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Iranian EFL Journal



Foreword

Welcome to the first edition of the year 2010. The Iranian EFL Journal has had strong growth over the last few years with a monthly readership now exceeding 1,500 readers. For a new journal examining the topic of English second language acquisition from a local perspective, the growth and readership has been pleasing. Statistically, readers are coming from almost 80 countries. In the first issue of volume 6 we present seven articles for your reading. In the first article the authors, Mohammad Reza Atai and Mahboobeh Saberi report the results of a study which investigate the underlying traits of word recognition skills, probing their validity as predictors of reading ability. In the second article the authors, Reza Pishghadam, Mohammad Reza Hashemi, and Mohammad Reza Adel, employing the qualitative design, examine the dominant classroom discourse in formal and informal contexts of second language education in Iran. The study analyzes the situation from the Bakhtinian discourse perspective. Hassan Soodmand Afashar investigates the learning vocabulary strategies most and least used by Iranian language learners. He also takes the role of gender into account. Next article by Jalilifar and Hashemian deals with the use and the function of discourse markers in interviews of Persian learners of English as a foreign language. Marandi and Mokhtarnia, in their study, have attempted to find out the probable relationship between metacognitive awareness of hypertext reading strategies of Iranian EFL learners and their degrees of computer familiarity. In the next article, Zahedi and Khajooei have tried to investigate different aspects of collocations and Iranian EFL students' performance at different levels of interchange Books in collocational cloze test. Finally, Salimi, Tavakoli, and Ketabi aim at investigating how the judgment of collocational patterns is affected by noticing and whether the effect of noticing is mediated by collocational complexity and proficiency level.

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

Title

Dialogical Interaction in Formal and Informal Contexts: A Study in an EFL Situation

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Abstract

The major aim of this study was to examine the dominant classroom discourse in formal and informal settings in Iran. To this end, employing qualitative design, the researchers collected the required data. Based on the results obtained, levels of formality, teachers' questions, facilities and forms

of classrooms, learner's generated topics vs. teacher's/others' imposed topics, students'/teachers' motivation, and monologue vs. dialogue were among the typical themes identified and classified for more detailed critical analysis. The study concluded by placing emphasis on a democratic pedagogy where dialogue played a central role and a reorganization of what was once held to be an indisputable truth.

Key Words: Classroom discourse, Critical analysis, Dialogue, Formal and informal settings

Introduction

It seems that language education in Iran is different in formal (public schools) and informal (private schools) settings. Apparently, language teaching in public schools is more 'authoritative' -oriented tending to impose its hidden agenda and the heart of this imposition of power is teachers' discourse, among many other direct or indirect factors. Private English schools, on the other hand, seem to move toward a more 'internally persuasive discourse'. We try to illustrate the possibility of the dynamic interaction of participating teachers whose words and actions may directly or indirectly frame the classroom practices.

Our argument is followed by a presentation of the research project with an analytical description of teachers and learners' discourse, pointing out some key moments in their teaching/learning process, and in conclusion, a series of final reflections of how this research might contribute to language teaching context are specified. We try to pose the following questions to internally persuade the addressees for searching richer solutions and still raising more questions:

1. Are there any differences in public and private English schools that may encourage a kind of ideology which is more authoritative?
2. To what extent do these settings promote learning through social interaction?

Dialogical Discourse Studies

It is claimed that discourse, in any form, is not a static byproduct of an individual mind, rather it is reciprocally created and constructed and deconstructed through interacting individuals. The advent of deconstruction theory and practice in the late 1960s was a challenge against the assumption that a text's meaning can be discovered through the analysis of the overall system; on the contrary a text is loaded with many meanings and no definitive interpretation of text is possible (Bressler, 1999). Discourse analysis re-appeared in the late 1960s as a meeting point between, at least, four branches of the humanistic sciences, such as linguistics, psychology, anthropology and sociology, and it is now used to handle issues at the intersection of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, philosophical linguistics, and computational linguistics (Brown & Yule, 1983). Being aware of any text's multiple meanings, discourse analysis does not provide definite answers, but rather expands our personal horizons (Palmquist, 2004). What makes the core of our arguments in this process of making multiple meanings is the determining concept of dialogue in Bakhtin's view, leading to a kind of discourse, which is more authoritative or toward an internally persuasive discourse.

Our work is a movement toward what Willinsky (1990) and others have called New Literacy studies. The central goals of these practices are to afford students the chance to participate actively rather than being passive recipients of an information delivery system, to create environments where they have increased choice and control over their work, to give teachers methods for honoring and supporting students' intentions, to make the work personally meaningful, to provide increased interactions among students; and to minimize the existing hierarchy of power. Similarly, the New London Group (1996) speaks of "multiliteracies," a term that "signals multiple communication channels, hybrid text forms, new social relations, and the increasing salience of linguistic and cultural diversity" (Hull & Schultz, 2002, p. 26).

The dialogical theory of language originated in the writings of the Bakhtin Circle (Brandist, 2002) and its most famous members: Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986, 1993) and Valentin Voloshinov (1973, 1976). More recent contributions to dialogical

thinking include those of Rommetveit (1992), Markova & Foppa (1990, 1991), Markova, Graumann, & Foppa (1995), Linell (1998), and Lahteenmaki (1998a, 1998b). During the past 20 years, there has been a surge of interest in Bakhtin's thinking within the field of second and foreign language research. An interesting early contribution was Cazden's (1989, 1993) discussion of the similarities between Bakhtin and Dell Hymes as antiformalists and representatives of non-Saussurean linguistics. James Wertsch (1990, 1991, 1998) discussed Bakhtinian ideas, especially the notion of voice, in connection with the sociocultural approach. Wertsch (1991, pp. 12-13) stressed the role of semiotic mediation and communicative practices in understanding human cognition. Claire Kramsch (1995, 2000) has drawn attention to some Bakhtinian aspects in her discussion of language learning as semiotic mediation. Gordon Wells (1999, 2002) has sought to emphasize the role of dialogue as a special type of activity in human learning and has attempted to combine aspects of activity theory, Vygotskian thinking, and dialogism. Wells (2002, p. 44) focused on classroom interaction and criticized its present, antidialogical nature. The notion of the multivoiced or polyphonic mind has been discussed in various contexts, including language learning and therapeutic discourse (Hermans, 2001; Leiman, 1998; Wertsch, 1991, 1998).

Dialogue among people in classrooms takes place in the many current approaches to collaborative learning and group work (Cohen, 1986), book clubs (McMahon, Raphael, Goatley, & Pardo, 1997), literature circles (Daniels, 1994), or debate programs (Ericson, Murphy & Zeuschner, 1987). As the core of our discussion in line with dialogic theory of Bakhtin, is the nature of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse, it is helpful to review a little more the concept of authority.

Authority has been considered and studied by different researches from various fields of study. Weber (1964), a sociologist, defined authority as the probability of a person gaining voluntary obedience from others. Other sociologists have explained that this relationship serves and is justified by a moral order that comprises shared purposes and goals, values and beliefs, and norms (Metz, 1978; Selznick, 1992). For instance, Durkheim (1956, 1961) emphasized the importance of moral authority. "The teacher," he wrote, "is the interpreter of the great moral ideas of his time and of his country" (Durkheim, 1956, p.89). Scholars, such as Grant (1988; Metz, 1978; Pace, 2003a, 2003c)

following Max Weber have distinguished and applied different types of authority. Traditional authority, the first type, is based on longstanding traditions that grant legitimacy to certain people with superior status. Teachers exercising traditional authority expect to be obeyed simply because they occupy the role of teacher. The second type, charismatic authority, occurs when heroic or exemplary individuals with exceptional qualities garner unusually high prestige. They are not bound by official rules, and their legitimacy lasts as long as they satisfy students' needs and inspire commitment. The third type, legal-rational authority (also known as bureaucratic authority), stems from rules and regulations based on legal procedures and policy. Other sociologists have identified professional authority as a fourth type distinguished by the use of individuals' expertise to achieve consensual aims (Blau, 1974; Parsons, 1964). In the role of professional expert, teachers' command of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills are their most important claim to legitimacy.

