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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMPARATIVE TEXTBOOK EVALUATION: A STUDY OF IRANIAN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK AT THIRD-GRADE (INTERMEDIATE, GUIDANCE SCHOOL) ACROSS INTERNATIONAL CRITERIA <i>GholamReza Abbasnezhad</i> ¹ , <i>Ramin Rahimy</i> ² , <i>Masumeh Arjmandi</i>	10
THE EFFECT OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES ON READING COMPREHENSION AMONG IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS <i>Giti Mousapour Negari and Samineh Askani</i>	19
THE EFFECT OF PROBLEM SOLVING TASKS ON IMMEDIATE AND DELAYED RETENTION OF NEW WORDS BY EFL LEARNERS <i>Atefe Mortaji and Hamid Reza Fatemi pour</i>	30
ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT: HAS IT COME OF AGE? <i>Saeed Ayiewbey</i>	39
EFL LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CRITICAL THINKING INSTRUCTION <i>Shabnam Azarmi Movafagh and Abdorreza Tahriri</i>	45
THE EFFECT OF DOCUMENTARY SUBTITLES ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF IRANINAN EFL LEARNERS AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL <i>Behzad Barekat and Parisa Farrokhian</i>	54
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COLLABORATION AND TEACHER SELF-REGULATION DEVELOPMENT A STUDY OF IRANIAN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS <i>Amir Kaviani and Hamed Ghaemi</i>	64
CUMMING'S (2007) TEACHING APPROACH TO POETRY BASED ON THE SOCIO-CONSTRUCTIVE VIEW OF LEARNING: THE EFFECT ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' POEM COMPREHENSION <i>Sedigheh Golmohammadi and Omid Pourkalhor</i>	72
GETTING ELL STUDENTS OUT OF THEIR SHELLS: ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH WRITING <i>Ronnie E. Goodwin</i>	79
IMPLEMENTING ENGLISH STUDY IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: INVESTING IN EARLY INTERACTIVE READING AND CHILDREN LITERATURE <i>Zahra Hakimi, Seyed Jamal Abdorahimzadeh and Ali Asghar Kargar</i>	100
A SURVEY OF IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHENTIC LISTENING MATERIALS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL <i>Sepideh Homaei</i>	116
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TYPES OF DICTIONARY USED AND IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION ACCURACY <i>Fatemeh Javan Delzende, Fereidoon Vahdany and Masoomeh Arjmandi</i>	137

THE EFFECT OF PHONOLOGICAL LOOP ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY RECALL AND RETENTION <i>Zabih Ollah Javanbakht and Fatemeh Miri</i>	148
THE EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE METHODOLOGY AND ITS EFFICIENCY ON SPEAKING SKILL AT IRAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE (ILI) <i>Safie Kazempour Balagafshe, Fereidoon Vahdany and Masoomeh Arjmandi</i>	155
EMP STUDENTS' USE OF READING STRATEGIES AND THE IMPACT OF STRATEGY INSTRUCTION ON MEDICAL TEXT COMPREHENSION <i>Maryam Khoshbouie, Seyed Jamal Abdorrahimzadeh and Mohammad Amin Sorahi</i>	164
LEARNING STRATEGIES INSTRUCTION AND IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENT IN SUB-SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL <i>Mona Mahnani, Seyed Jamal Abdorrahimzadeh and Mohammad Rostampour</i>	183
THE EFFECT OF PARTNERS' GENDER DURING PEER INTERACTION ACTIVITIES ON LISTENING IN EFL CLASSES <i>Hamed Mahsefat and Roghayeh Amooyi</i>	192
THE STATUS OF TEACHING AND TESTING L2 PRAGMATICS AMONG IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS <i>Seyyed Ayatollah Razmjoo, Rahele Mavaddat and Elyas Barabadi</i>	197
THE IMPACT OF ETYMOLOGICAL INSTRUCTION ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION OF IDIOMS IN SHORT READING TEXTS <i>Maryam Danaye Tous, Abdorreza Tahriri and Toktam Miri</i>	208
THE EFFECT OF MULTI-MEDIA AND MULTI-MODE GLOSSES ON INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY RETENTION OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS <i>Zhaleh Moazzeni, Mohammad Sadegh Bagheri, Firooz Sadighi and Mostafa Zamanian</i>	219
USING ILLUSTRATIVE DEVICES AND EFL LEARNERS' WRITING SKILL <i>Mojdeh Shirvani and Massoud Tajadini</i>	234
THE INTERACTIVE NATURE OF LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE, READING COMPREHENSION AND READING STRATEGIES IN IRANIAN EFL CLASSES <i>Mohammad Reza Talebinezhad, Ahmad Molavi and Hosein Hoseini</i>	239
REVISITING ETHICS IN IRANIAN LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM: AN IGNI FATUUS! <i>Nima Shakouri and Ogholgol Nazari</i>	248
IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE CONSEQUENTIAL VALIDITY OF THEIR RATINGS OF COLLEGE TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS <i>Hakimeh Pourjamal and Seyyedeh Susan Marandi</i>	255
THE EFFECTS OF COGNITIVE AND META-COGNITIVE STRATEGIES TRAINING ON ENHANCING VOCABULARY STORAGE OF IRANIAN STUDENTS <i>Mehran Rahimpour</i>	266
GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY THROUGH CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON DIALOGUE JOURNAL <i>Narges Rezaeizad, Abbas Moradan and Golnaz Peyvandi</i>	273

TOWARD LEARNER-CENTERED READING: LINKING EFL LEARNERS' AUTONOMY, VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES, AND READING COMPREHENSION <i>Mania Nosratinia, Rosa Salehi Gourabsari and Elnaz Sarabchian</i>	283
THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WEBSTER'S "DADDY LONG LEGS" TRANSLATION FOR PUBLICATION AND ANIMATION: INSIGHT FROM VAN DIJK 'S IDEOLOGY FRAMEWORK OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS <i>Leila Sharifi and Amin Karimnia</i>	293
A SURVEY ON THE LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY OF GILAKI IN CITIES OF RASHT AND SOWME'EH SARA <i>Ahmadreza Shoa Hasani and Maryam Adelifar</i>	301

COMPARATIVE TEXTBOOK EVALUATION: A STUDY OF IRANIAN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK AT THIRD-GRADE (INTERMEDIATE, GUIDANCE SCHOOL) ACROSS INTERNATIONAL CRITERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to evaluate and analyze the English textbook at third-grade intermediate Guidance school across international criteria, opinions of English teachers and the researcher. The research consists of two parts: the first part, analyzing textbook at third-grade intermediate Guidance school and second part, taking the questionnaire to 60 English teachers are working in the east of Guilan. The researcher evaluated and analyzed the textbook at third-grade intermediate Guidance school and got different ideas about this book from English teachers in Langroud, Roudsar, Kelachay and Chaboksar, then after a completely research the researcher analyzed using Chi Square (χ^2) via SPSS software. The data analysis revealed that the hypotheses of the study are proved. The results indicated that this textbook did not conform to international criteria and the ideas of teachers about this textbook were negative.

KEYWORDS: Textbook, Third-grade intermediate, English Teachers, East of Guilan, International Criteria

Introduction

The relation between textbooks and language teaching is not something which has only recently been commented on. It has a long history because the quality of teaching and learning has always been of interest to all people in general. Keeping this source up-to-date requires educational materials receive evaluation and revision time and again.

Sheldon (1988), cited in Abdollahi(2001) has offered several reasons for textbook evaluation. He suggests that the selection of a language textbook often signals an important administrative and educational decision. A thorough evaluation, therefore, would enable the managerial and teaching staff of an institution to discriminate between all of the available textbooks on the market.

Moreover, it could aid in identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use. Interchange third edition has also been evaluated according to Littlejohn's framework in another study by Sahragard, Rahimi, and Zaremoayyedi (2009), cited in Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012). The study was set to find out the values of the newest version of Interchange in particular, the correspondence between the newly developed and widely used Interchange textbooks, third edition, and their stipulated objectives, and the strengths and weaknesses of the series. The findings of their study indicated that the Interchange series (third edition) owns several pedagogical values nonetheless, it suffers from certain drawbacks. The tasks of the series can be considered productive with regard to promotion of communicative competence and are promoting in

that they give learners the opportunity to personalize the newly learnt pieces of language through production. On the other hand, the series lack of auditory and visual activities could render disadvantage since it does not exploit sensory channels in the course of learning.

Hutchinson and Torres (1994, pp. 232) identify three ways in which textbooks can help in times of educational change: first as a vehicle for teacher and learner training; second, they provide support and relief from the burden of looking for materials; and third they give a complete image of what the change will look like. Evaluation of textbooks is also considered to function as a kind of educational judgment. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, pp. 96) believe evaluation is a matter of judging the fitness of something for a particular purpose.

The innovative aspect of the current study lies in the fact that it can be considered a mild contribution in the latest theories and models of teaching textbook to the speaker of other languages. This includes the technique of discussion in the classroom which is supposed to lead to a evaluation and analysis way of teaching textbook. Another aspect of the results of such a study is that it seems to be more practical and compatible to an Iranian situation of foreign language learning particularly for those who encounter problems regarding their attitude.

Theoretical framework

There is a vast body of literature on textbook evaluation in different contexts; different authors and researchers have employed different textbook evaluation schemes or checklists to evaluate different textbooks or materials. Litz (2000), for example, tried to evaluate a textbook called English Firsthand 2 (EF2). He came to the conclusion that EF2 is a relatively new addition to the vast array of ELT materials that are currently available on the market. While perhaps not as well known as other prominent series of textbooks, EF2 has many notable and worthwhile characteristics. For example, the entire textbook package is well conceived and it contains a wide variety of useful supplementary materials. The book is also very attractive and organized in a clear, logical, and coherent manner. In addition, EF2 reflects a multi-skills syllabus, and it manages to integrate the four language skills without neglecting other important aspects of ELT such as vocabulary development. Despite its strengths, EF2 had some shortcomings. Many of the activities, for instance, were repetitive, failed to encourage truly meaningful practice, promote realistic discourse, lead to the internalization of language. There is a vast body of literature on textbook selection and evaluation in an EFL setting. These studies mainly revolve around the exploitation of textbook evaluation checklists.

Kayapinar (2009), cited in Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012) for example, in evaluation study of two textbook packages, namely, opportunities and New English File incorporating 134 teacher's survey results, points out that there is not an overall positive view of the aforementioned course book packages among teachers and the course books must be adapted in a way to meet learners' needs and interest at nationwide scope. He suggests that the materials used in the teaching process should be evaluated on a regular basis to be kept renewed.

Statement of the problem

Tomlinson (1998) a textbook provides the core materials for a language-learning course. It aims to provide as much as possible in one book and is designed so that it could serve as the only book which the learners necessarily use during a course. Such a book usually includes work on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Richards 1998, cited in Aytug (2002) Teachers, students, and textbooks are among the main elements of foreign or second language classrooms. For many years, the two elements, teachers and students and their roles were investigated thoroughly, but less attention was given to the issues regarding textbooks. However, in most cases, textbooks represent the hidden curriculum of the language studies in a certain program or country. For this reason, they play an important role for obtaining information about the likely teaching and learning practices of a particular school, program or institution.

Textbooks play an important part in the instruction process. The most popular textbooks in schools are series for all school levels to ensure a logical flow and normal progression of lesson difficulty. They consist of detailed materials on current topics and are designed to facilitate language development and knowledge

acquisition. Most teachers can choose their textbooks so that they match the objectives of their course and meet the learning needs of their students.

Litz (2000) English language instruction has many important components but the essential constituents to ESL/EFL classrooms and programs are the textbooks and instruction materials that are often used by language instructors. The preparation of any textbook requires a systematic evaluation. In order to reflect the aims of the curriculum, a number of factors should be taken into consideration. Among these factors, teachers' thoughts and experiences are valuable while preparing a textbook for a certain group or community. While designing and organizing foreign language textbooks, the situation is similar. Moreover, language teachers' observations and thoughts about the students' learning process are important because language learning is process-oriented and requires a considerable amount of time (Aytug, 2007).

Garinger (2001) states that textbooks play a pivotal role in language classrooms in all types of educational institutions, public schools, colleges, and language schools all over the world.

Hypothesis of the study

- H¹: English textbook at third-grade intermediate does not conform to international criteria.
- H²: The idea of English teachers is negative about this textbook.

Review of the literature

Curriculum, "the courses offered by an educational institution; a set of courses constituting an area of specialization" (Merriam-Webster, 2003). Alongside with aforementioned definition extracted from Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, curriculum development includes a variety of activities around the creation of planned curriculum, pedagogy, instruction. Researchers in defining curriculum development believe, it as comprehensive, ongoing, cyclical process "to determine the needs of a group of learners; to develop aims or objectives for a program to address those needs; to determine an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods, and materials; and to carry out an evaluation of the language program that results from these processes" (Richards, 2001, cited in Rahimy, 2010). *Textbook* is defined as a comprehensive learning resource that is in print or electronic form, or that consists of any combination of print, electronic, and non-print materials collectively designed to support a substantial portion of the Ontario curriculum expectations for a specific grade and subject in elementary school or for a course in secondary school, or a substantial portion of the expectations for a learning area in the Ontario Kindergarten program. Such a resource is intended for use by an entire class or group of students.

Hutchinson (1987) defines evaluation as a "matter of judging the fitness of something for a particular purpose" (p.41). While considering the evaluation process in language teaching, mostly, the initial analyses are conducted to understand whether the textbook fits into the official curriculum or the intended language program. Moreover, the textbook should meet the needs of the students by addressing their interests and abilities and it should also be consistent with the teaching style of a teacher (Grant, 1987).

Mc Donough and Shaw (1993) suggest an external analysis of the textbook and this analysis initiates the examination of the information given about the textbook on the cover of students' or teachers' book and what is indicated in the introduction and table of contents.

Further, they provide specifications for external evaluation and the leading aim is to determine the real function of a specific textbook since it is essential to find out whether they are used as main course materials or as supplementary sources. A teachers' book is necessary and it should be available moreover, the textbook should include vocabulary lists. Other purposes of an external evaluation are to investigate a clear layout, culturally appropriate materials, adequate representations of different countries and societies. The materials should also be checked thoroughly since they may reflect a negative attitude towards women and minority groups in the materials. Additionally, it is also important to investigate what kind of tests (diagnosis, progress, or achievement) is included in teaching materials and these tests need to be appropriate and useful in a particular language setting. The selection of a course book is one of the most important decisions a teacher will make in shaping the content and nature of teaching and learning. It involves matching the material against the context in which it is going to be used, following the aims of the teaching program, as well as fitting the personal methodology of the teacher. Cunningsworth (1984) asserts, "course materials for English should be seen as the

teacher's servant and not his master" (p. 15). Using textbooks only is not enough to meet students' needs. Instructors need to strike a balance between creative instruction and being a slave to their texts (Garinger, 2002). The problem, however, is when external pressures lead teachers into using particular ways to teach prescribed textbooks. Indeed, teachers must not be slaves to their texts, but it is usually the case that they have little choice because of social demands largely due to the pedagogical culture of the specific ELT classrooms.

In Iran, educational policies are decided primarily by the central government. All of the decisions made by the central government are passed down through provincial organizations for implementation at lower levels which have less authority in decision-making. All major educational policies concerning the school systems, the curriculum standards, the compilation of textbooks, the examination system and so on, are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (ME). According to Jahangard (2007), students' aural and oral skills are not emphasized in Iranian prescribed EFL textbooks. They are not tested in the university entrance examination, as well as in the final exams during the three years of senior high school and one year of pre-university education.

Methodology

Participants

In this study, the participants were 60 male and female TEFL instructors who had enough experience in teaching ELT, they taught in Guidance schools; their age 30 to 50, most of them had B.A degree, they were reside in the east of Guilan (Roudsar, Langroud, Kelachay and Chaboksar). The research consists of two parts: the first part, analyzing Iranian English textbook at third-grade intermediate Guidance school which prepared by ministry of education and second part, taking 60 English teachers ideas are working in the east of Guilan. Textbooks at third-grade intermediate and 60 Guidance school English teachers were selected as the sample.

Materials

In order to carry out this research, it was necessary to have a questionnaire for 60 English teachers, so there was a need to evaluate Iranian English textbook at third-grade intermediate Guidance school. The questionnaire was included in content, pictures, Grammar, vocabulary and drills which was consisted of 30 questions; the administration of the questionnaire was at the beginning of Mehr month which lasted a month to be done.

Procedure

This research is done by English teachers intermediate Guidance school in the east of Guilan (Langroud, Roudsar, Kelachay and Chaboksar). Current study carried on teachers consisted of female (34) and male (26) who had high experience in teaching.

The goal of the study was evaluated Iranian English third-grade intermediate textbook, after a short time a questionnaire was given, choosing 30 questions for 60 English teachers lasted around 15 minutes on teacher's side, the questions were designed according to the content, pictures, grammar, vocabulary and all aspects of the textbook. The teachers were selected randomly. Researcher, by taking a questionnaire to some teachers tried to gather their ideas about Iranian English third-grade intermediate text book. By providing these data, researcher analyzed each item carefully and with more sensitivity to get valuable results, then the researcher compared the textbook across international criteria was written by Garinger. They included:

A. Program and Course

- 1- The textbook supports the goals and curriculum of the program.
- 2- The appropriateness of the text for the intended learners is identified.
- 3- A sufficient number of the course objectives are addressed by the textbook.
- 4- The textbook was suitable for learners of this age group and background.
- 5- The textbook reflects learners' preferences in terms of layout, design, and organization.
- 6- The textbook should be sensitive to the cultural background and interests of the students.
- 7- The objectives of the textbook matched with the objectives of the course.

B. Skills

- 8- The skills presented in the textbook was appropriate to the course.

- 9- The textbook provides learners with adequate guidance as they are acquiring these skills.
- 10- The skills that presented in the textbook include a wide range of cognitive skills that will be challenging to learners.

C. Exercises and Activities

- 11- The exercises and activities in the textbook promote learners' language development.
- 12- There is a balance between controlled and free exercises.
- 13- The exercises and activities reinforce what students have already learned and represent a progression from simple to more complex.
- 14- The exercises and activities varied in format so that they will continually motivate and challenge learners.
- 15- The exercises and activities in the textbook contribute to learners' language acquisition.
- 16- The exercises balanced in their format, containing both controlled and free practice.
- 17- The exercises are varied and challenging.

D. Practical Concerns

- 18- The textbook is available.
- 19- The textbook can be obtained in a timely Manner.
- 20- The textbook is cost-effective.

Data Analysis

The research consists of two parts: the first part, analyzed Iranian English textbook at third-grade intermediate Guidance school which repapered by ministry of education and second part, took questionnaire to 60 English teachers were working in the east of Guilan which interpreted by Chi Square (χ^2) via SPSS software provided by descriptive statistics. The goal of current study was to investigate the analysis of English textbook at third-grade intermediate Guidance school. This study is formed both qualitative and quantitative research. In brief it should be mentioned that after analyzing the textbook and elaborating the questionnaire, these data are carried out.

Data analysis and findings

The Descriptive Analysis of the Data

Descriptive statistics is the discipline of quantitatively describing the main features of a collection of data. It aims to summarize a sample, rather than use the data to learn about the population that the sample of data is thought to represent. Actually it deals with analyzing, describing and interpreting the textbook. Descriptive analysis of the obtained data of the questionnaire which has been calculated by SPSS is presented below. The researcher analyzed all aspects of this textbook.

Using CD, software and video for better learning in spelling and practicing the words. Textbook emphasis on writing and grammar and do not pay attention to the speaking.

Textbook should be had workbook.

Conversations are intangible.

Sentences are irrelevant to everyday life.

The volume of the book is good.

The explanations of the grammar are good.

The font of the textbook is appropriate.

Readings should be consisted of beautiful pictures and better questions.

Pictures are childish mode.

Pictures and text conversation lessons seem unrealistic.

There is no entertainment in the book.

There are no CD and tape in this book.

Some exercises and conversations are not applied.

It is better to insert proverb according to our culture in the book.

Table 4.1. Question 1

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	15	15.0	.0
Disagree	43	15.0	28.0
Strongly agree	1	15.0	-14.0
Strongly disagree	1	15.0	-14.0
Total	60		

This table reveals that 73.33 percent agree that the content of the textbook has a lot of problems.

Table 4.2. Question 2

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	14	20.0	-6.0
Disagree	45	20.0	25.0
Strongly disagree	1	20.0	-19.0
Total	60		

This table reveals that 76.66 percent agree that the content of each lesson is not interesting.

Table 4.3. Question 3

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	27	15.0	12.0
Disagree	27	15.0	12.0
Strongly agree	4	15.0	-11.0
Strongly disagree	2	15.0	-13.0
Total	60		

This table reveals that 48.88 percent disagree that appropriate training with regard To the content of each lesson is included.

Table 4.4. Question 4

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	15	20.0	-5.0
Disagree	44	20.0	24.0
Strongly disagree	1	20.0	-19.0
Total	60		

This table reveals that 75 percent agree that this textbook has not an appropriate flexibility.

Table 4.5. Question 5

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	9	15.0	-6.0
Disagree	38	15.0	23.0
Strongly agree	11	15.0	-4.0

Strongly disagree	2	15.0	-13.0
Total	60		

This table reveals that 66.66 percent agree that this textbook should have a workbook.

Table 4.6. Question 6

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	19	15.0	4.0
Disagree	36	15.0	21.0
Strongly agree	1	15.0	-14.0
Strongly disagree	4	15.0	-11.0
Total	60		

This table reveals that 66.66 percent agree that this textbook has not a lot of colorful pictures.

Table 4.7. Question 7

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	9	15.0	-6.0
Disagree	45	15.0	30.0
Strongly agree	1	15.0	-14.0
Strongly disagree	5	15.0	-10.0
Total	60		

This table reveals that 83.33 percent agree that the pictures of this Textbook is not fascinating.

Table 4.8. Question 8

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	41	15.0	26.0
Disagree	14	15.0	-1.0
Strongly agree	2	15.0	-13.0
Strongly disagree	3	15.0	-12.0
Total	60		

This table reveals that 28.33 percent disagree that the pictures are not interrelated with the text of the lesson.

Table 4.9. Question 9

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agree	4	20.0	-16.0
Disagree	46	20.0	26.0
Strongly disagree	10	20.0	-10.0
agree			
Total	60		

This table reveals that 93.33 percent agree that this textbook should have an educational CD.

After a long research the researcher observed that this textbook is taught in Iran, had some problems in goals and did not conform to Garinger's criteria .some items in programs, courses, skills, exercises and activities did not match with this textbook.

4.2. Result of Hypothesis Testing

In this section the result of hypothesis testing is presented and explained. Flashing back to the first chapter of the study, the question and the hypotheses of study are reviewed as below:

RQ: Does English textbook at third-grade intermediate conform to international criteria?

RQ: Is the idea of English teachers negative about this book?

H₁: English textbook at third-grade intermediate does not conform to international criteria

H₂: The idea of English teachers is negative about this textbook.

These two hypotheses of the study which connoted the English textbook at third-grade intermediate does not conform to international criteria and the idea of English teachers is negative about this textbook is proved ability are proved. Some evidences came to justify the proof of these hypotheses. First, the researcher mentioned some points about this textbook, it showed that it had full of problems. Second evidence to justify the proof of the hypothesis was the questionnaires calculated by SPSS showed that the ideas of teachers are negative about this textbook. Third, this textbook is completely different with the international criteria wrote by Garinger.

General discussion

Many studies have been investigated around the topic in realm of evaluation and programs designed to make better. When the teachers at a school select new material to use in their teaching, they have to carefully examine that material to make sure that it is suitable for their particular school setting. In this examination they have to take a number of different aspects into consideration, for example the age and proficiency level of the students, what language factors that the students need to learn, the course syllabus and so on. The traditional textbook, as we see it, usually consists of a number of lessons with different text, theme, grammar, vocabulary for every lesson. In this study the researcher analyzed Iranian English textbook at third-grade intermediate Guidance school according to his personal ideas, then the researcher took a questionnaire to 60 English teachers in east of Guilan and they answered them and at the end of research the researcher compared this textbook with international criteria was written by

Garinger, the researcher believed that this textbook was far from of international criteria and some criteria did not observe in this textbook and teacher's ideas about this textbook did not seem positive.

Bear in mind that the proposed hypotheses of the study are proved. To be more focused on the issue, the proposed hypotheses are reviewed once more:

H₁: English textbook at third-grade intermediate does not conform to international criteria.

H₂: The idea of English teachers is negative about this textbook.

Considering the analysis provided in chapter four, it is true that it does not conform to international criteria and this textbook due to some points such as goal, curriculum, need; motivation and so on did not satisfy the students and teachers needs.

As it was indicated in this study, there were many criteria to support the claim of current study. The findings of the study demonstrated that manipulating some aspects of curriculum/syllabus and adding some more teaching material and offering the learners the strategies needed to cope with the issues they are needed to confront, could result in selecting and teaching the favorite textbook by teachers and make progress to the students. For example, (Nunan 1991: 209) Effective evaluation relies on asking appropriate questions and interpreting the answers to them. (Cunningsworth, 1995). According to Cunnings worth (1995), it is necessary to consider a number of practical considerations for textbook evaluation such as the durability and attractiveness of the physical appearance of the textbook and the easiness in obtaining the textbook package in a short period of time.

Suggestions for further research

Based on the results and the limitations of the current research, recommendations can be made for future research to get a clear insight for textbook in which what manipulations and in what way and degree should be considered in order to evaluate Iranian English textbook. The students evaluated the features of the English textbook, For further research, another study would be carried out with students as they would reflect their opinions concerning the efficacy of the English textbook and the other concerned people taking active roles in the preparation period of the textbook. In this study, individual interviews were carried out with teachers and they reflected their suggestions for an ideal ELT textbook. Future research can also focus on finding out both teachers' and students recommendations by conducting focus group interviews in order to find out the common and different suggestions of teachers and students.

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THE EFFECT OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES ON READING COMPREHENSION AMONG IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study seeks to determine the effect of explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies on Iranian EFL female students' reading comprehension at high school level. It also aims to investigate whether high school students have any improvement in their application of the metacognitive strategies in their reading comprehension. It also attempts to investigate the relationship between reading comprehension and metacognitive strategies; furthermore it will study whether Iranian EFL female high school students are high, medium, or low metacognitive strategy users. To this end, 70 female students who studied in high school were selected. The required data was collected by using (1) a proficiency test, (2) a self-report questionnaire, and (3) a reading comprehension test. Data analysis proved no significant relationship between metacognitive strategies and Iranian EFL female students' reading comprehension at high school level. While, it emphasized the role of explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies on Iranian EFL female students' reading comprehension at high school level. The present study also revealed a significant difference among the level of metacognitive strategy use among high school students and indicated its participants to be low, mid, and high metacognitive strategy users. The results of this study can be beneficial for language teachers, syllabus designers and language learners.

KEYWORDS: Metacognitive strategies, Reading Comprehension, Explicit Instruction, High, mid, or low Metacognitive users.

1. Introduction

Teaching reading strategies to learners is not a normal practice in Iranian language classrooms i.e., Iranian language instructors hardly ever provide language learners with explicit instruction about utilizing comprehension strategies while reading. Therefore, classroom practice does not always prepare learners to use skills and strategies to forecast, deduce, examine, agree, criticize, and evaluate by interacting with the given text. Language teachers usually restrict themselves to holding question-and-answer sessions to elicit answers, which obviously do not develop any meaningful and critical engagement between the given reading comprehension and the learners, the learners and the teacher or the reading and the teacher. Pedagogical implications of the obtained results of this study would initially shed light on the importance of the explicit instruction of metacognitive reading strategies in ESL and EFL classes and then would highlight the vitality of reading as a process rather than a solid product and significance of learners determining their own reading objectives, ways of achieving them, and evaluating their own process by the use of metacognitive strategies.

1.2 Explicit Teaching of Metacognitive Reading Strategies

Reading comprehension can be defined as the process of understanding and constructing meaning from a piece of text on which the writer encodes thought as language and the reader decodes language to thought. Richards and Schmidt (2002) believe that recognizing a written text in order to understand its contents is called reading comprehension (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). In order to read thoroughly it is vital to apply reading strategies

since they enhance reading proficiency and perception (Cheng, 1985). Brantmeier (2002) states that reading strategies are applied to comprehend a text can be defined as the cognitive processes applied to process second language input.

Oxford (1990) viewed learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (p.8). In Oxford’s taxonomy, metacognitive strategies are grouped under indirect strategies and embrace centering learning, arranging and planning learning, and evaluating learning. In Richards and Schmidt’s (2002) view, metacognitive strategies are considered also as a category of learning strategies which “involve thinking about the mental processes used in the learning process, monitoring learning while it is taking place, and evaluating learning after it has occurred” (p.329). Phakiti (2006) believes that metacognitive strategy enhances and improves reading comprehension. Phakiti (2003) mentions that metacognitive strategies are the mental behaviors employed to control cognitive strategy use and have an effective performance.

The process of explicit instruction is one in which the teacher instead of simply presenting the strategies and waiting for learners to learn and use them, must actively teach the strategy to be learned. This type of instruction is a definite and direct approach to teaching and includes both instructional design and delivery procedures. Archer and Hughes (2011) believe in explicit instruction as one of the best tools available to educators to maximize students’ academic growth. They define it as “a structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills” (p.1) which is characterized by some supports or scaffolds and by which learners are provided with “clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback” (p.1) on the learning process till self-regulating mastery is obtained (Archer and Hughes, 2011).

In Mayer and Wittrock’s opinion (1996), it is vital for learners to learn when to use various cognitive processes, to be aware of their processes, to monitor their cognitive processes, and to regulate their cognitive processes and that necessitates an instructional implication of the metacognitive regulations (as cited in Philip & Hua, 2006). Metacognitive strategy instruction (MSI), the teacher should teach how to use strategies as well as when and why strategies are used in a certain learning context and this entails teaching learners’ metacognitive knowledge and skills i.e., learners should be taught the capacity to think about one’s own thinking, and thereby to monitor and manage it (Greeno et. al. 1996, as cited in Philip & Hua, 2006). Consequently, metacognitive Strategy Instruction provides direct and informed strategy instruction for reading. In fact, reading cannot be flexible and adaptive without knowledge of when and why to apply a given strategy; therefore, strategic readers are characterized by the selection of appropriate strategies that fit the particular text, purpose, and occasion (Paris et. al. 1991).

1.3 Review of Literature

Studies investigating reading comprehension increasingly emphasize on the role of metacognitive awareness of one’s cognitive and motivational processes while reading (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995).

As a result, awareness and monitoring processes of one’s comprehension processes are critically important aspects of skilled reading and are often referred to as metacognition, which can be thought of as “the knowledge of the readers’ cognition about reading and the self-control mechanisms they exercise when monitoring and regulating text comprehension” (Mokhtari and Richard, 2002 p. 249).

Researchers investigating reading comprehension monitoring among skilled and unskilled readers have long recognized the importance of metacognitive awareness in reading comprehension because it distinguishes between skilled and unskilled readers. Vann and Abraham (1990) states that language learning strategies can be applied by both the skilled and unskilled learners, but lack of enough metacognitive strategies can make them unsuccessful (cited in Lessard-Clouston, 1997).

As previously mentioned and as might be anticipated from the definition of metacognition, the metacognitive processes involved in reading comprehension include metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive monitoring and control. Reading strategies can be classified in three clusters of metacognition: planning (pre-reading), monitoring (during reading), and evaluating (post-reading) strategies and each group has a variety of strategies that require readers’ metacognitive processing (Israel, 2007; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Self-regulated readers are actively involved in cognitive and metacognitive activities before, during and after reading and engage in

“constructively responsive reading” which involves reading with a purpose and actively constructing meanings from text (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, as cited in Kraayenoord, 2010).

reading comprehension instruction should involve focusing on comprehension of specific text rather than instruction of the metacognitive strategies students need for comprehending (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006) i.e., instead of making students involved in class, providing them with a variety of literacy materials, and modeling appropriate strategies to help with text comprehension, teachers mainly relied on textbooks and teachers’ manuals. As a result, teachers were authorities of interpretation and students would be passive recipients of knowledge. This lack of comprehension instruction persuaded researchers to carry out investigations about comprehension instruction as an essential part of primary grade reading programs. Consequently, there appeared a large number of studies which sought to make language learners familiar and comfortable at using a variety of different reading comprehension strategies, some of which would be briefly discussed in what follows.