Some people have distinguished authority from coercive power and other kinds of control. Metz (1978), for example, identified different resources teachers use to maintain control. When students are forced with the threat of punishment to do what they do not want to do, it is coercion. When students' cooperation is gained by offering them incentives, it is exchange. When teachers use their personal relationship with students to persuade them, it is influence. On the other hand, on social constructivist side, the concept of authority "...has no universal meaning, just waiting to be discovered" (Giroux, 1986, p. 24).

Some related studies like Metz's (1978) and Swidler's (1979) show that research on authority must be historically situated. Grant (1988) carried this endeavor forward, again by examining challenges to authority in a desegregated high school during the 1970s and 1980s. He argued that the identification of schools as responsible for social inequalities resulted in a general loss of trust and consent. Pace (1998, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c) has studied the social construction of authority relations and their connection to academic engagement in four classes in an ethnically diverse metropolitan high school. While building on Metz's (1978) study of authority in crisis during the late 1960s, 30 years later Pace has found that overt exercise and questioning of authority has given way to indirect assertions and challenges. Correspondingly, teachers now use a broader array

of strategies, such as politeness, humor, and grade inflation, to maintain generally cooperative yet ambiguous relationships in which discord lies beneath the surface.

Some progressive educators have been heavily influenced by the philosophy of John Dewey (1938), who promoted a model of education premised on the belief that students become more engaged in meaningful learning if their individual interests and real life experiences are reflected in the curriculum. Many liberal educationists have focused on the importance of individual rights, which were supported by court decisions granting freedom of expression and due process to students (Arum, 2003). Others have argued that educative authority at its best was an extension of a moral democratic community (Benne, 1986).

Feminists have produced extensions and revisions of critical theory about authority. Some believe teachers should facilitate consciousness raising to heighten awareness of and deconstruct patriarchal authority structures that sustain gender, racial, ethnic, class, and other social inequalities (Sarachild, 1975; Tetreault & Maher, 1994). Some other studies have focused on socioeconomic and racial inequalities (Irvine, 1990; Leacock, 1969; Lipman, 1998)

Since the publication in 1969 of Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", scholars in literacy studies have recognized that traditional power arrangements in the classroom are counterproductive and that learning is much more likely to occur when students are active participants in their own education; that is, when a significant portion of the teacher's authority is transferred to the students themselves. By urging teachers to turn students into subjects (Freire, 1970) and agents (Giroux, 1986) through dialogic method (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1996), radical educationists attempt to change teachers from oppressive figures working for the maintenance of the status quo into critical intellectuals struggling to make society more equal and democratic.

And finally, dialogue in Bakhtin philosophy plays the central and fundamental role in creating different kinds of discourse. In his analysis of language, Bakhtin (1986) considered the utterance as a basic form of verbal communication. The length of the utterance varies from a single word or a short phrase to a long text, and it is the exchange between the speakers that determines the boundaries of an utterance. An utterance is therefore connected to the concept of voice, or the "talking personality, the speaking

consciousness” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 434). In addition to the voice producing an utterance, it is formed by the person it is directed at, and it also carries the voices of anyone previously involved. Each utterance thus comprises at least two voices. Voices always exist in a social environment, never in isolation. Because of this, Bakhtin was concerned with the concepts of “social language” and “speech genres”. Social language is related to the social stratum of the speakers. Speech genres are characterized by the typical situations and contexts of the speech communication, such as everyday genres of greetings, farewell and congratulation, conversations about different topics in different situations, intimate conversations among friends, and military commands. However, social language and speech genres are often thoroughly intertwined. According to Bakhtin (1986), our utterances always entail the use of speech genres, and bearing this in mind it is very important to master different speech genres. Hence, in a school situation it is important that the pupils learn to master the different speech genres which arise in different situations in life.

In “Marxism and the Philosophy of Language” signed by Voloshinov (1973), it is noted that “orientation of the word toward the addressee has an extremely high significance. The word is precisely the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another” (p. 86).

For Bakhtin a word is a world. He declares that, “an individual’s becoming, an ideological process, is characterized precisely by a sharp gap between . . . the authoritative word (religious, political, moral; the word of a father, of adults and of teachers, etc.) that does not know internal persuasiveness, and . . . the internally persuasive word that is denied all privilege, backed up by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledge in society” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342). Unlike dialogic language, “the authoritative word or discourse is monologic, distant from context, unanswerable, and embodies different sources of authority (tradition, generally accepted truths, official lines). It is an imposition, in the sense that it demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused into it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past

that is felt to be hierarchically higher. . . . It is therefore not a question of choosing it from among other possible discourses that are its equal” (p. 342). In the words of Holquist “Undialogized language is authoritative or absolute” (1981, p. 426–7). Authoritative discourses or what Delpit (1995), Gee (1992, 1996), and others have termed “the languages of power” encode “cultural capital” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Although Bakhtin (1981) does not talk about learning directly, he does note that “when thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way, what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse” (p. 345). Bakhtin (1981) explains that the creativeness of an independent internally persuasive discourse lies precisely “in the fact that such a word awakens an independent words, that it organizes masses of our words within” (p. 343), words that come from our reflections on the events, actors, and relationships in our everyday lives. It entails finding a new position in the social world. Bakhtin maintains that “one’s own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of others’ words that have been acknowledged and assimilated . . . in everyday rounds of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half ours and half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). The semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, and this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346)

Language, Bakhtin argued, is never a fixed and closed system. Instead, it is a living, ever-changing entity, “social throughout its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 259). The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes “one’s own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 293–4).

Bakhtin’s (1981) conception of dialogism is that “in the actual life of speech, every concrete act of understanding is active. . . . Understanding comes to fruition only in response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other” (p. 282). In contrast to the concept of dialogue, Bakhtin’s concept of monologue refers to “any discourse that seeks to deny the

dialogic nature of existence, and pretends to be the ‘last word’, the authoritative word”. Morris (1994, p. 247) asserts that such discourse is typical of authoritarian regimes.

In fact, Bakhtin reminds us that “social dialogue reverberates in all aspects of discourse, in those (aspects) relating to ‘content’ as well as the ‘formal’ aspects themselves” (1981, p. 300), and that in everyday dialogue, “the listener and his response are regularly taken into account.” (p. 280). In this respect, discourse and thought *ipso facto* are, to use Bakhtin’s term, heteroglossic. That is, the word, the utterance, the verbal moment are multivoiced, infused with “shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents” (Bakhtin, 1934–45/1981, p. 276) that reflect what Holquist (1981) calls “a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup” (p. 428). For Bakhtin, the development of discourse in societies began with ‘monoglossia,’ a stable and unified language, then shifted to ‘polyglossia,’ two or more languages simultaneously existing in the same society, and finally to ‘heteroglossia,’ the conflict between centralized and decentralized, or ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ discourses (Morris, 1994, p. 246). Alive and always active, language moves in multiple directions simultaneously: in perpetual tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces – the tendency to unify, centralize, fix, formalize, privilege, and create norms – and the tendency to invent, innovate, vary, expand, and specialize. Bakhtin terms the locus of those forces heteroglossia. The meaning of any utterance is never fixed and static, but differs in rich and complex ways according to the context and conditions within which it is used. “Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 272). Bakhtin understood dialogue to occur in the spaces between two parties as a result of centrifugal outward push. It is “outside of the ‘soul’ of the speaker and does not belong to him only” (Todorov, 1984, p. 52) and therefore occurs outside ourselves in an environment of egalitarian reciprocity. In communication, “centrifugal forces compel movement, becoming, and history; they long for change and new life, whereas centripetal forces urge stasis” (Hazen, 1993, p. 17).