Takallu (2011) aimed at examining the effect of metacognitive (planning & self-monitoring) strategy instruction on EFL learners’ reading comprehension performance (on authentic and inauthentic texts) and their metacognitive awareness. Data analysis revealed that two experimental groups which received instruction on ‘planning’ and ‘self-monitoring’ outperformed the control group on the reading comprehension test. In addition, the achieved results proved that experimental groups’ awareness to metacognitive strategies significantly increased after instruction. Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) examined the existing differences in awareness of metacognitive strategies among ESL and native English speakers. The findings revealed that both ESL and native English readers in the more advanced groups were applying metacognitive strategies more often than those who were in the less advanced groups. Moreover, among ESL and native English readers, ESL learners applied metacognitive strategies more often. Overall, the study supported the effectiveness of using metacognitive strategies for both types of learners. The study also showed a correlation between high-proficiency students and the high frequency use of the strategies. Jafari and Ketabi (2012) in their study examined the relationship between metacognitive strategy instruction and reading comprehension improvement. They sought to investigate the effects of metacognitive strategies on enhancing reading comprehension in Iranian intermediate learners of English. The result indicated a significant difference between the two groups and the participants in experimental group outperformed those in control group. The achieved conclusions also revealed that it would be beneficial if participants were introduced metacognitive strategies to help them improve their reading comprehension. If students tried to exploit the learning styles and the strategies aforementioned discussed, they could help themselves enhance their reading comprehension ability more easily. The findings of this study supported this assumption and imply more attention in this crucial skill. The findings also implied that not only at the level being studied but at the other levels it seems to be beneficial to encourage the participants to apply metacognitive strategies.

As the above mentioned studies show, intervention for metacognitive strategies is advantageous for EFL/ESL learners and in general, learning what strategies are, how to use them, when and where to use particular strategies, and the importance of evaluating their use is, therefore, key to the development of reading comprehension for students whose first language is not English. Therefore, the present study tries to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between metacognitive strategies and Iranian EFL female student’s reading comprehension at high school level?
2. Does explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies have any significant effect on Iranian EFL female students’ reading comprehension at high school level?
3. Are Iranian EFL female high school students’ high, medium or low metacognitive strategy users?

To do the current research, the following hypotheses were then formulated:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between metacognitive strategies and Iranian EFL female students’ reading comprehension at high school level.

Ho2: Explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies doesn’t have any significant effect on Iranian EFL female student’s reading comprehension at high school level.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Participants of this study consisted of 70 female students who studied in high school. They were studying science at the 4th grade of high school. The age ranged from 18 to 19 years old. The participants were randomly divided into two groups of 35. The first group (Group A), were regarded as the control group and the second (Group B) were considered as the experimental group. Both groups had finished the English course of the 3rd grade of high school successfully and were going to finish that of the 4th grade's. The 4th grade's English course was taught by the researcher of the present study; therefore, the participants were her students.

2.2. Instruments

Three instruments were used in the present study: (1) a proficiency test, (2) a self-report questionnaire, and (3) a reading comprehension test.

In order to check homogeneity of participants regarding their language proficiency, Beginner Proficiency Test, developed by William Bertrand was administered initially and the participants were given 90 minutes to answer the questions. The proficiency test contained 100 multiple-choice items which assessed the participants' grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and pronunciation (See Appendix A). The reliability of the proficiency test was found to be 0.76 (Taghavi, 2013). It was considered an acceptable reliability, since according to Cohen (1977) and Nunnally (1978), reliabilities around 0.70 are acceptable level for early stages of basic research. To ensure the content validity of the test, the comments of some experts strongly confirmed the appropriateness of the test with regard to the general objective of measuring beginners' English proficiency (Taghavi, 2013).

The questionnaire is a fifty-item 5-point Likert-scale Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaire (MSQ) intended to elicit data about the participants' metacognitive strategy use. The MSQ was originally constructed by Ahmadizadeh (2001) in the study of the use of metacognitive strategies by Iranian EFL learners between conventional and distance learning systems. It was an adaptation of Oxford's (1990) Learning Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL). The MSQ was modified by Ghodrati (2008) and six items from O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of learning strategies were added to it (See Appendix B).

The other instrument of this study was a 30-item-reading comprehension test (See Appendix C), which was devised by the researcher and by the help of books such as "Advanced Reading comprehension", "proving Reading Skills I", "Active Skills for Reading: INTRO". The comprehension test included 25 reading tests and five vocabulary ones and was supposed to be answered in 35 minutes. To assess its reliability, the comprehension test was primarily been piloted through students other than the study's participants. It was taken by 35 mathematics majored students of the same school in a pencil-and-paper format, while the participants were not provided with any explanation about questions and how to answer them and they did not have any familiarity with the questions. KR-21 was applied to obtain the reliability of the prepared comprehension test. The reading comprehension test was used as both pre-test and post-test of the study.

2.3 Procedures

To make sure that all the students are at the same level of language proficiency, a Beginner Proficiency Test was administered in the first session of the instructional period. Before the instruction begins, to assure that both groups are homogeneous, they were given the reading comprehension test as a pretest. In the same session, to find out language learning strategies used by the participants and to understand if participants are high, low or medium users of language learning strategies, both experimental and control group were required to answer Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaire (MSQ) in 60 minutes.

The session after the pretest, the teacher started to teach both groups. The determined *before, while, and after* metacognitive reading strategies (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994) were taught to the experimental group while the control group received no explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies. Each group received twelve 90-minute sessions of instruction. In the last session of the instruction, both the experimental and control groups took part in the same reading comprehension test (post-test) to assess the impact of explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies on the performance of the participants.

3. Results

The first research question of the study tries to see if there is any significant relationship between metacognitive strategies and Iranian EFL female student's reading comprehension at high school level or not. To provide an answer to this question, a Pearson correlation is run to probe any significant relationship between metacognitive strategies and Iranian EFL female student's reading comprehension ability.

Table 3.1 Pearson Correlation between Metacognitive Strategies and Reading Comprehension Ability

Reading Comprehension	Metacognitive Strategies	
	Pearson Correlation	-.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.181
	N	70

As displayed in Table 3.1, the results ($r(70) = -.16$, $P=.18 > .05$) indicate that there is not any significant relationship between the two variables. As a result, the first null-hypothesis will be confirmed.

An independent samples t-test was run to compare the experimental and control group means on the gain score. Table 3.2 shows the results.

Table 3.2: Independent t-test of Gain Score by Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Gain Score	Equal variances assumed	.127	.723	4.960	68	.000	12.143	2.448	7.257	17.028
	Equal variances not assumed			4.960	67.596	.000	12.143	2.448	7.257	17.029

As shown in Table 3.2, the results of the independent t-test ($t(68) = 4.96$, $P=.000 < .05$) proved that the experimental group significantly gained higher scores on reading comprehension test. So, it can be concluded that the explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies had a positive effect on the learners' performance. In order to calculate the magnitude of the treatment effect, Effect size (ES) was estimated. It was indicated to be $R^2_{\text{effect size}} = .51$, which according to Cohen's (1988) classification, is a large effect size. In other words, the experimental group outperformed the control group. The results can be schematically represented in Figure 3.1.

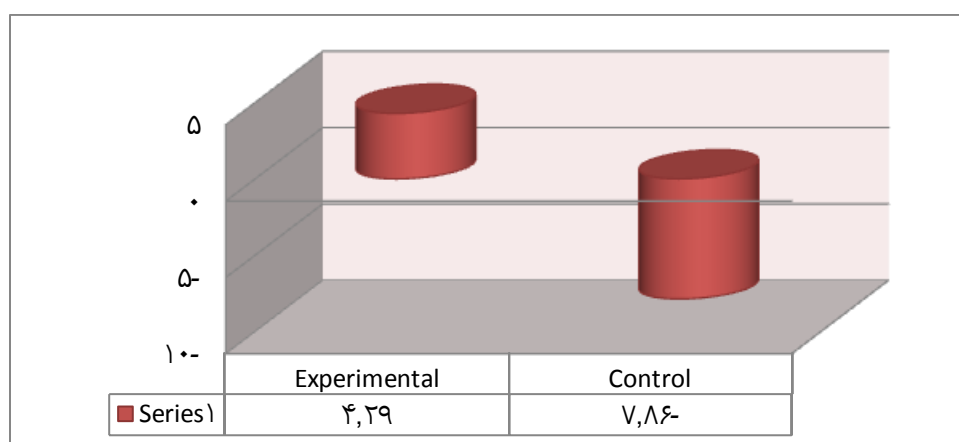


Figure 3.1: Means of Gain Score by Groups

Based on the results of the statistical procedure of independent samples t-test, it can be concluded that the second null-hypothesis is rejected.

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the low, medium and high metacognitive strategy users' means on the metacognitive questionnaire. Descriptive statistics for the three groups are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Descriptive Statistics for Metacognitive Strategy users

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Low	21	146.62	14.878	3.247	117	164
Medium	22	176.45	6.559	1.398	165	188
High	27	200.52	12.367	2.380	190	233
Total	70	176.79	25.145	3.005	117	233

As displayed in Table 3.3, the mean scores for the three groups were 146.62, 176.45 and 200.52. The standard deviation for the three groups was 14.878, 6.559, and 12.367 respectively.

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the three groups' means on the metacognitive strategy in order to prove that Iranian EFL female high school students are high, medium or low metacognitive strategy users. The results are shown in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4: One-Way ANOVA for Metacognitive Strategy Use by Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	34320.638	2	17160.319	123.533	.000
Within Groups	9307.148	67	138.913		
Total	43627.786	69			

As Table 3.4 displays, the results of one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 67) = 123.53$, $P = .000 < .05$) indicated significant differences between the means of the three groups on the metacognitive strategy use. Since ANOVA tests do not indicate how different the means are from one another, the effect size of the difference was calculated. It was found to be $\omega^2 = .77$ which, according to Cohen (1988), represented a large effect size.

Although the result from ANOVA displays significant differences among the means, $p < 0.05$, we still do not know where this difference exists. As a result, a post hoc Scheffe test was carried out to make multiple comparisons. The result from the Scheffe test is displayed in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Post-Hoc Scheffe's Test for Metacognitive Strategy by Groups

(I) Meta.Cog.User	(J) Meta.Cog.User	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Medium	Low	29.835*	3.596	.000	20.83	38.84
High	Low	53.899*	3.429	.000	45.31	62.48
	Medium	24.064*	3.385	.000	15.59	32.54

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of the post-hoc Scheffe's tests (Table 3.5) indicate that;

A: There was a significant difference between medium ($M = 176.45$) and low ($M = 146.62$) metacognitive users' means ($MD = 29.83$, $P = .000 < .05$).

B: There was a significant difference between high ($M = 200.52$) and low ($M = 146.62$) metacognitive users' means ($MD = 53.89$, $P = .000 < .05$).

C: There was a significant difference between high ($M = 200.52$) and medium ($M = 176.45$) metacognitive users' means ($MD = 24.06$, $P = .000 < .05$).

As there are differences between the means of the three groups, it can be concluded that the participants belong to three different groups of low, medium and high metacognitive users. The results are schematically shown in Figure 3.2.

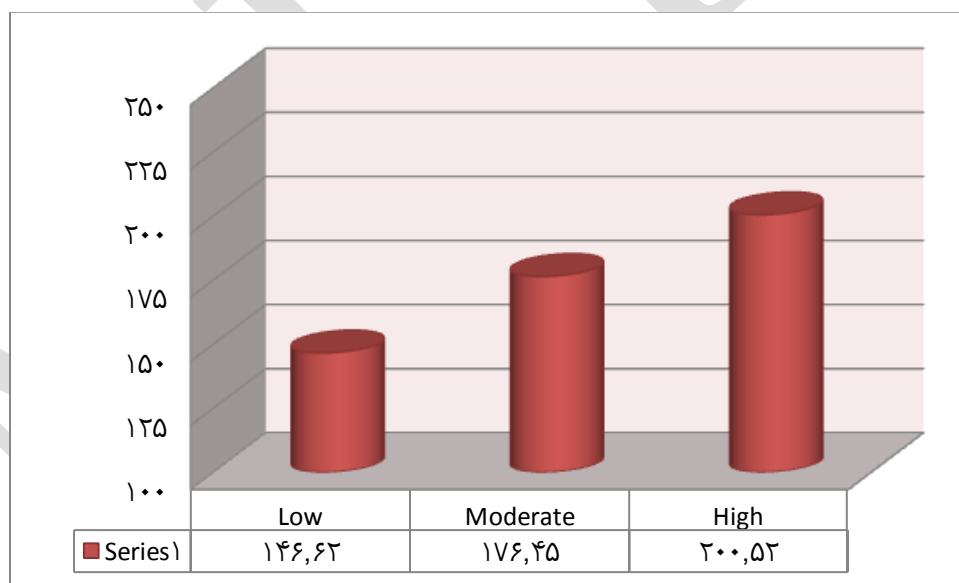


Figure 3.2 Mean Scores of three Metacognitive Strategy users

Based on the results obtained from the one-way ANOVA and Scheffe's test presented above, the third null-hypothesis as Iranian EFL female high school students are not high, medium or low metacognitive strategy users is safely rejected.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

To answer the first question, a Pearson product-moment Correlation was used. The results indicated that there was not any significant relationship between the two variables. Therefore, the null-hypothesis related to the first

question i.e., there was no significant relationship between metacognitive strategies and Iranian EFL female students' reading comprehension at high school level, was supported. The derived results of this study are in accord with that of Alsamadani's (2009), who studied the relationship between using reading strategies and reading comprehension among Saudi college L2 learners and could not find any significant relationship between their reading comprehension and strategy use. Anderson (1991) also studied differences in strategy use among adult second language learners while engaged in two reading tasks and revealed no single strategy which significantly caused the success on these two reading measures.

However, such findings do not accord with the body of research history. As Kafipour and Hosseini Naveh (2011) argue, metacognitive strategies reflect learners' ability to find opportunities to learn and then record and review those experiences. As they describe, metacognitive strategies include "monitoring, decision-making, and assessment of one's advance" and "help learners to specify suitable vocabulary learning strategies for learning new words" (p. 630). Many studies put an increasing emphasis put on the role of applying metacognitive strategies while reading and believe that the ability to examine one's comprehension process is the indispensable aspect of skilled reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, as cited in Shokouhi & Jamali, 2013 and Carrell, 1995; Wenden, 2001; Chamot, 2005 as cited in Zhang & Seepho, 2013). In agreement with such studies, Karami & Hashemi (2012) discovered a significant relationship between reading comprehension and metacognitive reading strategy use of language learners in their study. They asserted that "the more L2 learners employ metacognitive reading strategies, the more their reading comprehension level will be" (p.58). Hamdan et al. (2010) also suggested that using meta-cognitive strategies in reading comprehension plays the same role on the process of language learning. They found that using metacognitive strategies results in high levels of reading comprehension. It is worth mentioning that, despite the expanding research on different aspects of second and foreign language readings, "a limited number of studies have centered on reporting the types of metacognitive reading strategies EFL and ESL readers use while they are reading in English" (Karbalaei, 2010 p.168).

To provide answer to the second research question, an independent t-test was run to compare the experimental and control group means on the gain scores. Based on the obtained results, the experimental group significantly showed a higher gain score on reading comprehension. In consequence, the null-hypothesis related to the second question i.e., explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies have a significant effect on Iranian EFL female students' reading comprehension at high school level, was rejected. Integrating explicit instruction of language learning strategies into the language curriculum has been primarily validated by Nunan (1996) who stated that "language classrooms should have a dual focus, not only teaching language content but also on developing learning processes as well" (p. 41). Numerous studies, according to Klapwijk (2013), have shown the benefits of comprehension strategy instruction and confirmed that instruction of reading strategies improves reading comprehension (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991; Guthrie, 2002; Stahl, 2004; Scharlach, 2008; Spörer, Brunstein & Kieschke, 2009), as well as other areas related to reading, such as self control and regulating while reading (Haller, Child & Walberg, 1988; Paris, Wixson & Palincsar, 1986), metacognitive strategies in L2 test performance of low-ability groups (Purpura, 1998), and improved decoding abilities (Van den Bos, Brand-Gruwel & Aarnoutse, 1998). As a matter of fact, comprehension considerably increases when it is explicitly taught (Paris & Hamilton, 2009) i.e., teaching language learners to use reading comprehension strategies increases their comprehension of text (Pressley, 2001). Therefore, instruction of some of the learning strategies can help language learners learn more effectively (Rubin, 1975, 1981; Stern, 1975, as cited in Rahimi & Katal, 2012).

Along with the outcomes of the second research question of the present study, Snow (2002) asserts the necessity of improving comprehension via instructing reading strategies, since meaning does not exist in text and the reader should construct meaning from the text. Carrell et al. (1989) also discovered that the combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategy training was effective in improving learners' reading. Auerbach and Paxton (1997)'s research found that students' metacognition awareness could be increased after training. Anastasiou & Griva (2009) emphasized the positive effect of strategy instruction on poor readers, which could be "taught how to use strategies with explicit modeling, thinking aloud instructional strategies and a high level of scaffolding, as well as when to use them in certain learning contexts" (p.295). Also, the results of the carried study by Takallou (2011) are in line with the present study. Takallou (2011) inspected the influence of teaching

metacognitive strategies (i.e., planning & self-monitoring) and their possible effects on reading comprehension among Iranian L2 learners and indicated that the L2 learners who were instructed metacognitive strategies responded the reading comprehension test more successfully. Philip and Hua (2006) believed in explicit teaching of metacognitive reading strategies to help both high proficient and low proficient college readers with developing their comprehension skills when reading academic texts. Therefore, teaching students to utilize strategies during reading has been the focus of many studies and it has been found to affect both reading performance and strategy use of poor readers in a positive way (Anderson, 1992; Collins, 1991; Palincsar & Brown, 1987, as cited in Anastasiou & Griva, 2009). Furthermore, since "the understanding of the reading process is not limited to identifying effective and appropriate strategies, but also includes being aware of the correct reason and appropriate use of the strategies, Philip and Hua (2006) suggested that teachers guide their students to know not only the "what" of metacognitive reading, but also the "why" and the "when" of it" (Estacio, 2013). Al-Buainain (2010) recommends that more training should be given in using all strategies by embedding them into regular classroom activities.

To answer the third research question and to check if Iranian EFL female high school students' are high, medium, or low metacognitive strategy users, a One-Way ANOVA and a Post-hoc Scheffe test were applied (See Tables 4. 10 and 4.11). Based on the obtained results, there were significant differences between mean scores of low, medium and high metacognitive strategy users. Thus, the null-hypothesis related to the third research i.e., Iranian EFL female high school students are not high, medium or low metacognitive strategy users, was rejected. This result goes along with that of Al-Buainain's (2010), who discussed the type and frequency of language learning strategies used by Qatar University English majors and also showed that the students used learning strategies with high to medium frequency. It is worth mentioning that this study stands among the few investigations exploring learner's level of metacognitive strategy use. Most investigations have generally focused on metacognitive strategy use and its relationship with other different factors, such as students' gender, values and motives, their perceptions of task demands, and instruction they receive (Pintrich, 1990, as cited in Zhang & Seepho, 2013). For instance, Tajedin (2001) investigated the use of learning strategies, gender, language proficiency and learning situation. He used Oxford's (1990) eighty-item questionnaire and found that Iranian students use metacognitive strategies more frequently and affective strategies less frequently than other learning strategies. Also, he found that men and women were not different in their use of learning strategies. The relationship between metacognitive strategy use and learners' language proficiency has also been studied in different studies (e.g. Anderson, 2002; Dhieb-Henia, 2003; Dreyer & Nel, 2003; Eskey, 2005; Steinagel, 2005, as cited in Zhang & Seepho, 2013). They found that metacognitive language learning strategies are recognized as the most highly preferred and most frequently strategies used by the students with high proficiency level. A large body of research supported that more proficient learners are believed to employ a wider range of strategies more efficiently than less proficient learners (e.g. Green & Oxford, 1995; Kaylani, 1996; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Oxford, 1996; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Philips, 1991, as cited in Paul, 2012). However, in the conducted study of Al-Buainain (2010), the statistical tests showed no significant difference for proficiency on overall strategy use.

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THE EFFECT OF PROBLEM SOLVING TASKS ON IMMEDIATE AND DELAYED RETENTION OF NEW WORDS BY EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This Project Focuses On The Effect Of Problem Solving Tasks On Immediate And Delayed Retention Of New Words On Different Levels Of Learners From Starter To Advance. The Levels Of Learners Were Locally Defined, Based On The Level Of Their Book Studying. About 266 Female Learners Between The Ages Of 17-25 In Three Steps Took Part In This Study. The Study Measures The Current Vocabulary Knowledge Of Learners Through One Pretest That Was Repeated For Posttests Two Times As Immediate And Delayed Tests. The Pre and Posttests Were Corrected Based On Paribakht and Wesch (1998) Subjective Vocabulary Scale. After The Pretest Was Held, And The Researcher Was Sure That Learners, Did Not Know The Meanings Of New Words, So Then The Treatment Process Was Applied, The Vocabulary Learning Was In The Form Of Problem Solving. It Means That The Meanings Of New Words Were Guessed Through Different Examples. The Examples Were Chosen From Four Main Dictionaries (Advance Oxford Dictionary And Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 3rd Edition And Goggle Online Dictionary And Longman Advance Dictionary). The Vocabularies Were Chosen From Three Different Books, "New Cutting Edge" And "New Interchange" And 504 Words. The Results Showed That The Best Effect Of Problem Solving Tasks On Vocabulary Retention Was For Starter And Pre Intermediate Learners And The Worst Was For Advance Learners.

KEY WORDS: Problem Solving tasks, Immediate Retention, Delayed Retention, New Words

1. Introduction

Learning a new vocabulary in a foreign or second language, is one of the major and important issues in language learning, and retention of that for a longer time is another and may be more important than the first one. It has happened to most of us that we memorize a word, but can hardly remember that. How can we store the new vocabulary for longer time to remember it later? This is a question that everyone likes to know the answer for that. How many vocabularies do we need to know to learn a language? Is there any adequate number of words to talk frequently with them? Will a foreign learner of a language need to learn all the vocabulary of the new language? Even for native speakers of one language, there are some words that are unknown. It is important for both production and comprehension of a foreign language.

According to Thornburg (2002), as cited in Hashemzadeh (2012), in order to connect new knowledge (new words in context) to previous knowledge, it should be supported with exercises. According to Amiryousefie and Kassaian (2010), exercises lead the learners to a specific vocabulary item and help them understand the meanings of these words through different tasks. Webb (2007) as cited in Hashemzadeh (2012) said that "in order to remember a word, it needs to be remembered ten times in activities or texts" (p. 10). So, vocabulary items should be repeated in different exercises and activities.

2. Background of the Study

2.1. Vocabulary Learning

During the two decades, the process of vocabulary learning has been important for many researchers, (Nation, 2001; Singleton 1999) ;(Bogaards and Laufer 2004; Schmitt and McCarthy 1997; Wesch and paribakht 1999) and many other researchers. According to Ellis (2012), learning vocabulary is an "open system". [It means that it is so big in the size of "lexicon" and "depth of knowledge"]. It is not clear to say how much vocabulary is known by a learner, it is just guessed by some test like "Laufer and Nation's (1997) productive vocabulary level Test". According to Folse (2006), as cited in Hashemzadeh (2012), activities and exercises are both necessary factors to take learners' attention to a vocabulary.

2.2. Vocabulary Exercises

According to Paribakht and Wesche (1994), the vocabulary learning exercises are of 5 types:

1. Selective Attention: This type of exercise shows learners that there is a list of words to be learnt by learners.
2. Recognition: In this type of exercise the form, its family form and its meaning will be clear for learners, identifying synonyms or meanings through different choices.
3. Manipulation: how to use different suffixes and prefixes to form a word.
4. Interpretation: To make a connection among meanings of a word in text and other words
5. Production exercises: According to previous knowledge of learners they need to fill in blanks.

2.3. What Are Characteristic of a Good Vocabulary Exercise?

According to Nation (2001), characteristics are as followings:

1. The high frequency words that were seen before should be included. Prevent low frequency words as there is no much use of them.
2. Focus on useful aspects of learning burden. It has a useful learning goal.
3. Motivate back ground knowledge of learners.
4. Find the word in exercise and evaluate that.
5. Avoid words that were misinterpreted by learners.

2.4. Problem Solving

According to Martinez (1998), in history we had problem solving by Socrates, but it was ignored until 1960s, There are some forms of problem solving for teaching math and science.

According to Martinez (1998), In the process of vocabulary learning through problem solving, the meaning is considered as an answer and it is not prepared easily for them; it is done as the cognitive process and it needs the learners to have some thinking and associate words with their previous knowledge: It can be done by synonyms, antonyms or having a definition. According to Ormond (2006), problem solving activity, the existing knowledge is important as the new knowledge is associated with the previous knowledge.

For teaching in foreign language in the form of problem solving activities, a teacher can involve learners with process of problem solving, so as a teacher we should define a problem in order to make the learners think, like everyday problems, discussion of texts dealing with problems. Language problem solving is first done under teacher guidance with explanations of each step and then can be done by learners themselves. The followings questions are supposed to be answered by carrying out this research.

Q₁: Do problem-solving activities have any effect on the Iranian EFL learners' words retention?

Q₂: Is there a difference among students in words retention in different levels or not?

Q₃: which groups may have the best and the worst performance in new words retention?"

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The subjects were 254 female learners from starter to advance levels, studying of New Cutting Edge book and New Interchange book. This research was done in Azadi language school in the east of Tehran and Shokooh institute in the center of Tehran. Most of the students were local students. This research cannot be generalized to the other population or even male gender. The age of the learners was between 17 to 27years old. The learner's

first language was Persian and their nationality was Iranian. The learners' level was locally defined and based on their book's level, the learners were not homogenized, as the process of vocabulary learning over a period of time and its retention was the main aim, as the learners were asked to learn the words and be tested three times. In this research, there was no control group as we did not need that; instead we had six experimental groups from starter to advanced level. The process of vocabulary learning and retention of that was compared among these groups.

3.2. Instrument

The instruments were one pretest and two posttests, the pretest was to evaluate the learners' current level of vocabulary, to be sure that the learners did not know the vocabularies to be taught, then the instruction as a treatment was applied in the form of problem solving tasks. It means that the new words were taught in the form of some examples and the learners were going to find out the meanings of the new words in those examples, and then the guessing meaning was checked by the teacher in order to prevent bad guessing of new words and to be sure that the correct meaning was applied by learners. After the instruction finished, during two weeks, immediately a test was given, to check the learners' understanding and whether the learners remembered the words or not, this test was needed to check the performance of the learners on the first post test and whether the learners probable lack of knowledge is because of lack of understanding or memory. The pretest here is scored subjectively the same way as the two posttests.

Target words were selected from Cutting Edge book by Sarah Cunningham and Peter Moor and fifth edition of the book entitled 504 words by Barron and New Inter Interchange book by Jack C. Richards, Jonathan Hull and Susan Proctor. The new words were collected beforehand. And some more words were chosen that being tested to prevent the effect of treatment on the post test.

3.3. Procedure

In this research, there were six experimental groups; there was no control group as we wanted to compare the differences between these groups. There were 41 students in starter level, 59 in Elementary level, 31 in pre intermediate level, 54 in intermediate level and 49 in advanced level. In these groups the vocabulary learning was done through problem solving tasks and tested three times to know whether the retention of them differs through a period of time. First learners were grouped based on the level of their books from starter to advance level, their levels were locally defined. Then they were tested through one pretest and they were asked to answer words based on the Paribakht and Wesh (1998), they were asked to write number from 1 to 5 and if they chose number 3, 4 or 5, they were asked to write an example for that too. At first, these grades were explained for them in Persian, their mother tongue, to be sure that they understand the format of the test truly. The vocabularies chosen for pretest were based on new words of their books, and were available at the end of their books with the title of Mini Dictionary, Then for vocabulary problem solving, there were sentences as the examples from four dictionaries, (Advance Oxford Dictionary and Cambridge Advanced learner's Dictionary 3rd edition and Goggle online Dictionary and Longman Advance Dictionary), and gave them to students and asked them to find out the meaning based on these examples, The point that needs to be considered here is that the researcher had to take care about choosing of examples, as all examples carry the same meaning, and the examples were the same level of their book, and also examples should not contain the new word, to stop understanding. Then they tried to guess the meaning and of course the teacher had a very important role in the case that checked the learners guessing. After two weeks of instruction, the learners had the first post test and the papers were corrected based on subjective scoring of the Paribakht and Wesch (1997, p181), According to them, there are five stages or types of knowledge of words.

1. The word is not familiar at all
2. The word is familiar but the meaning is not known
3. The meaning is known in first language or second language

4. The word is used with semantic appropriateness in a sentence

5. The word is used with semantic appropriateness plus grammatical accuracy in a sentence.

The range of marks was from 0 -100. The least mark can be 0 if the learners do not answer any of them, and if the learners answer that they do not know the meaning of any of them they get 20, and if they were able to produce authentic grammatical sentences, they would get 100. The desirable mark for pretest was between 0-40, as between 0-20 means words were not familiar for learners and 20-40; it meant it was familiar for learners. And for the first posttest the desirable marks were 40-80, the most desirable mark was 80 not 100. The mark 80-100 was not expected in this research for second language learners. Then after the papers were corrected, the list of marks were prepared for analyzing data, to find out which group had the best and worst performance on the retention of words.

4. Result

4.1. The First Research Question

In order to answer the first research question, "do problem-solving activities have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' words retention?" a paired sample t-test was run to compare whole scores of the pretest and two posttests. As table 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 show, since the probability associated with their F-observed values were lower than the significant level of .05 therefore the first null hypothesis, there is no effect of problem-solving activities on the Iranian EFL learners' words retention, was rejected.

Table 4.1. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error		Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Posttest1 Pretest	-34.015	17.057	1.046		31.956	36.074	32.525	265	.000

Table 4.2. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error		Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Posttest2 Pretest	-28.955	15.382	.943		27.098	30.812	30.701	265	.000

Table 4.3. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error		Lower	Upper			

Table 4.3. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Posttest1 - Posttest2	-5.060	11.836	.726	3.631	6.489	6.973	265	.000

In order to answer the second research question, "is there a difference among students in words retention in different levels or not?" other paired sample t-tests were run to compare each group's scores of the pretest and second posttest (posttest2). As all tables show, since the probability associated with their F-observed values (0.00) were lower than the significant level of .05 therefore the second null hypothesis, there is no significant difference among students in words retention in different levels, was rejected.