And to conclude, following Bakhtin, we understand that knowledge does not reside in the head of one individual but is always constructed and those who are open to this knowledge construction welcome development. In Lave & Wenger’s words (1991, p. 15) “learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an

individual mind. . . . Learning is, as it were, distributed among coparticipants, not a one-person act”.

Therefore, as the studies in the social realm show, learning is possible when we create an environment in which there is place for dialogue and transfer of knowledge. The application of Bakhtin’s ideas in an Iranian context is supposed to be fruitful and promising, particularly the concepts of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse which has not been done by any research studies in an EFL situation, particularly in our educational context. What is particularly novel in our work is the analysis of Bakhtin’s two types of discourse in comparison with two different language teaching settings, i.e. the public and private schools.

Methodology

The total population participated in this study were 40 English teachers and 200 learners from 30 public and private English teaching schools in Mashhad/Kadkan-Iran, who filled in a questionnaire on teacher-student discourse; they were also observed (4 teachers), and interviewed (8 teachers). In line with Bakhtin’s types of discourse, some questions were posed whose content validity was substantiated by the researchers. The participants were asked to carefully read the questions and just decide on the percentage asked for the related questions. These percentages were then used to determine the amount of teacher-student discourse types. In some cases, however, they were called for giving full answers. These full answers were also analyzed along with teachers’ interviews and class observations. The questions in the student’s and teacher’s questionnaires were given in the Appendices. The teacher’s questionnaire is almost the same as the learners’ except in some minor cases. Based on the questionnaires, some typical themes were extracted and categorized along with the percentages for comparison and analysis.

The observation site for this study was 15 private language teaching schools and 15 public high-schools. With respect to the public schools, ten of which were located in Mashhad, a city in Khorasan, and the others in Kadkan, a town near Mashhad. Our participants were 100 pre-university students learning English at upper-intermediate level and 20 BA TEFL teachers. The book taught was “Learning to Read English for Pre-

University Students” (Birjandi, Annabi, & Samimi, 2008). These 120 students and teachers were administered the questionnaire to fill in. Out of these 20 teachers, four skilled and more competent teachers were chosen for interview and to add, out of these four teachers, two more experienced and representative teachers were chosen for class observation and tape recordings. One of them was a female teacher aged 29 having eight years of experience and the other was a male teacher aged 31 with 9 years of experience. We observed and tape-recorded five successive sessions of each of these teachers. The average length of the tape recording was 50 minutes in each session. The overall recording of these fifteen public school teachers which was transcribed later for content analysis was about 8.33 minutes. The questionnaires were later analyzed in detail as well to see any discrepancies between teachers’ and students’ answers in these different language teaching contexts.

The same procedure went for those private English schools, which were all located in Mashhad. Again our participants were 100 students who had registered for optional English courses and 20 BA TEFL teachers. Learners were upper-intermediate. The books taught were pre- FCE and the FCE books (Norris, 2008 & Prodromou, 2005). These 120 teachers and learners were also distributed the same questionnaire to fill out. In the same vein, out of these 20 teachers, four more experienced teachers were chosen for interview and in addition, out of these four teachers, two more qualified and representative teachers were preferred for class observation and tape recordings. These two female teachers aged 30 and 27 had 8 and 6 years experience respectively. All learners in the two groups aged between 18 and 24. We observed and tape-recorded five successive sessions for the teacher who had 6 years of experience, and nine successive sessions for the second teacher. The average length of the tape recording was 1.30 minutes in each session. The overall recording of these two private school teachers which was transcribed later for content analysis was about 21 hours.

In the end, some classes were observed and tape-recorded (N=4), and some teachers were interviewed (N=8). For ease of reference and observing codes of ethics, we chose twelve pseudonyms for the teachers observed, tape-recorded and interviewed. Four teachers whose classes were observed and tape-recorded are as follows:

1. Khorasani is the female teacher aged 29 having 8 years of experience
2. Najafzadeh is a male teacher aged 31 with 9 years of experience
3. Taghavi is the female teacher aged 27 having 6 years of experience
4. Asghari is the female teacher aged 30 having 8 years of experience

These four teachers just mentioned were also interviewed. We also added eight more teachers for interview. The fictitious names of these 8 teachers are as follows. The following four teachers were teaching at public schools:

1. Jaber is a male BA TEFL teacher aged 35 having 10 years of experience
2. Hasani is a male BA TEFL teacher aged 33 having 7 years of experience
3. Ghafoori is a male BA TEFL teacher aged 35 having 10 years of experience
4. Hashemi is a male BA TEFL teacher aged 38 having 12 years of experience

The following four remaining teachers were teaching at private schools:

5. Ghasemi is a male BA English Literature Teacher aged 26 having 5 years of experience
6. Alizadeh is a female BA English Literature Teacher aged 27 having 5 years of experience
7. Heidari is a female BA TEFL teacher aged 26 having 6 years of experience
8. Kamali is a female BA TEFL teacher aged 27 having 10 years of experience

Results

Based on the teacher's and student's questionnaires, some typical themes were extracted and categorized, which are put in the following Tables (1 & 2) for ease of comparison and interpretations.

Table 1: Comparison of Teachers' Responses in Public Schools vs. Teachers' Responses in Private Schools (The Overall Average Given in Terms of Percentage)

*	Typical Themes	Teachers' Responses in	Teachers' Responses in
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		Public Schools		Private Schools
1	<i>Teacher Talk</i>	79.72		57.73
2	<i>Student Talk</i>	20.28		42.27
3	<i>Group Work</i>	48.88		73.94
4	<i>Teacher-Student Language Use</i>	<i>English:</i>	15.27	83.42
		<i>Persian:</i>	81.12	15.53
		<i>Etc.:</i>	3.61	1.05
5	<i>Peers' Language Use *</i>	<i>English</i>	—	—
		<i>Persian</i>	—	—
		<i>Etc.</i>	—	—
6	<i>Levels of Formality</i>	75.27		61.57
7	<i>Teachers' Questions</i>	55.27		76.84
8	<i>Teachers' Closed Questions</i>	37.77		45.26
9	<i>Teachers' Open-ended Questions</i>	62.23		54.74
10	<i>Proximity</i>	63.88		37.89
11	<i>Outside Relationship</i>	21.11		51.5
12	<i>Having Facilities</i>	46.66		73.15
13	<i>Beginner</i>	35.27		25
14	<i>Intermediate</i>	50.85		53.94
15	<i>Advanced</i>	13.88		21.06
16	<i>Getting Help from the Advanced Learners</i>	45.27		59.73
17	<i>Teachers' Decisions on Topics</i>	20		17.10
18	<i>Learners' Decisions on Topics</i>	2.77		6.05
19	<i>Other People's Decisions</i>	77.23		76.85
20	<i>Interest in English</i>	78.61		81.5
21	<i>Teacher's Role in</i>	—		—

	Motivation *		
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- Note: These choices (5 & 21) were put and checked in the Student's questionnaire.