Table 4.7. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pair 1	Posttest2	69.35	40	12.514	1.979
(starter)	Pretest	32.88	40	9.946	1.573

Table 4.8. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Posttest2 - pretest	-36.475	15.826	2.502	31.414	41.536	14.577	39	.000

Table 4.9. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pair 1	Posttest2	67.41	59	13.414	1.746
(elementary)	pretest	37.03	59	8.572	1.116

Table 4.10. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
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	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Interval of the Difference		Lower	Upper	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Posttest2 – pretest	30.373	15.721	2.047	26.276	34.470	14.840	58	.000		

Table 4.11. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pair 1 (pre intermediate)	Posttest2	69.00	32	15.027	2.656
	pretest	39.09	32	9.491	1.678

Table 4.12. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Interval of the Difference			
Pair 1	Posttest2 – pretest	-29.906	15.478	2.736	24.326 35.487	10.930	31	.000

Table 4.13. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pair 1 (intermediate)	Posttest2	68.78	54	14.750	2.007
	pretest	39.33	54	10.163	1.383

Table 4.14. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Interval of the Difference			
Pair 1	Posttest2 – pretest	29.444	14.836	2.019	25.395 33.494	14.584	53	.000

Table 4.15. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pair 1 (Upper)	Posttest2	58.06	32	13.944	2.465
	pretest	35.41	32	10.204	1.804

Table 4.16. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. tailed)	(2-	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean	Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
						Lower					Upper
Pair 1	Posttest2 pretest	-22.656	13.473	2.382		17.799	27.514	9.513	31	.000	

Table 4.17. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pair 1 (advanced)	Posttest2	57.29	49	13.421	1.917
	pretest	33.22	49	9.026	1.289

Table 4.18. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
				Std.	95% Confidence				
				Error	Interval of the				
		Mean	Std.	Mean	Difference				
			Deviation		Lower	Upper	T	Df	
								Sig. (2	
								tailed)	
Pair 1	Posttest2 pretest	-24.061	13.703	1.958	20.125	27.997	12.292	48	
								.000	

In order to answer the third research question, "Which groups may have the best and the worst performance in new words retention?"

By comparing the means of the six groups in the posttest2, it can be concluded that the best performances belonged to starter and pre-intermediate groups. And the worst performance belonged to advanced level. Therefore, the third null hypothesis was also rejected.

4.2. Analysis of the Vocabulary Posttest 2

After six instructional sessions, posttest 2 including a 20 from a standard proficiency test was administered to measure the effects of the treatment at the end of the study. The mean scores, standard deviation, and the skewness of the posttest2 are reported for the six groups in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics of the vocabulary Posttest 2

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
Posttest 2	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Starter	40	69.35	12.514	-.183	.374
Elementary	59	67.41	13.414	-.595	.311
Pre intermediate	32	69.00	15.027	-.717	.414
Intermediate	54	68.78	14.750	-.164	.325
Upper intermediate	32	58.06	13.944	.112	.414
Advanced	49	57.29	13.421	-.133	.340

The results of the skewness analysis (Table 4.3) again revealed that the assumption of normality was observed in the distribution of the second vocabulary posttest scores of the six groups (-.48, -1.91, -1.73, -.50, .27, -.39, all falling within the range of -1.96 and +1.96). Figure 4.5 shows the normality of the second vocabulary posttest scores.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

In this research, it was intended to have a view on the effect of problem solving tasks on the immediate and delayed retention of new words. The retention of that over a period of time was important. The results and investigation of null hypotheses previously mentioned were shown below. The research was done with six experimental groups to test the immediate and delayed retention of new words. It was found that we were successful to help the learners for immediate retention of new words, but for delayed retention, there were some factors as memory and pass of time. There was the least retention in advance group and the best retention for starter and pre-intermediate according to results obtained from the comparison of the means of the six groups in the posttest 2, it was concluded that the best performances belonged to starter and pre-intermediate groups. And the worst performance belonged to advanced level.

There was a research by Rob Waring , Notre Dame Seishen& Misako Takaki(2003),To compare the immediate and delayed retention of new vocabulary from reading a graded reader, On the immediate posttest, words seen more than 8 times were remembered most of time, but words met only four or five times were remembered only half of the time. And finally it shows that, only one word after three month can be remembered by learners, and meanings of words that repeated only fewer than eight times cannot be remembered later. So graded reading is not helpful for leaning new vocabularies but helps to enrich the previously learnt words and activate them. The results of this study are in line with this thesis result.

There was another study for retention of inferred and glossed words by (Koren 1999).This research made clear that retention of the inferred words, was much better than glossed words (meaning is given) and that incidental vocabulary learning is not very effective The retention of glossed words was four times better than that of the inferred words (33 % compared to 8%).

There was another research for the effect of Post Reading Activities on the Retention of Vocabulary. By Ilknur Istifci Andolu(2008). The learners were asked to read British and American Newspaper by Barry Baddock. The participants in experimental group read three passages, and did three types of vocabulary exercises to attract their attention, which were chosen among the tasks Paribakht and Weche(2000), used in their study, Finally the result showed that participant in experimental group could remember most words of the reading, while control group did not.

There was a research in Batumi State Pedagogical, for teaching of grammar and vocabulary in problem solving tasks .As it was mentioned in chapter two, the result of experimental group were much better than control group.

There was a research for retention of new words for children and adults.

T-test also showed that the amount of improvement was surely greater for children than for adults. So; Based on the first research, repetition is one factor that can help for remembering of a word. As mentioned in chapter two, if repetition is less than four or five times in context, the delayed retention does not occur, and if it is more than eight, it happens. One of the reasons for present study that could not get the same retention of immediate for delayed posttest can be the amount of repetition.

The second research showed that the glossed words are remembered four times better than inferred words. . As it was mentioned, if the amount of dictionary use grows, the amount of retention improves, too. The reason can be because of intervening in the process of finding the meaning, and in line with this, the problem solving does this process of intervening, too.

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ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT: HAS IT COME OF AGE?

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ABSTRACT

Alternative assessment is type of assessment practice that seeks to assess learners' language abilities, in ways other than how traditional standardized tests did. The present article reviews the issues related to alternative assessment and adopts a partly critical position regarding some of the related arguments. The advantages as well as quality concerns are discussed and a number of challenges that need to be dealt with are considered. Finally suggestions are made to ameliorate practice.

KEY WORDS: Alternative Assessment, Traditional Tests

1. Introduction

It is the common practice among students (language students or other majors) to raise their objections to their scores when they fail to get a criterion score or when they feel they have not gotten the score they deserve. Even somehow similar attitudes can be found among those who have gotten the required scores and so do not have any problem of moving on to the next level, grade, class etc. Where is the problem? Does the sheer act of taking a test and getting a score produce bitter feelings in students? Most likely no. Do they feel their abilities are underestimated? Or simply, they just want to have their scores changed for higher ones? Although the answer as to why of this customary practice is not clear, what is clear is that testing has kept open the channels that produce such judgments of inefficiency of testing from the part of test takers. If this is the case, what is the problem with tests and/or testing that results in attitudes like these? One major answer is that tests – or at least tests that are used in such situations – do not allow the students to display their full range of abilities, especially if they are language students. Individuals who sit in one corner of the test-taking hall, and provide answers for a number of questions are well excused for voicing their discontent with such tests, if the phenomenon to be tested is an ability rather than knowledge.

One way to overcome the problem referred to above, is to use methods of testing other than what has been practiced so far. In other words, practitioners are advised to try alternative forms or methods of testing; those that reach out to probe more into language learners' abilities. Alternative assessment is one solution. It is a form of assessment that claims to break away with the traditional tests, and provide a better picture of what learners can do with language. These claims are appealing. Provided that alternative assessment stands up to the claims it makes, it can be of much help to remedy the limitations of traditional tests. But, does it? It is to this that I now turn to in the following section.

2. Alternative Assessment: What is it?

From the very start the difficulties associated with alternative assessment manifest themselves. The term "alternative assessment" is suffering from a number of shortcomings. I see two problems with this label; one is the fact that this label is not used unanimously by scholars. Hamayan (1995), for example, names some of the terms that have been used by different writers, all of whom referred to alternative assessment. These terms are "alternative assessment", "informal assessment", "authentic assessment", "performance assessment", "descriptive assessment" and "direct assessment" (pp. 213). The second problem with the label is that it does not refer to a coherent group of activities that can be put together under one term as a representative (Balliro, 1993). Alternative assessment includes a variety of activities, very different in nature, aimed at generating data about individual learners. Although all of the activities share the common goal of producing information about an individual's language competence,

considering them as homogeneous with shared features is misleading. More discussion about what these activities are is provided below. Balliro (1993) also expresses the vagueness she perceives is present in the term. Further, she proposes the use of the term *congruent assessment* instead, which captures the "...process by which the assessment fits the goals of the adult education program, pp. 560".

Whatever label is used, alternative assessment does appear to have the consensus of scholars about what the *notion* refers to. The *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* defines alternative assessment as: "various types of assessment procedures that are seen as alternatives or complements to traditional standardized testing, pp. 23". As such, alternative assessment can be taken to refer to a group of procedures that aim to evaluate a learner's overall performance. Hamayan (1995) gives a role to "the context of instruction" and relates alternative assessment to the daily activities of the school or classroom (pp. 213). A variety of procedures have been suggested in the literature. Huerta-Macías, (2002), for example, includes in her list such practices as checklists of student behaviors or products, journals, reading logs, videos of role-plays, audiotapes of discussions, self-evaluation questionnaires, work samples, and teacher observations or anecdotal records. The list and its inclusion of very disparate activities implies that whatever source that yields data about a learner's competence is pertinent. These data are used to evaluate the learner's language ability.

3. Advantages

Proponents of alternative assessment postulate a number of advantages for it. The most noticeable and promising of those advantages is that alternative assessment provides a more thorough picture of a learner's abilities, achievements and weaknesses, than did multiple-choice tests (Aschbacher, 1991; Hamayan, 1995; Huerta-Macías, 2002). Unlike traditional paper-and-pencil tests that give limited information about individuals' theoretical knowledge of grammar and usage only, alternative assessment allegedly taps into what the learner is able to do as a result of instruction. The use of multiple sources of information is appealing, as it takes into account both knowledge and ability, and there does not appear to be any objections to the very idea, since it has been established that communicative competence is composed of many delicate knowledge components with intricate interactions within, and a simple sheet of questions is unable to reflect such a complicated web of knowledge.

One other merit of alternative assessment which is related to the one just mentioned, is its awareness of the context in which a learner is to demonstrate his/her competence (Aschbacher, 1991; Huerta-Macías, 2002). Traditional standardize tests, assess learners' discrete knowledge of components of language, a statement which has become trite over the years. Such testing does not give a realistic picture of a learner's true abilities to perform real-world tasks. Alternative assessment, on the other hand, contextualizes learners' performance, and requires them to demonstrate their abilities by doing meaningful and purposeful tasks, embedded in a social context.

Another improvement of alternative assessment is its inclusion of learners in the process of assessment (Hancock, 1994). Alternative assessment gives a role to learners and requires their contribution to the estimations and decisions made of and about them, thereby introducing democraticity to the enterprise of language teaching.

Alternative assessment allows for the adoption of a holistic or integrative view of language. In contrast to traditional standardized tests, that examine the learner from a single dimension, alternative assessment adopts a multi-dimensional perspective in that it employs other sources of data, in addition to test answers, each of which brings its own piece to the overall puzzle of a learner's language knowledge. For Hamayan, a holistic view of language also means to look at language in its entirety, rather than as a sum of separate aspects like phonology, grammar and vocabulary (pp. 214).

4. Quality Concerns

As with any other language assessment measure, the most important quality concern with alternative assessment is its validity and reliability. Much has been written about the validity of traditional language tests, and a great deal of improvement has been made regarding our understanding of this

concept. However, most claims about the quality of alternative assessment are intuitive in nature, and little, if any, attempts has been made to verify such claims. Huerta-Macías (2002), for example, is very optimistic in terms of the quality of alternative assessment, and assumes an automatic validity for it due to its nature, and, therefore, it is easy to criticize her for her stance towards validity of alternative assessment. Although she admits the cruciality of validity in alternative assessment, she believes that “The procedures [of alternative assessment] in and of themselves are,..., valid, pp. 340”. It is true that in alternative assessment the measuring instrument is closely linked to the phenomenon under observation, as Huerta-Macías reasons, but this alone does not guarantee validity. What remains to be ensured is the subjectivity of the evaluator’s judgments. She further argues that all human judgments, including those made in standardized tests’ validity, is subjective, and so she appears to circumvent the problem of subjectivity. The problem is not that standardized tests are also subjectively validated; it is how we can ensure the validity of alternative assessment in the face of the assessor’s subjective attitudes. Accountability requires that those who are in the position of decision makers for others’ lives, assume responsibility and make the best of their efforts to gather validity evidence in order to demonstrate the validity of their assessment. Practitioners of alternative assessment are not at all an exception in this case. They also are required to ascertain their addressees in terms of the quality requirements that are needed of their assessment endeavors.

There are a number of measures to be taken to ensure the validity of alternative assessment. Huerta-Macías suggests these: 1. designing multiple tasks that produce similar outcomes, 2. using trained judges, 3. setting up clear criteria, 4. monitoring raters for consistency, and 5. triangulation (pp. 341-2). As it is apparent, these strategies are not new, as claimed by Huerta-Macías, and what is new is the idea that carrying them out is enough, a view held by Brown & Hudson (1998). They argue that it is to be irresponsible to take the validity of assessment for granted, once these procedures are practiced. Since assessment affects the lives of individuals, they further hold, it is the duty of the assessor to make every effort to demonstrate and enhance the validity of assessment (pp. 656).

5. Challenges

The mainstream test types used in language classes is mainly focused on the end product of instruction or on an individual’s proficiency as it is related to what s/he has achieved. This product-orientedness of standardized tests is what is contrasted with alternative assessment’s process-orientedness (Alderson & Banerjee, 2001; Hancock, 1994; Hamayan, 1995). Alternative assessment through bringing to the forefront those aspects of the teaching/learning process that mainly go unnoticed by multiple-choice tests, because of their concern with the end-of-the-term product of instruction, gives information about the processes that learners use or undergo to learn language. A think-aloud protocol, for example, provides valuable information about what strategy a learner uses to comprehend a text, or it guides us in recognizing what a particular learner’s attitudes are towards the target community; information that a multiple choice test of linguistic knowledge hardly, if ever, can provide. However, some may raise their objection to this argument by pointing to formative assessment and say that it is aimed at detecting learners’ needs and evaluating instruction during the term. I would argue that although formative assessment’s goal is to provide information for teachers about how the course is progressing, it employs largely product-oriented means to evaluate the process. The kind of data that formative assessment provides is of the type summative assessment produces. What is different between these two types of tests, formative and summative assessments, is not very much the kind of data that they produce; rather it is the interpretations that are made of the data that distinguishes the two. However, alternative assessment, be it used formatively or summatively, produces information that is different in nature. However, it is erroneous to think that alternative assessment should replace objective tests. There is a danger to this assumption. We should not think radically and fall from the other side of the line. Objective tests do produce invaluable data, but that the data is not enough. We can boost the advantages by integrating the two: to consider multiple choice kind of tests as an alternative and accommodate it *within* the framework of alternative assessment. In other words, it is possible to utilize this kind of tests

along with other measures, i.e. teacher observations, diaries, written samples, etc., and let each of them play their own roles to contribute to our evaluations of learners.

Another characteristic of alternative assessment is the claim that it is mainly used for low-stakes situations, and when evaluation is needed for a high stakes situation, traditional tests are used (Alderson & Banerjee, 2001). Alderson & Banerjee (2001), for example make the point that alternative assessment is used for classroom-based assessment, focusing on the progress of the instructional program, (pp. 229). One reason seems to be for teachers, administrators and authorities to be unwilling to take risks. They are reluctant to stop doing what they have practiced so far, and opt for what they do not know exactly. If this is the case, we are not allowed to blame them for such an attitude, since, if we be optimistic and look at the story by seeing the good, they want to take responsibility for their learners and want to do what has been established and accepted, not something that would jeopardize the benefits of their learners for the sake of trying a new thing, only. It is, then, the responsibility of those working in the theoretical camp, i.e. researchers and theory makers of the field, to unravel the benefits of alternative assessment for the practitioners through holding seminars, publishing specialized material for teachers and similar measures, certainly with the help of other authorities and agencies.

The failure to utilize alternative assessment by teachers brings up the question of the gap between theory and practice. This problem is not unique to alternative assessment and is the case for most topics in the field of applied linguistics. However, the problem is not unidimensional. It is not only the teachers that do not use alternative assessment; it is both under-practiced and under-researched. To the best of my knowledge no study has been done to explore alternative assessment to add to the current state of knowledge. Although studies have been done to investigate the different activities launched inside the framework of alternative assessment, such as diary studies, such attempts do not reveal much about alternative assessment as a whole. Little is known about alternative assessment, and there are many facts still waiting to be explored. To be humorous, the only thing about which we are sure regarding alternative assessment is that it exists! Certainly, it is not enough. More is needed, before we can make strong claims as to the benefits it provides for teachers and learners. Attempts need to be made and researches needs to be done to investigate the different elements of alternative assessment.

A less recognized concern is a meta one. As pointed above, different labels are used to refer to alternative assessment. This is not a satisfactory situation. If our understanding of alternative assessment is to be enhanced, we need a label that is unanimously used by scholars, so that discourse is facilitated. Some of the labels in some contexts point to a different phenomenon, altogether. For example, performance assessment is used as a label to refer to alternative assessment by some writers, while it is used to refer to an entirely distinct concept by some others. If there is no consensus about what term to use to refer to alternative assessment as a concept in language testing, then how are we to reach an agreement on other more grave matters like how to validate assessment. Also, different terms mean that there will be ambiguity in discussions related to this concept. Therefore, the first step of all is for me to discard all the other *alternative* terms and use one more familiar; my suggestion is alternative assessment.

6. Further Research

Currently we know nothing about teachers' perceptions about alternative assessment. Teachers' ideas may shape their practice and hence influence the lives of their learners. Therefore, if we are to exploit the benefits alternative assessment provides, we have to know more about what teachers think about alternative assessment, how it can contribute to learners' success, how it is carried out, how it is different from traditional paper-and-pencil tests, how are its effects differentiated from the effects of standardized tests, what types of evidence are required to validate it and so on. However, before probing into teachers' attitudes, we first need to introduce it to teachers, as stated above. Until then the task is even more cumbersome.

Another responsibility for researchers is to reveal what procedures are best suited for specific situations. The procedures that are employed in alternative assessment such as teacher observation, examination of sample writing, etc., each sheds light on a different aspect of a learner's competence. On the other hand, each assessment situation has its own agenda and goals, and it is logical to think that not every

combination of the procedures is appropriate for every situation. In other words, determining what procedures to employ for a particular situation seems to be necessary, depending on the goal of assessment and the type of audience we have. Before such studies, it remains for teachers' intuition to determine what course of action to follow. If the appropriate combination is not employed, the whole assessment may lack validity and produce results that are far from representative of learners' true abilities; it may result in the same pitfalls that are being discussed is the case with traditional type of tests. The decisions made on the basis of the information produced by such assessment may have unfavorable repercussions for the society.

Another challenge for research is the fact that the exact methodology to employ is not clear and standardized (Balliro, 1993). The question is a very general one: what should teachers do? Where should they start from? What stages should they follow and in what sequence? What should they do with their findings or how should they interpret the results? What resources are available for them to consult? What types of decisions can be made on the basis of assessment? A related question pertains to the data that assessment procedures produce. Each of the procedures yields data that are inherently different from others. A checklist that is used to rate the frequency of learners' behavior, for example, gives data that cannot be compared to information obtained from examining learners' writings. Both are different from learner diaries with regard to the data produced; none is comparable to what is obtained from think-aloud protocols. Although for Hamayan interpreting the information obtained is easy (pp. 215), the disparity of the data and the consequent interpretations required will most likely be unmanageable for teachers who are not prepared for the task. Researchers should step in and provide guidance by outlining teachers' roles and the precise path to go.

7. Conclusion

In writing a concluding paragraph for the paper, a term which was reverberating in my mind was a frightening one: change! Changes always entail leaving your safe grounds in search of unexplored territories. Not everyone has the courage to do it. But in the case of our shared discipline we have to embark on such a demanding task, at least regarding the fact that we are dealing with knowledge and its consequences, the consequences in this case being the effects that our practices leave on the lives of our learners. Change does not always require discarding previous objects, beliefs, practices and behaviors altogether. Rather it means, if we mean to improve, to modify those aspects of the target phenomenon whose inefficiency is apparent. Alternative assessment resonates with this notion of change absolutely. It does not aim to replace traditional test, but that to complement them. Lynch (2001) makes a similar statement and says that in using alternative assessment we have to "...judge its validity with criteria that are appropriate to its underlying paradigmatic assumptions, (pp.361)". It aims to make amends for what multiple-choice tests cannot account for. But can we count on a method that is still in its infancy? As Hamayan (1995) points out, "... alternative assessment approaches have yet to come of age (pp. 219)". The ultimate concern is this: has alternative assessment come of age?

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MJLTM

EFL LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CRITICAL THINKING INSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate EFL learners' attitudes towards critical thinking (CT) instruction. To this end, based on the result of an Oxford Placement Test, thirty intermediate EFL learners were selected from among 90 participants to take part in this study at a language institute. A repeated measure design was utilized by the researchers based on which the same group of participants took part in the control and experimental phases of the study. At the end of the experiment, the participating EFL learners answered an open-ended researcher-made questionnaire the items of which were based on existing literature in order to explore the participants' views and attitudes towards the type of instruction offered to promote their CT skills. It was found that more than two-third of the participants were interested in using CT skills at class. The findings have some implications for course designers, material developers, and teachers to introduce and foster CT skills in classrooms for students.

KEY WORDS: Critical thinking, Instruction, Attitude, EFL

1. Introduction

One of the most effective instruments anyone can have is the ability to think. In fact, critical thinking (CT) skills are strategies people use to consider new opinions (Fahim, Barjesteh & Vaseghi, 2011). It refers to a kind of skill that can influence various aspects of a person's academic career, and personal life. It helps us to understand written text more deeply, write more influentially, and become more successful test-takers. CT also helps us make better decisions and develop our own ideas. Through the use of critical activities, students can also learn how to reach conclusions and self-assess their performance in class.

Different definitions of CT have been suggested by several educators although there is not much difference among these definitions. According to Elder and Paul (1994), CT refers to the skill of individuals to control their own thinking and build up suitable criteria and standards for examining their own thinking. As Maiorana (1992) stated, CT intends for achieving understanding, evaluating, and finding the answers for the problems.

Nowadays numerous EFL instructors emphasize the requirements for teaching CT in EFL university composition classes; this idea has been described by several researchers and educators. The appearance of these various descriptions is a result of its cognitive characteristic in which CT is considered as an "ongoing activity" (Canagarajah, 2002, p. 101) and learner writers are anticipated to achieve the skill to think critically as they go through process-directed activity. Beyer (1995, p. 8), for instance, explained CT as "...making reasoned judgments," that may imply applying CT to assess the quality of something, from "cooking to a conclusion of a research paper" (Alagozlu, 2007, p. 119). The aim of this study was to explore the attitudes of EFL learners towards CT instruction.

1.1 Significance of Critical Thinking

There are various concepts of CT. As Paul (1995) explained, the concept of CT is best understood as to the context and aim it is applied. The purpose of educating for critical, democratic citizenship has lately been

developed with the title called 'critical thinking'. In the 1980s, there was an outbreak of attention in CT. In several studies and policy reports in the USA it was mentioned that a higher-order thinking skill was missing among learners and that democratic society needed learners to think critically (Glaser, 1985; National Education Goals Panel, 1992). The common concentration on CT as a pedagogical aim does not modify the fact that CT is an intricate construct, changing from a politically directed pedagogical end (Giroux, 1992; McLaren, 1995) to higher-order thinking abilities (Halpern, 1998).

The significance being given to CT is at present an extensive event. In education reports of countries like Australia, the United States, and United Kingdom, CT has been recorded as an important domain to be improved and estimated in higher education (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2005; Australian Council for Educational Research, 2002; Higher Education Quality Council, 1996). Beside Western countries, late educational improvements in Asian countries like Hong Kong (Education Bureau, 2003) and Japan (Atkinson, 1997) have as well supported the progress of CT so that learners can take part in a liberal society. In spite of the agreement of educators and scholars on the importance of cultivating learners to become critical thinkers, training for CT has not been an easy task.

1.2 Teaching for Critical Thinking

There are numerous approaches to training learners to practice critical thought; two separate philosophies present how education is best viewed. Some educators and professionals approve the imbedded approach based on which the course structure and educator enhance higher-order thinking without direct training in the language and practice of CT abilities (Case, 2002). Others supported explicit instruction, where particular abilities are taught; these are total cognitive skills that converged different academic and real-life conditions. There is considerable study to advocate both methods (Cotton, 1991) but little is understood about their relative effectiveness. The former has the clear benefit of not needing an extra course in the school study program although a defect is that imbedded instruction is dependent on teacher and may or may not be exercised at class (Presseisen, 1989). This is a demanding subject because little consideration has been given to CT education for scholars and may not be a chief interest in a pedagogical condition that concentrates on 'content-matter' control (Paul, Elder, & Bartell, 1997). However, in courses that CT has long been connected, it is acceptable that thinking about content does not happen reflectively.

1.3 Critical Thinker

Booo (1982) claimed that an essential part of the thinking skill is thinking about thinking. The thinker should be able to look at his/her thinking and judges it to his/her former task. S/he should also have the ability to look at the thinking that other people apply for themselves. Paul and Elder (2004) indicated that a good critical thinker has some characteristics as the following:

S/he asks important questions and troubles, forming them evidently and efficiently; s/he obtains and evaluates related information, using abstract concepts to measure it effectively; s/he gets logical results and solutions, testing them against related criteria and rules; s/he communicates efficiently with others for understanding solutions to complicated problems.

According to Paul and Elder (2009), there are three important types of thinkers: The native critical thinker, the selfish critical thinker, and the fair-minded critical thinker. The first one, the native critical thinker, is the person who is not concerned about, or does not have awareness of, his/her thinking. The second one, the selfish critical thinker, is the one who is good at thinking, but in fact not fair to others. The third one, the fair-minded critical thinker, is the one who is good at thinking and also fair to others.

King (1995) believed that the clear characteristic of a critical thinker is having an investigative mind; good critical thinkers are those who are expert at asking good questions. Paul et al. (1997) mentioned that self-assessment is a vital factor to CT, and just those learners who learn to evaluate their own thinking are critical thinkers. A critical thinker can reflect, discover, analyze, and can select to think in these complex ways.

To be a critical thinker is actually stating the intellect with the feelings, views, and disposition. Furthermore, Carroll (2004) claimed that critical thinkers chiefly benefit from two crucial advantages: Self-assurance, and sense of authority over their life. Paul and Elder (2002) indicated that emerging CT is a developmental process which needs hard work, and becoming a good thinker is not possible by only taking a

beginning course. So, the essential features of a critical thinker demand a long-lasting time of progress. To this end, there are six steps to go through to progress as thinkers:

Step 1- The unreflective thinker: The person is not aware of important problems in his/her thinking.

Step 2- The challenged thinker: The person gets awareness of problems in his/her thinking.

Step 3- The beginning thinker: The person tries to make himself/herself better, but without systematic practice.

Step 4- The practicing thinker: The person identifies the necessity of systematic practice.

Step 5- The advanced thinker: The person develops in accordance with his/her practice.

Step 6- The master thinker: Skilled and careful thinking becomes second nature.

2. Literature Review

Different researches have been done concerning CT influences on several aspects of foreign language learning and most of them belong to the past decade. Most of these studies are in favor of this theory and proved that the participants in the related studies improved in terms of their knowledge in the experimental groups in various fields. Some studies are presented in this section chronologically.

One of the first effective methods of tactful growth in university learners was the work of Perry (1970). Perry performed open-ended interviews with learners at Harvard in the 1960s and applied these observations to present a stage theory of tactful growth throughout the university years. Learners do not unchangingly move through in a linear order, as it was assumed that there are pausing and backward movements as well as forward movement. Likewise, there seems to be personal variances in the pace with which learners develop through the stages. Perry recognized nine positions, but there were three chief stages. The first one was called dualism. Dualists considered the world according to "right/wrong, black/white, and good/bad. Dualists are passive learners who depend upon authorities to hand down the truth" (Carroll, 2007, p. 214). Then, when confronted with variant attitudes, learners got awareness of the diversities of points of view and more relativistic in their perspective. At this stage, they comprehend that disparate individuals have variant viewpoints, but do not consider a basic foundation for evaluating these points of view. Later, after their tasks have been demanded by the teachers' emphasis on proof, they reach the agreement within relativism stage, where they come to take permanent attitudes but with suitable, accepted reason as well as awareness of other perspectives. Aelger (1993), in his research on the influence of thinking skills on learners' reading comprehension, chose a sample of 257 fifth grade learners. He divided them into two groups of experimental and control. In this regard, he taught regular readings to the experimental group with thinking skills developed by Cognitive Research Trust Centre. The learners replied to both pre-test and post-test in all groups. Finally, the researcher found that all learners gained important improvements in reading comprehension over this period although there was not any statistical difference between experimental and control groups. Moreover, another study similar to this area of investigation was done by Eghtedari (2002). 200 English language students took part in this study. 90 students were selected from them based on their language proficiency. After that, they were divided into three groups of elementary, intermediate, and advanced language learners. Likewise, the subjects answered three different language proficiency tests, and then they took CT questionnaire. The result of the analysis indicated that there is a strong relationship between participants' way of thinking and their reading comprehension skill. In a study on the correlation between collaborative learning and CT of Iranian EFL learners, Naeini (2005) used 144 adult female intermediate English language students. She separated the participants into two groups of control and experimental ones. The subjects answered the Intermediate Nelson Language Proficiency Test and a CT questionnaire by Honey (2004). After training them to think more critically in groups, she distributed the CT questionnaire twice; moreover, she gave a pre-test at the beginning of the term and a post-test at the end of the term to measure their understanding, analysis, and measurement skill of Iranian EFL learners. After evaluating the results, she concluded that the experimental group performed better than the control group. In a study by Mirzai (2008), the relationship between CT and lexical inferencing of Iranian EFL learners was examined. To this end, 130 male and female students of a language institute were given a TOEFL and Honey's CT questionnaire including 39 items. The result of the CT questionnaire showed that 70 students had high CT ability and 60 had

low CT ability as a pre-test. Students were given a checklist containing 170 words and by checking yes/no, they showed how many words they knew. To this end, they had to use inferencing strategies. In the last part, the students were given two passages with underlined new words, and were supposed to guess the meaning of those words using inferencing strategies. The results of the study revealed that those students with high CT ability outperformed the ones with low CT ability in lexical inferencing. In another study by Kamali and Fahim (2011), the relationship between CT ability, resilience, and reading comprehension of texts containing unknown vocabulary items was examined. The results of the study showed that (a) the levels of CT had significant effect on the scores of the participants on the resilience scale; (b) the levels of CT had significant effect on the participants' comprehension of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items, and (c) the levels of resilience had significant effect on the participants' comprehension of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items.

They were also some studies which cast doubt on the effect of CT on the related items. For example, Facione, Facione and Sanchez (1994) applied the CCTDI to a group of entering freshman ($n=587$) at a private comprehensive university. The finding of the mean score of the disposition for truth-seeking was below 40. It showed the least approval and a weakness in this disposition. Colucciello (1997) also found same findings in her study of CT skills and dispositions of baccalaureate nursing learners ($n=328$). She applied the CCTDI to calculate CT dispositions; outcomes showed that the mean scores for every group of learners registered in all of the academic grades—sophomore II through senior II—were below 40 for the disposition of truth-seeking and below 50 for every of the following six dispositions. The disposition scores of the sophomore II students were the least in comparison with the mean scores of the junior and senior learners. In addition, Dayioglu (2003) investigated the CT levels of students majoring in science and social sciences at Hucettepe University English Preparatory school. To carry out this study, Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal test, the information from and the English proficiency exam were administered to 193 students. The results revealed that there was no significant relationship between CT levels and English proficiency levels, but there was a significant low relationship between reading and writing skills and the CT skills of the participants. Myers and Dyers (2006) also investigated the effect of students' learning style on CT skill. The results of the study indicated that there were no differences between the CT skills of male and female students. However, students with deeply embedded abstract sequential learning style preferences showed significantly higher CT scores. No differences in CT ability existed between students of other learning styles. In another study by Rashtchi (2007), it was attempted to explore whether cooperative writing enhanced CT in EFL learners. The findings of the study showed that students' CT scores at the time of their entrance in the university were not satisfactory and their rank in the university exams was not related to these skills. It was concluded that it is necessary to consider teaching and promoting CT skills in the university educational planning. Based on the literature, the following research questions was proposed to be answered through the present study:

- What are the EFL learners' attitudes towards Critical Thinking instruction in language classes?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

30 randomly-selected female students studying English at a language institute, Rasht, Iran participated willingly in this study. The level of their English proficiency was intermediate.