Table 2: Comparison of Students' Responses in Public Schools vs. Students' Responses in Private Schools
(The Overall Average Given in Terms of Percentage)

*	Typical Themes	Students' Responses in Public Schools		Students' Responses in Private Schools
1	Teacher Talk	79.94		71.83
2	Student Talk	20.06		28.17
3	Group Work	31.59		50.05
4	Teacher-Student Language Use	English:	12.62	73.72
		Persian:	86.46	26.22
		Etc.:	0.92	.06
5	Peers' Language Use	English	4.84	43.66
		Persian	91.97	56.18
		Etc.	3.19	16
6	Levels of Formality	74.17		74.83
7	Teachers' Questions	52.31		80.05
8	Teachers' Closed Questions	56.90		36
9	Teachers' Open-Ended Questions	43.1		64
10	Proximity	45.87		41.61
11	Outside Relationship	24.94		27.33
12	Having Facilities	53.44		64.5
13	Beginner	38.35		18.29
14	Intermediate	44.94		53.83
15	Advanced	16.71		27.88
16	Getting Help from the Advanced	—		—

	<i>Learners *</i>		
17	<i>Teachers' Decisions on Topics</i>	53.45	52.1
18	<i>Learners' Decisions on Topics</i>	16.08	18.68
19	<i>Other People's Decisions</i>	30.47	29.22
20	<i>Interest in English</i>	64.58	89.33
21	<i>Teacher's Role in Motivation</i>	57.83	71.38

- *Note: This choice was put in the teacher's questionnaire to check the level of teachers' authority. For students, it was analyzed in Group Work section.*

The findings in general, support the claim that language teaching in public schools is more authoritative –oriented and the center of this imposition of power was supposed to be teachers' discourse. Besides, it was found that private English schools are moving toward a more internally persuasive discourse.

As the results show, there is little room for students' talk in comparison with teachers' talk in teachers' responses (public schools =79.72, private schools=57.73). This shows that most of the time students are silent and listening and the teachers are controlling and monitoring the classroom discourse. It should, however, pointed out that, though the students' rate of talk is much less than teachers', that amount of speech is not the same in two settings. In private schools this rate is almost as twice as the rate of the learners in public settings (20.28 vs. 42.27). To add, this rate is almost compatible with students' responses. Almost in both settings, the students believed that there is little room for them to have dialogue (20.06 in public schools and 28.17 in private settings) and there is ample opportunity for teachers' talk (79.94 in public schools and 71.83 in private settings).

With respect to Group work, teachers' and students' views were different. Teachers believed that there were opportunities for students' interaction and pair work (48.88 in public schools vs. 73.94 in private settings). But the learners held that this rate was not very high (31.59 in public schools vs. 50.05 in private settings). But a comparison between private and public schools in both teachers' and learners' views in terms of Group work showed that there was more opportunities for group work in private settings.

Moreover, there were quite sharp differences in L1 and L2 use in two settings, levels of formality was high in both settings, teachers' questions were higher in private schools, and there was distance between teachers and learners in public schools particularly in teachers' view. Furthermore, teachers of private settings believed that they had more outside relationship and contact with their learners. Other criteria were also directly or indirectly in favor of a more internally persuasive discourse rather than an authoritative discourse in private settings in contrast to public English schools.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of the questionnaires' results, observations, tape recordings and 29 hours and 33 minutes transcriptions, along with teachers' interviews, the following typical themes were identified and classified for more detailed critical analysis from a Bakhtinian perspective:

1. Levels of Formality
2. Teachers' Questions
3. Facilities and Forms of Classrooms
4. Learner's Generated Topics vs. Teacher's/Others' Imposed Topics
5. Students'/Teachers' Motivation
6. Monologue vs. Dialogue

However, before discussing these typical themes in relation to questionnaires' findings, we try to look into teachers' interviews and transcriptions of the tape recordings for finding the sufficient traces of these principles to provide a more complete picture for the critical analysis of an authoritative framework. Fortunately, all findings show a relationship with each other, hence more validity to conclude for the unfortunate existence of an authoritative discourse in contrast to an internally persuasive discourse, especially in public language teaching contexts in Iran.

Teachers' Interviews

Interviews were typically one hour in length. Meetings and interviews were audio-taped and transcribed to enable an in-depth content analysis. The teachers interviewed inhabited many possible and sometimes contradictory worlds as they belonged to

different environments in which they lived and worked. Contradictions, however, is a building block of entailing a context which is free and open for all to express their voices. The content analysis of these interviews in the two settings, public and private, is also compatible and well-matched with the results of the questionnaires. Here again, we see that the authoritative discourse is more evident and sometimes strongly supported in public schools in the answers of these public school teachers. The private school teachers, on the other hand, are moving gradually to an internally persuasive discourse preferring in Bakhtin's word "we-experience instead of I-experience" (Bakhtin, 1973). The pseudonyms, as mentioned (see Procedure) belong to the teachers interviewed. We mention some extracts from both groups to emphasize on their differences in ideology and compare their responses:

Interviewer: "How much time do you spend on cooperating with the pupils?"

Public settings:

- Jaber: "We have no time. Sometimes, I do the exercises myself and the students just fill the answers in. We have no other choice. I have to prepare the students for exams based on the syllabus given."
- Najafzadeh: "They have nothing to tell. They don't understand, so they have no questions."
- Ghafoori: "I just translate, and they listen."

Private settings:

- Kamali: "It depends on the topic we are teaching and learning. We have free discussions in some related topics. It depends."
- Ghasemi: "I use flashcards when I teach vocabularies and sounds."
- Alizade: "Cooperation is a basic principle for me. I interact with my students for better learning"
- Heidari: "It depends on the level of the students. If they are beginners, 90 percents of the time I take the floor. In other classes, I let them speak."

Interviewer: "Do you let your students air their views too?"

Public settings:

- Jaber: "I try to speak almost all the time, as I think I speak better than them, even in Persian. They cannot express themselves. I do whatever I think is better."

- Interviewer: "Don't you think that this is power?"
- Jaber: "Though I have extra part time jobs and that outside work experience has taught me that power is not effective all the time, nevertheless I cannot change my procedure 'cause I am accustomed to that culturally. I'm not biased, but I think this way is better for them."
- Najafzadeh: "They are bold and bully. You have to have the supremacy, the influence to petrify them. I am not dominant in nature, but they don't merit consideration."
- Ghafoori: "Those who are worthy, I consider them, but they have no time to speak. If you let them speak, that's waste of time. They're unruly, out of control. Learning is not possible when you are not in the position of a leadership."

Private settings:

- Kamali: "Yes, we have pair work. I ask their views. What is important for me is not the truth of their claims; I just want them to speak."
- Alizadeh: "I let them speak. I do like to know their ideas."

Interviewer: "When teaching English, which languages do you prefer to use? English or any other language?"

Public settings:

- Jaber: "Just Persian".
- Interviewer: "Why?"
- Jaber: "Cause the educational system is insisting on that."
- Hasani: "Persian all the time."
- Interviewer: "Why?"
- Hasani: "Nobody can understand English. We have to explain everything in Persian."
- Khorasani: "I just speak Persian. I cannot get in touch with them through English. They don't like it."
- Najafzadeh: "Just Persian. I'm not a native speaker to speak English. Speaking is not important. Reading skill is everything."

Private:

- Taghavi: "English, most of the time. And the students have to express themselves in English. Speaking is important."
- Alizadeh: "It depends. In the elementary levels they cannot speak, but in advanced levels Speaking English is a priority."

Interviewer: "Do you consider all your students in your class?"

Public settings:

- Jaber: "I have an eye on the more advanced learners, as they can understand me better. I like them to know me. The poor students do not have that ability to understand me."
- Najafzadeh: "I pay attention to those students who are weak. I use of the more advanced learners when doing exercises. I don't consider the average students."
- Ghafoori: "I spend no time with the poor students. They don't learn. I like the advanced and the intermediate ones."

Private settings:

- Alizadeh: "Yes. I try to use of more advanced students to teach those weak students. I help the poor ones, but they are few."
- Taghavi: "I never use of advanced students to teach or help other learners. The rules of the institutions don't let me have such a choice."
- Kamali: "All the students are the same for me."

Interviewer: "Do you have a role in designing your own syllabus?"

Public settings:

- Jaber: "No. I teach a book which I have to. If I had the choice, I would change it."
- Interviewer: "Did you consider your students' needs, in that respect?"
- Khorasani: "No, we have to prepare them for better, shining futures. There are too young to decide great decisions yet."

Private settings:

- Kamali: "No, the syllabus is already designed. You have to teach the book they say; but I make some changes in the way I teach. I bring some proverbs, idioms, jokes, etc. to the class. But the syllabus is determined by the institution's policy makers, and I have no power to introduce the books I like."

Interviewer: "Do you behave formally?"

Public settings:

- Hasani: "It depends. Sometimes I have good students, I like them. In case of trouble, I strongly push them. I never use a disrespectful language anyway."
- Jaber: "No fun is permitted. You cannot control the class."
- Hashemi: "It's half formal and half informal. It depends. I'm not very strict."
- Najafzadeh: "I seldom laugh. You have to control the class. Laughing makes them disobedient and noncompliant. They have no right to come around my table. They are not worthy."
- Ghafoori: "Yes. You have to. In these settings the students have no choice to choose the teacher they like. We are chosen and they have to obey us. You have to have power; otherwise, they don't listen. Listening for me is everything. Anybody who doesn't lend me an ear, I punish him."

Private settings:

- Ghasemi: "In the beginning levels, fun is a basic principle for me."
- Kamali: "My code of teaching is order and they have to obey the rules."
- Ghasemi: "I try to be as close as possible to my students, but it depends. They love me, 'cause they have chosen me to be their teachers."
- Alizadeh: "They get tired if you have no fun. You have to create some comfortable situations."

Interviewer: "Are you interested in teaching English?"

Public settings:

- Najafzadeh: "I was. But, now, I see no motivation in learners, educational system, people, I have lost my interests."
- Ghafoori: "No. I have to teach, 'cause I have no other job."
- Jaber: "The students say they don't like it. We also have lost our spirit."

Private settings:

- Ghasemi: "Yes, but there are lots of problems, the number of the students, lack of facilities, low income, unmotivated students all are de-motivating factors."
- Taghavi: "Yes I like teaching English and I do enjoy."
- Alizadeh: "I like it, but I'm thinking about other jobs too."

- Ghasemi: "I like it, 'cause I can progress; and I try to motivate the students by giving them bonus marks if they do extra activities."

Interviewer: "Do you like to get help from your learners?"

Public settings:

- Jaber: "Never. I'm better than them all."

Interviewer: "Do you prefer to have power in teaching or in class management?"

- Najafzadeh: "In class management, having knowledge is not important. You have to control the class."

Interviewer: "Do you ask questions when you are teaching?"

Public settings:

- Khorasani: "Yes, but the last word is mine."
- Ghafoori: "I ask questions, but there are no answers. They don't know."
- Khorasani: "I ask them many questions, but most of the time they are silent."

Private settings:

- Alizadeh: "I ask questions, and I indirectly provide the answers."

Recordings

In this part, we have selected a small portion of extracts from the tape recordings to confirm our findings which all corroborate the disparity of teachers' discourse in these different settings. The first and the second extracts are transcriptions of recordings of those two public school teachers. The third and the fourth ones are the recordings of the teachers in private schools.

Extract 1

The class starts with a formal greeting and then the lesson starts immediately.

- Teacher: (Khorasani): "You don't have any question, have you? Is everything clear?"
- Student: "Yes".

This type of question and the intonation indirectly shows the authority of the teacher. The students are forced to say yes to the teacher's questions. That is to say, they

have to agree that everything is clear. The teacher also asks different types of questions, closed and open as the following:

- Teacher: "Is exercise useful for our heart?"
- Student: "Yes".
- Teacher: "What is aerobic exercise?"
- Teacher: "What is aerobic exercise?"
- Teacher: "...is any kind of activity?"
- Teacher: "Why exercise is important?"
- Student: "What?"

But the problem is that when answering multi-answer questions, they cannot articulate themselves and they remain silent and the teacher should continue. Then, the whole dialogue is devoted to the discussion of the importance of doing exercise. This is done in Persian. For some moments you may think that this is not an English classroom. Everything is expressed in English without any relation to the clarification of the English words and reading texts.

As we observe this class, we see that the teacher is reading the text, the teacher is giving the definitions, and then the teacher tells the students to be silent again as she is going to teach grammar deductively. Only once, she let them read the texts, but she insists on reading quickly as they have no time. "You have to hurry as we have no time and I want to teach you the grammar", She says. She continues and devotes almost one hour teaching grammar deductively and out of context. Next session, she starts reading the Language Function section and instead of explaining language functions, she starts translating the sentences reminding the students that they have to memorize the meaning of unknown vocabularies. The teacher again starts asking the meaning of the reading text in Persian and the students are answering in Persian. Then, they start doing the exercises. Some students mention that they are not ready. "I forgot to bring my book"; "I have bought a new book and I haven't done the exercises yet"; "I have not study". These are some of their alleged reasons. If there is any interaction, it is from teacher to students. There is no student-student interaction. The teacher speaks very formally with and authoritative intonation. Once she is checking the students' books, she tells them that they

should not write the meaning of the unknown words in their books. “If you do that, I’ll throw the book out of the window, got it?”, she shouts with anger.

Extract 2

As we enter the classroom and find a place to sit, the teacher has finished his greeting very formally and then starts asking some questions. “We have done all the previous exercises, ye?”, the teacher says. “We have to do some exercises on page number 22, numbers 2 and 3”, one of the students reminds the teacher. Then, the teacher goes to the Reading section and starts asking the meaning of the vocabularies. When reading, he tries to teach some grammatical points. In comparison with the previous teacher, this teacher seems to feel the importance of teaching in context. But, he also devotes a great amount of time (two sessions for teaching the grammar of just one lesson, which is about active/passive sentences) to teaching grammar. What are interesting in this class are the excessive questions of the teacher. He asks very short closed questions. But, the shocking point is that he doesn’t let the students think. He gives the answers without any delay and goes to the next question. The students are just writing the responses hurriedly. When asking the meaning of “idea”, one of the students starts thinking and the teacher says: “don’t addle your brain, it means “Aghide” (opinion). Persian is the language used most of the time. The “language Function” section is also treated as a reading section, exactly the way the previous teacher was doing. Some grammatical points are also explained in Persian and the teacher reminds them that they have to know them for the final exams. The class finishes and next session we attend the class and we see that the teachers and the students are bargaining on the final exam and the score policy. Then, they start translating the reading text sentence by sentence. There is no break, no fun and the teacher finishes the class as strict as possible.