3.2. Instruments

The first instrument used in the study was an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (3B1-2) to determine the participants' level of proficiency. Cronbach's alpha was computed for the OPT test items through a pilot study on 15 EFL learners who were identical to the main group in terms of their level of overall foreign language proficiency and a reliability of .836 was obtained which was considerably higher than the minimum required value of .70. The second instrument was an open-ended researcher-made questionnaire, the items of which were based on existing literature to explore the participants' views and attitudes towards the type of instruction offered to promote the participants' CT skills. The items of the questionnaire were piloted and its validity was ensured.

3.3 Treatment

The first eight sessions was called the control phase of the research since it was based on lower-order thinking skills; each session the course instructor, provided the learners with lower-order thinking skills based on Bloom's Taxonomy. The lower part includes knowledge, comprehension, and application levels. Every level involved special question words. For instance, for the first level, question words such as *define*, and *describe*, for the second level question words like *discuss*, and *explain*, and for the third level question words such as *illustrate*, and *classify* were presented. Besides, particular learning strategies related to various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy were taught to students.

The second eight sessions of the research was called experimental phase since it was based on higher-order thinking skills; each session the instructor provided the learners with higher-order thinking skills based on Bloom's Taxonomy. The higher part includes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels. Each level involved special question words. For instance, for the first level question words like *contrast*, and *generalize*, for the second level question words like *categorize*, and *contrast*, and for the third level question words like *conclude*, and *justify* were presented; besides, particular learning strategies related to various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy were taught to students. Furthermore, an open-ended questionnaire was answered by the participants in the final session to explore their attitudes towards the implementation of CT-based activities. The following table presents the Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the Cognitive Domain.

Table 1.1
Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the Cognitive Domain

LEVEL	QUESTION WORD	LEARNING STRATEGIES
KNOWLEDGE (rote memory, recall of specifics)	define, describe, enumerate, identify, label, list	Rehearsal strategies: Highlight key vocabulary from text or lecture notes, generate flash cards, devise mnemonic devices.
COMPREHENSION (basic understanding, putting an idea into your own words)	discuss, explain, restates, traces	Explain a concept to a classmate; associate material with prior knowledge; summarize key concepts from lecture notes and compare to a "model."
APPLICATION (applying a general principle to a new and concrete situation)	illustrate, classify, compute, predict, relate, solve, utilize	General original examples; design and complete classification systems; solve and analyze new problems; predict test questions
ANALYSIS (breaking the information into component parts in order to examine it and develop divergent conclusions)	contrast, generalize, illustrate, diagram, differentiate, outline	General comparison and contrast lists and use these to predict test questions; identify themes or trends from text or case studies; organize material in more than one way
SYNTHESIS (creatively or divergently applying prior knowledge and skills to produce a new or original whole)	categorize, contrast, design, formulate, generate, design a model, reconstruct	Predict test questions and outline the answers; locate evidence to support a thesis; generate a thesis to support certain evidence
EVALUATION (judging the value of material based on informed personal values/opinions resulting in an end product without a distinct right or wrong answer)	appraise, conclude, justify, criticize, defend, support	List supporting evidence; listing refuting evidence, generate concept maps, debate; find weaknesses in other arguments.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

First, a group of EFL learners studying in a language institute was pre-tested to determine their level of proficiency. Then, intermediate EFL learners participated in the main phase of the study. About one semester (16 sessions), the participating group was instructed according to Bloom's Taxonomy. Then, the participants completed an open-ended questionnaire that sought to explore their attitudes towards the implementation of CT-based activities in their learning. The treatment lasted for 16 sessions twice a week (8 weeks). Every session lasted for 2 hours.

To analyze the data, descriptive statistics including mean, range, and standard deviation were calculated and reported for the scores obtained from the participating EFL learners. The participants' answers to the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed to determine their attitudes towards the implementation of CT skills.

4. Results and Discussion

The only difference between the two phases of the study (control and experimental) related to the lower-order and higher-order thinking skills as defined in Bloom's taxonomy. The participants in the first eighth sessions that comprised the control phase of the research were taught skill based on lower-order thinking skills of Bloom's taxonomy. The purpose of this phase was to make the participants aware of the appropriate words related to various activities they were supposed to do. The researcher considered the first session as the pre-test and the eighth session as the post-test to evaluate their performance. On the other hand, the participants in the second eighth sessions (experimental phase) were taught based on higher-order thinking skills of Bloom's taxonomy. The purpose of this phase was to make the subjects aware of the appropriate words related to different activities they were supposed to do in this stage. The research question scrutinized the participants' attitudes towards the activities done in the experimental phase of the study. Six open-ended questions were given to twenty participants of the experimental group. Their responses were summed up and frequency and percentages were computed for the responses provided by the participants.

The research question in this study scrutinized the participants' attitudes towards the activities done in the experimental phase of the study. Six open-ended questions were given to twenty participants of the experimental group. Their responses were summed up and frequency and percentages were computed for the responses provided by the participants. The six questions are as follows:

1. Which group of topics (the first 16 topics or second 16 topics) did you like the most? Why?
2. Which group of topics motivated you more to write in English?
3. Which group of topics helped you show your writing ability better (to the best of your ability)?
4. How do you evaluate your progress in writing skill during the instruction?
5. What is your idea about the type of writing instruction you had and the topics you covered in two phases of the writing course?
6. Please write down if you have any other comments or suggestions about writing instruction.

As for the first question that dealt with choosing between two groups of topics, 13 students were interested in lower-order skill topics and 7 students were interested in higher-order skill topics. Overall, about 68.3 % were interested in the lower-order skill topics and 94% of them were interested in the higher-order skill topics.

As for the second question that dealt with choosing more motivated topics, 11 students were interested in lower-order skills and 7 students were interested in higher-order skills. Overall, about 75.8% were eager in the lower-order skills and 74.2% were eager in the higher-order skills.

As for the third question that dealt with more helpful topics for showing writing ability, 8 students were interested in lower-order skill topics and 10 students were interested in higher-order skill topics. Overall, about 72.8% was eager in the lower-order skill topics and 60.6% was eager in the higher-order skill topics.

As for the fourth question that dealt with the students' evaluation of their own progress during the instruction, the answers were diverse. Overall, about 79.3% were eager in this topic.

As for the fifth question that dealt with the idea of students' about type of writing instruction and topics, the answers were diverse. Overall, about 85.3% were interested in the type of writing instruction and 88.9 % were interested in topics.

As for the sixth question that dealt with writing students' comments or suggestions about writing instruction, the answers were diverse. Some students believed that the writing instruction was attractive, difficult, etc. Some mentioned that it was influential for improving their writing. However, there were no suggestions in their replies as well. Overall, about 64.2% were interested in this topic. Overall, about 64.2% were interested in this topic.

It is noticeable that for the first three questions, there were two groups of skills (lower-order and higher-order) to discuss. Also, for each group, just the positive items were summed up and reported as percentages. Furthermore, according to the tables mentioned in attitude questionnaire section, the results of both positive and negative items would be 100 percent as a whole. But, as far as the last three questions were concerned, there was not separate groupings as lower -order and higher -order skills; moreover, just the positive answers were summed up and reported as percentages.

As Lun, Fischer and Ward (2010) mentioned, the application of CT has been considered as a significant part of education, especially in today's learning environment where learners are exposed to a large amount of information, that needs efficient cognitive strategies to process them. Furthermore, based on Akyuz and Samsa (2009), the purpose of educational system that change based on progress in educational technology is to prepare more active learners in the learning process, and make them the people who have skills like CT, problem-solving, etc. They added that in the present information age, thinking skills are regarded as an essential part for educated people to handle the changing world. Developing learners' CT has been considered to be one of the first educational aims. Likewise, as Bowell and Kemp (2003) stated, CT made students to have good purposes to believe; and also teacher's treatment accordingly helped learners to begin the process of becoming a critic of their thinking. Of course, this treatment should be done gradually. Teacher helps them first to discover their thinking and make relevant changes in their thinking too. Similarly, students could figure out their bad habits of thoughts and understand that they could learn to think better.

6. Conclusion

To answer the question, some open-ended questions were given to twenty participants of the experimental phase. Their responses were summed up and frequency and percentages were also computed. Based on the findings, regarding the participants' interest, 68.3% were interested in the lower-order skill and 94% were interested in the higher-order skill. Concerning the second one, 75.8% were eager in the lower-order skills and 74.2% of the participants were eager in the higher-order skills. For the third question, about 72.8% were interested in the lower-order skill activities and 60.6% were interested in the higher-order skill ones. For the fourth question, about 79.3% were eager in this activity. For the fifth, about 85.3% were eager in the type of instruction. As for the sixth question, the answers were diverse. Overall, about 64.2% were interested in this topic. According to the findings, more than two-third of the participants were interested in instruction by using CT skills.

Generally, this study has implications for syllabus designers, material developers and language teachers. First, this study may be helpful to syllabus designers who need to employ CT for teaching. Second, language teachers can also benefit from the results of this study. This study may give language teachers the insight that incorporating CT into the classes helps the teachers identify the weaknesses of their learners. Moreover, this study gives helpful guidelines to teachers for implementing CT into their language classes. They may feel more confident with practical guidelines that are provided in method section, where the teaching process is presented in a step-by-step manner. The findings of this research offer insights to language teachers. It is worthwhile for teachers to realize the role of CT in the improvement of EFL learners' instruction. It is hoped that the findings of this research provide teachers with a framework that helps them guide EFL learners towards further understanding of CT. Indeed, in EFL context in which the only source of comprehensible input is classroom exposure and practice, attention drawing activities towards CT should be considered as an indispensable part of language teaching. Hence, justified time and energy should be allocated to the provision of students with tasks that guide them to controlled production of activity accompanied with the instructors' feedback and support.

There were some limitations in this study. The first limitation of the present study was due to the number of students; since language institutes did not cooperate with the researcher well, the researcher was forced to select a limited number of participants. In addition, only one group took part in study based on repeated measure design.

First and foremost, this study can be replicated to find out whether the same results would be obtained or not. Other studies could be performed in order to investigate the possible relationship between CT and specific language learning skills and with language learning styles. A further study can be designed in which the data are collected from other settings like university with learners at various levels, e.g., freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors and public education system. It seems very useful to carry out the same research on other proficiency levels as well. It is hoped that the results obtained from the present study would open new avenues for helping language learners to promote their critical thinking skills.

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THE EFFECT OF DOCUMENTARY SUBTITLES ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to find out whether subtitles have any positive effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners, and if yes, which of the two English and Persian subtitles have more significant effect on learners. The participants were 90 intermediate students who were selected from 135 freshman English translation students of Tonekabon Islamic Azad University via applying an Oxford placement test (opt) and then randomly divided into three groups, two experimental, one control. The data from the English and Persian subtitled documentaries were measured by paired sample t-test to prove which group outperforms better than the other; in addition, data gathered from post listening test among three groups were calculated by one-way ANOVAs to demonstrate whether subtitled documentaries have any effect on listening comprehension of students or not. The overall results showed that while neither of the two English and Persian subtitle groups had significant difference with each other considering the effect of subtitles, both of them showed significantly higher scores in their listening post-test, when compared to the control group after treatment.

KEY WORDS: documentaries, English subtitles, Persian subtitles, EFL learners, listening comprehension

1. Introduction

Among the four major areas of communication skills and language development namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing the most basic one is listening (Arosenius, 2011). Moreover, listening ability plays a significant role in the development of other language skills, i.e. "Listening comprehension is currently considered the most prominent aspect of language, as it is believed to facilitate the other language skill; reading, writing and speaking" (Vandergift, 2011, p.455). According to Hawatt and Dakin (1974), listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This ability involves the knowledge of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and grasping meaning. This would be research intends to deal with the effect of movie subtitles on listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL Learners. To be exact, this study is going to find out whether subtitles have any significant effect on enhancing listening skill ability. It will further compare the Persian and English subtitle to see if there is any difference between their effects on students' listening comprehension ability.

The main issue represented in this study is the effects of documentary's subtitled movie on learners' listening comprehension. It should be noted that multimedia devices are the most modern strategies of teaching listening skill. Listening is one of the most important skills which engages teaching of grammatical points, correct structures, and also correct pronunciation to the EFL learners.

According to Richards and Gordon (2004, p. 2) videos, as medium, enable learners to use visual information to enhance their comprehension (cited in Hayati & Mohmedi, 2011). In another study, Haghverdi and Vaezi (2012) claimed that Movies with subtitles are one of the effective tools in English language teaching and learning. Al-seghager (2001) reported that written text in multimedia class including video and subtitle more develop learners' vocabulary knowledge bound than teaching by pictures and

passage. This idea intends to shed light on the effectiveness of multimedia subtitles on listening comprehension ability.

Markham (1999) referred to the effects of subtitles on listening comprehension ability. He considered both positive and negative aspects of subtitles. Its positive side was similar to the above mentioned studies in which experimental group outperformed the control group in recognizing more words, understanding better the meaning of dialogues. The negative point of subtitled movie in his study was the performance of the captioned group which was more due to the memorization rather than listening comprehension (cited in Latifi, Mobalegh & Mohammadi, 2011). Moreover, Mac William (1986; cited in Wagner, 2007) stated that visible features of subtitled movie draw students' attention away from the grasp of audio meaning and it may actually disrupt their apprehension.

According to Bird and Williams (2002) and Danan (2004) captions promote language learning in learners as they watch what they hear, while particular information of the movies may be beyond the learners' linguistic knowledge or aptitude. Captions can enhance language comprehension by providing an easy approach for cognitive processes. Parks (1994) reported that "students using captioned materials show significant improvement in reading comprehension, listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, word recognition, decoding skills, and overall motivation to read" (Cited in Zanon, 2006, p. 43).

In contrast, in other study Danan (2012) stated that, "Subtitles are most commonly viewed as distracting: they accused of encouraging viewers to rely on the written text, taking attention away from the actual spoken language, and even fostering a form of laziness bordering on cheating" (Danan, 2012, p. 67). Therefore, many researchers debated on the positive and negative effects of subtitles. Taking all of the above mentioned controversial results into account, in the present study it was attempted to examine the effects of using subtitle on listening comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL students in a new context.

2. Review of literature

Since in this study it is attempted to measure the ability of listening comprehension, the first and the major point is answering to the question: what is listening comprehension? Some researchers', such as Rost (1990); Brown (1995); Anderson and Lynch (1988), had recommended their agreement concerning about listening comprehension definition, describing listening comprehension respectively as an 'interpretation' rather than 'comprehension', or 'shared mutual beliefs' rather than 'shared mutual knowledge', and the last term defined listening comprehension on the act of 'active model builders' instead of 'tape recorders' (Cited in Barta, 2010, p. 62).

Graves (2000) states that, it is important for a teacher in designing a course, to choose materials, and activities in a way that students can reach the objectives that will help them achieve the purposes of the course (Graves, 2000). Considering the fact that, most of the EFL students do not use English in their daily-life; teachers can utilize modern technology to help them become familiar with various aspects of native speakers' life; including, culture, structure, pronunciation, and so on. "Good various materials will help boost students' enthusiasm and motivation to learn" (Soong, 2012, p. 132).

According to Harmer (2007) there are some stages in using listening materials for students. First of all, teachers should create motivation and make encouragement for learners expanding the listening activity through using TVs, internet, CDs, tapes, and so on. Second, before starting those activities, it is better to activate some background knowledge relevant the content of the listening task; it can help learners to pick up the key words while listening. The last stage is about 'intention and impression' which can be made by background knowledge, standardizing or classifying the control level of video tape, and also using motivating subjects for teaching to the students (Cited in Sulistyowati, 2011).