Extract 3

The teacher greets the students smilingly. Then, the lesson starts, which is teaching grammar, conditional sentences. The teacher starts explaining everything in

English. “Do you remember about conditional sentences? Type one, two, three conditionals. Yeah these are the most common types, we have mixed conditionals. We will talk about”, the teacher continues. Then, she, like the other public school teachers dedicates a great amount of her class time to teaching grammar deductively, but the difference is that everything is told in English. The teacher is explaining and the students are listening. This teacher has a more friendly tone of speech, and most of the time a smile she has on her lips. The class finishes and we wait for the next session. Now, we are again in the class and after a long greeting, they start reading a text. Then the teacher asks them:

- “Any Problems, any sentences that you cannot understand in the text?”
- Student: “Yes, the 2 line on the age of the city, what’s the meaning of expose?”
- Teacher: “What does ‘expose’ mean?”
- Another student: “uncover”.
- Teacher: “That’s right, number 5, line 2...”

The teacher does not provide the answers explicitly. She let them think and then respond. One of the students asks a question: “Can I ask the summery of this?” “You can ask someone to start and someone to continue”, the teacher says. I this class there is interactions between students and teachers. The teacher tries to use students as scaffolders. She is not the only person who knows the answers. It seems that this teacher’s discourse is moving toward the internally persuasive continuum. We attend the class again and again and we see that they are always interacting with each other and the only language used in the class in English. What we hear most of the time is the teacher’s “Let’s read, let’s see...” statements. “I” does not exist in this class in most cases. Sometimes, the teacher is asking them some personal questions about their life, sympathizing with them and smiling.

Extract 4

The teacher greets her students and then the start the discussion. The teacher asks them to do the vocabulary exercises. They fill the answers in and whenever there are

some pronunciation errors, the teacher corrects them. What is interesting in this class and it is quite evident from the transcriptions, is that the teacher's utterances are very short taking a small portion of class time. Sometimes they are at the phrase level. This shows that learners have more opportunities to speak and take part in the dialogues. Then, the teacher asks them some vocabularies and they have to give an English synonym for the words the teacher asks. This is different from the public school teachers' strategies. They asked the vocabularies and the students translated them into Persian. English language was not so important for them. Again, this was a decision the teachers had taken for their students and some teachers (in the interview) claimed that this is the policy we have to obey. This session is over and we attend the class once more. This time the teacher greets them and looks at one of the students who seem to be unwell. "Ok ... How was your day?", the teacher asks. "Today ... what's wrong? Nothing ... tired...", the student answers. And this continues for some time and the teacher asks whether all are fine. This shows that the level of formality in such classes is not as strict as it was in public schools. The teacher considers the feelings of the students and they are motivated to answer and express their personal problems. It seems that they love their teachers. Our findings in all cases, observation, interview, and questionnaires, showed that such an atmosphere did not exist in public schools. Then, the class continues and they start reading a text, the teacher corrects the phonological errors, explains the grammatical points within the text, and sometimes asks the meaning of words. There is ample chance for students to have interactions with the teacher, but student-student interaction and group work is not very high in this class, though, as the results of the questionnaire show, the percentage is higher in private schools particularly from the students' perspective. "Class dismissed", the teacher smiles.

As it was illustrated, teachers' interviews and classroom observations all tended to prescribe an atmosphere of authority and this prescription was too strong for public settings than private teaching contexts. Now, we try to analyze the above mentioned themes for more discussion.

1. Levels of Formality

With regard to formality level, teachers' responses in public schools and private schools are somehow different (75.27 vs. 61.57). This shows that teachers in public schools are more authoritative than those who are teaching in private schools. But, from the learners' point of view, it can be inferred that learners in general do not feel comfortable with their teachers (74.17 vs. 74.83).

Proximity and Outside Relationship are also analyzed in this section. The Outside Relationship category shows that private settings teachers feel free to have contact with their learners even outside the learning contexts (21.11 in public vs. 51.5 in private contexts). The students' view, however, in both contexts is all but the same (24.94 vs. 27.33). This is the same as their responses in the Proximity category (45.86 in public vs. 41.61 in private settings). The student's questionnaire again proved that learners feel their teachers in all settings, particularly in private contexts, do not share a personal, and intimate zone with them (45.87 vs. 41.61).

Teachers' interviews and observations also confirm these findings, though the level of formality is stronger in public schools. Respect, fun, jokes and other parameters differently exist in the two settings. As Lawrence-Lightfoot (1999) notes, "Respect creates symmetry and empathy, and connection in all kinds of relationships, even those, such as teacher and student . . . embedded in classroom dialogue as a teacher helps students learn how to ask good questions, value inquiry, listen to each other, and begin the habit of thoughtful reflection" (pp. 9–12). Some teachers are more respectful and some, particularly in public schools, appear to look down at their pupils. Bakhtin (1990) wrote that a word, when spoken, is given an intonational contour that reflects the speaker's attitude toward it: "The word does not merely designate an object as a present-on-hand entity, but also expresses by its intonation my valuative attitude toward the object, toward what is desirable or undesirable in doing so" (pp. 32-33). Look at the following extracts from teachers' interviews and observations:

- "I never use a disrespectful language anyway." (public)
- "They are not worthy." (public)
- "They love me, 'cause they have chosen me to be their teachers". (public)
- "If you do that, I'll throw the book out of the window, got it?", she shouts with anger (see extract 1).

- “Ok ... How was your day?”, the teacher asks. (see extract 4)

In order to explain the dialogic or centrifugal force of fun, Bakhtin explored the concept of carnivalesque. The carnival was not just a means of escape from the harsh realities of life, but was also a way of moving outside monologic officiality to a creative, expressive and free dialogic experience. For “carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal” because it allowed for a situation free from “all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions” (Ty, 1994, p. 106). Few traces of fun were seen in public schools and there was little fun in private schools as well demonstrating a heavy atmosphere of power in these settings. Having humor and even telling jokes is fundamental in creating an informal context reducing the fears and anxieties of the learners. As Schegloff (2001, p. 1952) states, ‘Jokes’ are but just one manifestation of acting ‘non-serious’. In children’s interactions, forms of humor besides jokes include fantasy play, silly songs, word play and behavioral forms of humor, such as buffoonery and naughty acts (Lampert, 1996).

Now, look at some of these extracts:

- “No fun is permitted. You cannot control the class.” (public)
- “I seldom laugh. You have to control the class”. (public)
- “In the beginning levels, fun is a basic principle for me.” (private)
- “They get tired if you have no fun. You have to create some comfortable situations.” (private)

Bakhtin relates the ‘time space’ metaphor, or chronotope, to the concepts of meeting, contact, distance and proximity as he points to the meeting and parting of people as a recurrent and important theme or motif in literary plots (1981, p. 97). However, Weiss and Harris (2001) argued that proximity alone does not bring about enduring social change or the generalization of social skills beyond the training context. This lack of proximity or access may not be just confined to these teachers, but to other teachers’ classrooms, department offices, technology, libraries, which may have impacts on students’ learning and constructing knowledge.

2. *Teachers’ Questions*

There are different classifications for question types such as factual, check knowledge, open-ended, inference questions, among others (Cain & Oakhill, 1999; Dysthe, 1996; Reichenberg, 2005; Wajnryb, 1992). But what is related to our study is the closed/open dichotomy which shows the kind of authority teachers may impose by these kinds of questions.

The results of the student's and teacher's questionnaire showed that the rate of teachers' questions in general was higher in private settings both from students' and teacher's perspectives (76.84 in teachers' view vs. 80.05 in students' view). In public schools, on the other hand, the rate of teachers' questions in both questionnaires was almost the same (55.27 vs. 52.31).

The teacher's questionnaire showed that the rate of closed questions were almost the same as that of open questions in private settings (45.26 vs. 54.74), while the rate of open types of questions were much higher in public settings than those of private contexts (62.23 vs. 37.77). This is a contradiction as we expect more open-ended questions in private settings. But this is solved when we look at other parts of the questionnaire along with other results in the study, which all contribute to the authoritative atmosphere of private contexts (see also teachers' interviews). To add, the student's questionnaire showed that in private settings open-ended questions are higher than closed ones and in public settings closed questions are higher than open ones. This is true of the nature of a more internally persuasive discourse in the private settings. Cazden (2001) makes an explicit contrast between traditional and non-traditional lessons. On one hand, traditional lessons refer to the using of a three-part sequence: teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation or follow-up (IRE or IRF). Non-traditional lessons, on the other hand, means the sequence of talk in classrooms does not fit an IRE structure on account of a changed educational goal (Cazden, 2001, p. 31). Thus, it is obvious that in traditional lessons teachers generally dominate the class talk; students have fewer opportunities to ask their own questions or generate subtopics (Gutierrez, 1994).

Apparently, questions have significant effects on classroom activities. But not all types of questions may equally contribute to student learning. Skidmore, Perez-Parent & Arnfiel (2003) analyzed three categories of questioning: questions with one right answer; with a finite set of right answers and with an indeterminate though bounded set of

possible answers. The first type, namely, closed or two-choice questions are criticized for not only failing to promote pupils' deep thinking but also inhibiting their intellectual activity (Wood, 1992, p. 205). Wood also argues that the use of closed and Wh-type questions can result in pupils' short responses, less participation and misunderstanding. The second type is more open-ended and has more 'cognitively challenging quality' than the first; while the third type, questions with an indeterminate number of possible answers are authentic which the teacher does not know what the pupils will answer (Skidmore et al, 2003, p. 50). As Nystrand and Gamoran (1997, p. 73) state, only authentic discourse can engage students, and authentic questions must stimulate pupils to think and reflect on the consequences of their ideas, not just recall their past experiences.

3. *Facilities and Forms of Classrooms*

When we observed the classroom, we saw buildings, arrangements, equipments, and other so-called facilities as static as possible. The public school classrooms were more traditional, however, than the private schools. This is evident from the questionnaire's responses regarding the facilities needed. Teachers in public schools asserted that they had 46.66 percentages facilitates, while teachers of private schools noted that they had more facilities, i.e. 73.15. This rate in students' view was 53.44 in public schools vs. 64.5 in private schools. Not only the teacher's space and oratorical manner serve to indicate the teacher's authority, Bourdieu and Passeron point out, the traditional teacher's discourse "magisterial discourse" is "the most efficacious and the most subtle" of "all the distancing techniques with which the institution equips its officers" (1977, p. 110). Unfortunately, such forms of buildings and equipments are bringing in an atmosphere of power and authority.

4. *Learner's Generated Topics vs. Teacher/Others Imposed Topics*

Classroom authority relationships are influenced by the institution of schooling, where most decision making is beyond the control of teachers (Nyberg & Farber, 1986, p. 4). The exclusion of teachers from decisions about space, class size, scheduling, textbooks, budgets, testing, and many other conditions undercuts authority within the classroom.

The question regarding the content taught in these teaching/learning contexts is whether these students' real needs are accounted or not. Results of the questionnaire strongly confirm that learners particularly in public schools have approximately no role in selecting the topics and contents (see Results). Teachers who are more aware of this fact than their learners know that a hidden agenda is prescribed and they have to choose what has already been decided. Here we see that the realm of authority is much broader and it is not confined to teachers per se. Some political and cultural issues are involved as well (see also teachers' interviews for the role of syllabus).

5. *Students'/Teachers' Motivation*

Almost all factors mentioned may be diminishing or strengthening factors with regard to motivation. The students become motivated when they see their instructors are not so formal and they let them take part in the dialogues and group works, and ask them different types of challenging questions. The way they sit is nothing but to be obedient objects and no reason they have then to initiate a topic they like. But the positive point is that this situation is gradually changing in the private settings as the teachers are more motivated and their learners feel that they have an important role in providing a more encouraging environment (see Results). But the crucial question which pops up is whether all students afford to go to private settings for English learning. Another point is that the teachers, especially public school teachers are also beginning to lose their motivation (see teachers' interviews on interest).

5. *Monologue vs. Dialogue*

This is our central theme and Bakhtin's central theory as well. We discuss it here on purpose as a concluding topic to summarize our findings. All the themes discussed are in one way or another related to monologue/dialogue dichotomy. Under the monologue/dialogue theme, we try to analyze teacher talk, student talk, group work, teacher-student language use, peers language use, proficiency levels and getting help from the advanced learners. The by-product of this dialogic/undialogic language is the priority given to a type of discourse which may be more authoritative or more persuasive.

An important question for Bakhtin is how meaning and understanding are created. Bakhtin claimed that self-consciousness is only achieved in interaction and communication with other people; hence dialogue is a central concept in his work. Meaning is constructed between the dialogic partners. Dialogue opens the possibility of new discoveries and outcomes not previously thought of (Isaacs, 1999, p. 3). Monologue is a tendency towards imposing unifying ideas whereas dialogue allows for and values the presence of many different voices or heteroglossia (Morris, 1994). Unfortunately the results of the questionnaires, interviews and observations are in favor of the monologic language particularly in public school. The promising point is that this rate is toward dialogue in private settings (see Results). The reasons behind such inclination toward monologic discourse is implied in teachers' responses: (see also teachers' interviews)

- "We have no time. Sometimes, I do the exercises myself and the students just fill the answers in" (a public school teacher).
- "It depends on the topic we are teaching and learning. We have free discussions in some related topics. It depends" (a private school teacher).
- "I try to speak almost all the time, as I think I speak better than them, even in Persian. They cannot express themselves. I do whatever I think is better" (a public school teacher).
- "Cooperation is a basic principle for me. I interact with my students for better learning" (a private school teacher).

The link between constructing knowledge and the development of learning in line with internally persuasive discourse of Bakhtin is dialogue. In Vygotsky's term, dialogue in this respect acts as a ZPD. Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) explains the interaction (emphasis ours) between learning and development, among which the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the central idea. He defines ZPD as 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). "Discourses are not mastered through overt instruction but by enculturation (apprenticeship) into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse" (Gee, 1996, p. 139). In Gee's term

(1996) Discourses (with capital D) are ways of being in the world, or forms of life that integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes.

And with regard to Group Work, the private English schools are more promising and hopeful. They are moving toward a liberating pedagogy in which knowledge is shared and constructed as the result of cooperating minds. Many of the literature reviews over the last 20 years lead to a range of conclusions (Kutnick, Blatchford & Baines, 2005; Lou et al., 1996; O'Donnell & King, 1999; Slavin, Hurley & Chamberlain 2003; & Webb & Palincsar, 1996). These conclusions include the following points: that children work more effectively in smaller than larger groups; the co-operative and collaborative approaches to group work are, generally more effective than individualistic and competitive approaches; there are modest academic gains; and pro-social and pro-school attitudes improve significantly in co operative/collaborative groups.

Another issue analyzed was the language used in such settings. The results showed that the dominant language used in public schools was English, while Persian was the main language for communication in public schools. Some teachers claimed that they use Persian because the students cannot understand English:

- "Nobody can understand English. We have to explain everything in Persian".

This comment may not sound very convincing as the proficiency level of these students in all settings show that they are heterogeneous and most learners are intermediate. How, then, is the language use so different in the two contexts? These may not be related to just one factor. Learners in private schools are volunteer learners whose purpose is to learn how to speak English and they can choose their teacher. On the other hand, public school learners and teachers are not so much free in deciding on their language use, materials, etc.

Some others comments were as follows:

- "Cause the educational system is insisting on that" (a public school teacher).
- "I just speak Persian. I cannot get in touch with them through English. They don't like it" (a private school teacher).

- “Just Persian. I’m not a native speaker to speak English. Speaking is not important. Reading skill is everything” (a public school teacher).
- “English, most of the time. And the students have to express themselves in English. Speaking is important” (a private school teacher).
- “It depends. In the elementary levels they cannot speak, but in advanced levels Speaking English is a priority” (a private school teacher).

And the last issue in this regard is getting help from the advanced learners. In a cooperating situation all subjects are agents contributing to the knowledge construction, transfer and reevaluation. The traces of such cooperation are more evident in private settings (59.73 vs. 45.27) (see also teachers’ interviews and observations).

Conclusion

Of different types of authority, it can be inferred that formal settings are more inclined toward a traditional authority. The traces of bureaucratic authority can easily be seen to be complied by both groups. All teachers, as they were BA TEFL teachers, can fall in the category of having professional authority, but as all findings and teachers’ and students’ remarks show, no group lend itself to charismatic authority. Moreover the elements of influence and exchange are more dominant in informal settings than coercion.

It seems that our current pedagogy in public schools is similar to the banking concept of education put forward by Paulo Freire (1970). In such a pedagogy, the teacher teaches and the students are taught; the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; the teacher thinks and the students are thought about; the teacher talks and the students listen — meekly; the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined; the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply; the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher; the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it; the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students; and the teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

Bakhtin’s ideas about language provide theoretical tools for thinking about the complexity of the learning at hand. He also provides a toolkit for thinking about how

change comes about, how one step back from truths constructed from experience and dominant discourse and reconsiders their validity. According to his theory, this happens when inner persuasive discourse is freed from authoritative discourse to create an independent word, a reorganization of what was once held to be an indisputable truth. This is what private school teachers and students are beginning to develop. Those who promote discourse as multi-voices may find Bakhtin's two kinds of discourse as a useful foundation on which to design and measure teaching and learning environments.

In public schools in Iran, due to the historical dominance of authority, teachers resist new ways of thinking, but adolescents constantly coin new terms that characterize and define youth culture, and set it at odds with authoritative discourses. To students for whom school has not been a friendly place and in which they have not been deemed proficient or successful, the discourses they have found internally persuasive, and the identity they have crafted with and around those discourses, are not those privileged in schools (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Gilmore, 1987; Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981).

"Dialogism" conveys Bakhtin's understanding of the omnipresent and dialogical social contexts in which human beings are always "in a state of being addressed and in the process of answering" (Bakhtin, 1981; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Holquist, 1990). From such a perspective, individuals, including those in professional development and teaching situations, are always in the act of responding to the social world, and in making meaning through their responses to that world.

The implications of this research can be thought of as making schools sites for creativity, deep thinking, and the formation of whole people, sites in which all children can gain chances for success, but success defined in multiple ways, and gain the ability to critique and transform social formations in the service of creating better worlds for all. It is of necessity to establish an environment in which students work productively on the boundaries between the centripetal and centrifugal forces. Texts and contents which consider learners' needs are suggested in a way to support students in bringing their own interests and ideas to bear on challenging texts, producing their own texts in response, and combining multiple, rich, and varied forms of discourse to shape a final performance that demonstrates their understanding of a significant issue enlightened by those texts.

But creativity and advocating new ways of thinking have their own limitations. Can work in one classroom alone alter the negative effects of an overall environment that is repressive? What kinds of active, social, purposeful work will the institution tolerate? Will large secondary schools, especially those who serve poor students ever be able to treat their students as ‘resources’? Given the other demands on resources, will supporting and advocating such programs and its requirements of time, space, and human energy be viewed as cost effective? We hope this work will open new horizons for future studies following new and critical ways of thinking in the field of literacy.

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Appendix A

Student’s Questionnaire: *The Teacher-Student Discourse Relationship in the Classroom in Line with Bakhtin’s Authoritative and Internally Persuasive Discourse*

1	How much of class time is devoted to your English talks and how much to the learners talks? Just tick the proper percentages in the parentheses A. Teacher talk (0-5-10-15-20-25-30-35-40-45-50-60-65-70-75-80-85-90-95-100) B. Student talk (0-5-10-15-20-25-30-35-40-45-50-60-65-70-75-80-85-90-95-100)
2	Do you have group work? What are they?
3	What is/are the language(s) used in teaching English in your class between teacher-student, and peers? How much time is devoted to the use of that/those particular language(s)?

	A. Teacher-student language use a. English b. Persian c. Etc. B. Peers language use a. English b. Persian c. Etc.
4	How formal or informal are you class? Do you have a strict teacher giving orders or do you experience fun, humor, jokes, personal stories, etc.?
5	Does you English teacher ask you questions? Are they of different types (closed, open)? A. Teachers' questions B. Closed questions C. Open-ended questions
6	How is you distance (your relationship) with your teacher? Can you get near to him in and out of the class? A. You are far away B. Outside relationship
7	Do you have any proper facilities used in the class? What are they and how is their arrangement? Are you satisfied and comfortable? A. Having facilities
8	Do you have any beginner, intermediate, or advanced students in your class, or are they all of the same level? A. Beginners B. Intermediate C. Advanced D. We get help
9	Who decides on the topics taught in the class? A. Teacher's decision B. Your decision C. Other people (syllabus designers, policy makers, etc.)
10	Do you like leaning English? How is the teacher's role in giving you more motivation? A. My interest B. Teacher's role

Note: For economy of expression, the percentages from 0 to 100 are given only in the first question above. In all other questions the percentages were put as well. This is true for the teacher's questionnaire too.

Appendix B

Teacher's Questionnaire: *The Teacher-Student Discourse Relationship in the Classroom in Line with Bakhtin's Authoritative and Internally Persuasive Discourse*

1	How much of class time is devoted to your talks and how much to the learners talks? Just tick the proper percentages in the parentheses) A. Teacher talk (0-5-10-15-20-25-30-35-40-45-50-60-65-70-75-80-85-90-95-100) B. Student talk (0-5-10-15-20-25-30-35-40-45-50-60-65-70-75-80-85-90-95-100)
2	Do you have group work? What are they?
3	What is/are the language(s) used in teaching English in your class between teacher-student, and peers? How much time is devoted to the use of that/those particular language(s)? A. Teacher-student language use a. English b. Persian c. Etc. B. Peers language use a. English b. Persian c. Etc.
4	How formal or informal are you class? Are you a strict teacher giving orders or do you share fun, humor, jokes, personal stories, etc. with your learners?
5	Do you ask you questions? Are they of different types (closed, open)? A. Teachers' questions B. Closed questions C. Open-ended questions
6	How is you distance (your relationship) with your learners? Do you get near to them in and out of the class? A. You are far away B. Outside relationship
7	Do you have any proper facilities used in the class? What are they and how is their arrangement? Are you satisfied and comfortable? A. Having facilities
8	Do you have any beginner, intermediate, or advanced students in your class, or are they all of the same level? Do you get help from the advanced learners? A. Beginners

	B. Intermediate C. Advanced D. I get help
9	Who decides on the topics taught in the class? A. Your decision B. Learners' decision C. Other people (syllabus designers, policy makers, etc.)
10	Do you like teaching English? What are the possible reasons behind having or lack of motivation? A. My interest B. Reasons