In many studies, researchers came to this conclusion that Iranian students have problems in communication to the target language (EFL). According to Harji, Woods, and Alavi (2010), while Iranian students' aim is learning English as a foreign language, they are faced with various problems in their own life such as listening comprehension, or the proper usage of function words because of being in a foreign situation and not being able to use English in their daily life. As a result, students couldn't have an adequate apprehension of the function of words and comprehension of speech meaning. They suggested that it is

better to investigate a new method which is surrounded by an authentic or real life situation while teaching in the classroom, as it helps the learners to make a better perception of the target structure format while communicating, and since their curriculum is based on grammar, vocabulary, and reading, it limits their communication.

Baltova (1994) reported about the consequence of authentic video which is shown the different aspects of real life by visualize type, but he mentioned that this equipped lonely could not make enough comprehension into learners. As a result, subtitled video was used for enhancing comprehension of all information related to video texts (cited in Sydorenko, 2010).

Soong (2012) conducted a study about the tolerance of watching documentary movies among students in various groups. He refers to confidence and motivation of native English speakers watching longest documentary movie between 15-20 minutes, but non-native speaker with less confidence or even lack of background information chose shortest documentary movies less than 5 minutes. The result of his study provided answers to the question of what the major handicaps in understanding a documentary film are. He mentioned three main factors relating to this weakness based on the students' responses. 68 students out of 129 (52.5%) admitted that they suffer from listening comprehension which is needs further practice by listening to the video or soundtracks. While, other 49 (38.2%) and 8 (6.2%) students respectively believed that their problem in failure of understanding is lack of vocabulary knowledge and poor background knowledge which impeded their listening comprehension (soong, 2012).

Garza (1991) stated that subtitling has advantages in teaching language because of it develops the learning process through linking auditory to visual input While, in contrast, Mayer, Heiser, and Lonn (2001; cited in Sydorenko, 2010) confirmed that learners who watched written text of speakers' dialogue on the screen outperformed those who watched the videos with the language of subtitle being different from the language of the speakers. In other words, they confirmed that the learners who watched the video and listened to the dialogue of speaker in L2 (target language) with the L2 subtitle be refitted more than those learners who watched video by captions as in three modalities, with the subtitle being in a different language. Therefore, they believed that captions make distraction because of their similar given information which can be named 'redundancy principal'.

There are three other major clues of documentary films, which are mentioned by Stemplesk and Tomalin (1990); in other words, these are important and fundamental clues to choose an appropriate and standard documentary film to be displayed in the classrooms. These three elements are interest, length, and language level. One of the most important criteria for the selections of movies is the range of measuring enthusiasm and attraction of documentary film for learners; also, considering interesting content could create motivation in learners to listen carefully to speakers' dialogue. As for the length, researchers confirm no more than five minutes in length for the completion of activities in English language classrooms. Finally, the last factor is language level, which is not a crucial criterion for different language levels, particularly low levels, who struggle to grasp the meaning from key words of texts. It should be mentioned that, researchers prefer to use this documentary films at the intermediate or upper-intermediate level.

3. Method

This part presents the results of the current study. The multi-faceted nature of the hypotheses of the study necessitated the researcher to apply both descriptive and inferential methods of statistics in order to sort, display and describe the data on the one hand, and to interpret the data on the other.

Thus, in this section first, a descriptive analysis of the data for each hypothesis has been presented; then, the inferential analysis of the data has been given using Tables and figures. The descriptive statistics for all hypotheses consisted of the mean, standard deviation and the standard error of measurement. Similarly, the inferential analysis of the data in this study consisted of calculating the paired-sample t value between the pretest and the posttest of English and Persian subtitles, and one-way ANOVA between three groups of the present study treatment tests score, and finally an ANOVA will be conducted to compare the means of the three posttests.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned the goal of this statistical part which are being to answer the questions of the current study. Questions are designed as follows:

RQ1: Do documentary subtitles have any positive effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level?

RQ2: Considering to the positive effect of subtitle, which of the two subtitles, English or Persian, has more significantly positive effect on Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level?

In the present study two placement test set was conducted as a measure of general knowledge of students and listening comprehension ability of the participants. First of all, the result of Oxford Placement Test (OPT) which was administered to 135 students with different proficiency levels. In this case, students' scores should be between 28 -35 for being acceptable in the intermediate level of proficiency; therefore, 112 students (86.7 % out of 100%) with the mean of 31.79 were shown to be at the intermediate level in the first general placement test. Reliability of OPT test which consisted of 60 items in the range of 28_35 was close to the maximum correlation of test (+1) with a reliability of 0.872.

The result of the second placement test to homogenize groups on the basis of their listening comprehension ability indicated that out of 112 students, 90 homogeneous students were accepted for participating in the current study. To put it more specifically, considering the score range of 16_24, 90 students (80.4 %) passed this test and 22 students (19.6%) failed. In this case, it should be mentioned that after taking listening IELTS test as a placement test and selecting the 90 intermediate students based on their listening comprehension ability they were randomly divided into three groups.

Table 3.1 descriptive table of ESG and PSG pre-listening test score

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Pre Es	30	6	12	18	15.10	.226	1.241
Pre Ps	30	7	10	17	13.97	.282	1.542
Valid N (listwise)	30						

The Table (3.1) shows the descriptive statistics for the pre-listening test of ESG and PSG. The table reveals that the mean score of ESG group is 15.10 ($\bar{x} = 15.10$) and the mean of is 13.97 ($\bar{x} = 13.97$), respectively. English subtitled group obtained score in the range of 12 to 18 and Persian subtitled group obtained score in the range of 10 to 17 point. Each group had 30 participants. This test was used to compare students' listening comprehension ability before treatment which is explained more in the following tables of this section.

3.2 Results of hypothesis

3.2.1 Results of the First Hypothesis (H1)

The first hypothesis of this study targeted the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners as a result of documentary English subtitles. The descriptive analysis of the data for this hypothesis is summarized in Table 3.2.1 below:

Table 3.2.1 pair sample of pre and post listening test of ESG (English subtitled group)

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pre ES1	15.1000	30	1.24152	.22667

Post ES 2	16.0333	30	2.10882	.38502
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As Table 4.8.1 indicates, the mean of the ES (English subtitle) group in pretest is 15.1000 (\bar{X} =15.1000) while the mean of the ES (English subtitle) group in the posttest is 16.0333 (\bar{X} =16.0333). The following table reveals paired differences of pre and post listening test base on correlation coefficient with 95 % or alpha less than 0/05.

3.3 Inferential analysis data of English subtitle Group

Table 3.3.1 pair differences between pre and post listening test of ESG (English subtitled group)

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair Pre ES - post ES	-.93333	2.51798	.45972	-1.87356	.00690	-2.030	29	.052

Table (3.3.1) rejects the assumption of this study related to the effect of English subtitle movie on improvement of listening comprehension of ESG after treatment. In light of this, there was no significant difference before and after treatment; meanwhile, the significance of difference between pre and post listening test of English subtitled group base on the alpha level of 0.05 is $p \geq 0.52$. Although it is not much higher than alpha 0.05, it cannot prove the positive influence of English subtitled movie on enhancing the listening comprehension ability of students. Accordingly, our first null hypothesis is rejected.

3.4 Results of the Second Hypothesis (H2)

The second hypothesis of this study targeted the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners as a result of documentary Persian subtitles. The descriptive and inferential analysis of the data for this hypothesis is summarized below:

3.4.1 Paired Samples Statistics

Table 3.4.1 pair sample of pre and post listening test for PSG (Persian subtitled group)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre PS	13.97	30	1.542	.282
	Post PS	14.20	30	1.031	.188

According to table 3.4.1 the mean score of pre listening test for Persian group is 13.97 and the mean for post listening test is 14.20. This was evaluated for 30 participants and the range of score was out of 20.

Table 3.4.2 pair difference between pre and post listening test of PSG (Persian subtitled group)

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			

		ation	n	Lower	Upper			
Pre PS – Pair 1 Post PS	-.233	1.501	.274	-.794	.327	-.851	29	.402

The mean of the Ps (Persian subtitle) group in pretest is 13.97 ($\bar{X}=13.97$) while the mean of the Ps (Persian subtitle) group in the posttest is 14.20 ($\bar{X}=14.20$). The mentioned tables (paired sample test) were used to demonstrate the effect of independent variables (subtitled groups) before and after of treatment. Although there is a significance relationship between test items of pre and post listening test, there is not a significance difference between students' scores before and after treatment as the p-value is greater than our assumed alpha level ($p>.402$) The relationship between pre and post listening test was described by the observed t of -.851 which is less than critical t (2.04) ($t_{crit}=2.045$ with the level of significance of 0.05 and degree of freedom of 29 $df=29$).

In this case, the results of paired sample t-test separately between two experimental groups showed that there is not a significance difference between them. Therefore, the first and second hypothesis of the current study rejected by type I error. The treatment of this study had no positive effect on listening comprehension ability of experimental group. With respect to the time of treatment, this study failed to prove which experimental groups performed better than the other one in listening comprehension.

3.5 Results of the Third Hypothesis (H3)

The third hypothesis included comparison of the three participant groups. To this end, One-way ANOVA was run through SPSS software to compare the means of the control, English subtitle and Persian subtitle groups of the study.

3.5.1. Descriptive Statistics for the groups of the study

Table 3.5.1. descriptive statistic table among experimental and control group

Group s	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ES	30	16.03	2.109	.385	15.25	16.82	13	20
PS	30	14.20	1.031	.188	13.82	14.58	12	16
CG	30	12.03	1.129	.206	11.61	12.45	10	14

Table 3.5.2 the results of one-way ANOVA for the experimental and control groups' differences

Descriptive	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	240.578	2	120.289	53.166	.000
Within groups	196.838	87	2.263		
total	437.416	89			

According to table (3.5.2) the F- value is 53.166 which is significantly higher than the criteria 1 (much higher than critical F value 3.10), this shows that the means of the three participating groups are different and the significance level is less than 0.05 which indicates that the difference is not by chance rather because of the effect of the variable of the study. Furthermore, the mean score of English and Persian subtitled group is much higher than CG (Control Group). The range of score in experimental groups are respectively lower and upper bound of ES (15.25- 16.82), PS (13.82- 14.58), and CG (11.61- 12.45) with correlation confidence of $\alpha \leq .05$.

Means Plots

Figure 3.1 mean of post listening upper bound confidence for three groups

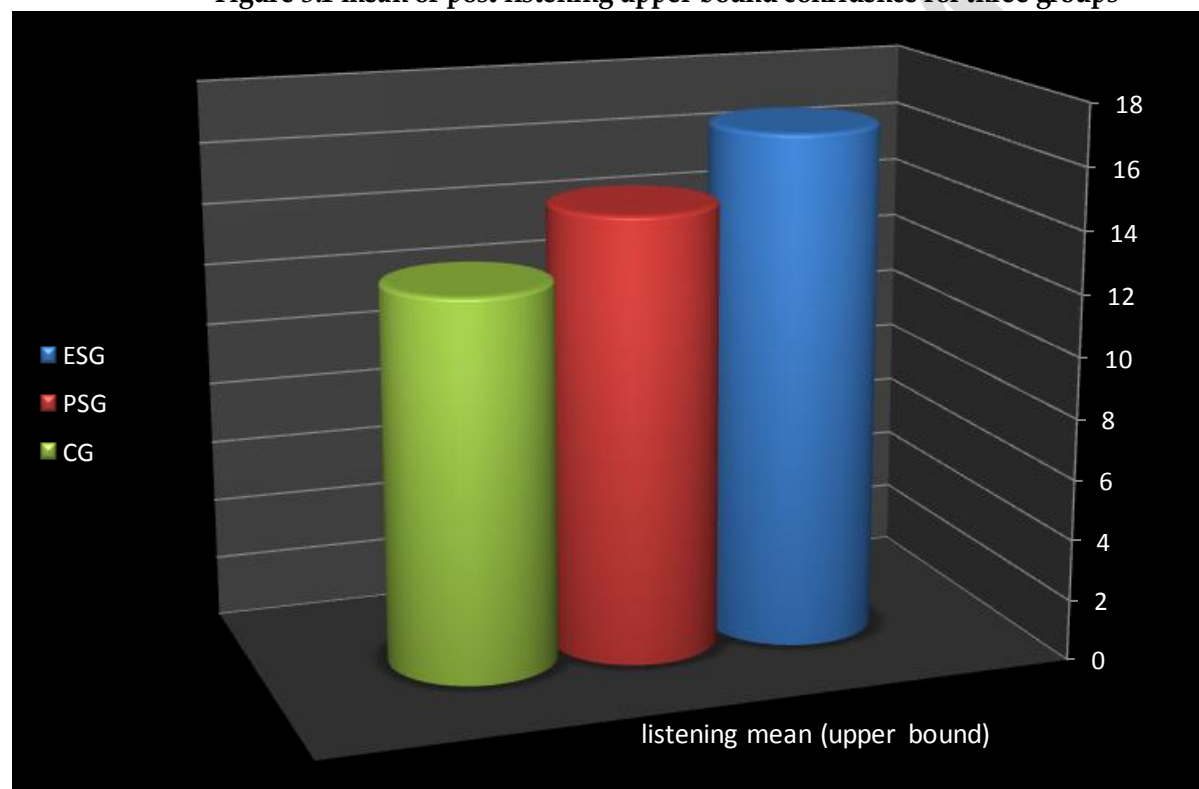


Figure (3.1) displays the upper bound of confidence interval of mean with the significant level of 0.05 for the three groups namely, ESG, PSG, and CTRL group.

3.6 Result of Study's Question

The present study was based measured on qualitative and quantitative research. To answer the research questions of this study data was measured by two types of statistical method: paired sample T-test and One-way ANOVA.

3.6.1 Research question 1: Do documentary movies' subtitle has positive effect on listening comprehension of EFL Iranian intermediate students?

While students going to learn foreign language, students should cover target language under four skill of language such as: listening, reading, speaking, writing. Listening skill is one of major skill (vandergift, 2011) whose students can learn it by various sort of teaching methods. The present study, investigate how does it can be improved while using documentary movies with subtitle to students. also,

considering its improvement or its positive effect, this study focus on which of two subtitle, English or Persian, has more effect on listening comprehension of EFL intermediate students.

To answer the first question that was mainly about the effect of documentary subtitled videos on EFL learners' listening comprehension measured data by One-way ANOVA about the ability of listening comprehension of EFL learners toward utilizing documentary subtitled videos. In this case, while-listening test consider to documentary videos whether subtitled videos or non-subtitled videos were watched by three groups. After the 8 sessions of treatment, post-listening test was calculated with ANOVA. This method concerned to calculate comparison results between groups and within groups. The result of data analysis based on ANOVA was revealed that subtitled group had better outperform than control group without any treatment.

3.6.2 Research Question 2: considering the positive effect of subtitle, which subtitle whether English or Persian has the more significant effect on listening comprehension of EFL Iranian intermediate students?

The statistical method measured for the second question was paired sample T- test the analysis of data answered to the question which type of subtitle 'Persian or English' has more effect on EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. The gathered data of pre and post listening test of both experimental groups (ESG and PSG) was compared to each other. The results revealed no significant difference between two groups. Although there is the positive effect of subtitle with regards to the result of first research question, two experimental groups in comparison related to second question had not significantly differentiated with each other before and after listening test. Both of their alpha level were $p \leq .05$; meanwhile, during the time of this study's treatment students had not significant different between their pre-listening and post-listening test.

As it was mentioned in the review of literature, most of the existing study in literature related to teaching listening skill by subtitles confirmed that one of the facilitating instrument to enhance EFL/ESL subtitled movie. Their investigation determined the positive effect of subtitled group rather than just audio or visual audio. The data analysis of the first question in this stage showed the same positive results concern to subtitled groups toward control group without subtitle; but, the second question's data revealed no significant difference among the subtitled groups in this study.

4. Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, the use of documentary subtitled movies has positively effect on the listening comprehension ability of EFL learners. Therefore, with respect to the result of finding, instructors could use this method base on the fruitful effect of this investigation. Movies as a multimedia instrument in teaching listening make students more attribution and motivation to learn listening skill. Students have more concentration while speakers are talking regard their action, gestures, facial expressions, and information by written text on screen. Although there are various types of movies, the documentary movie with its Standard English language and its standard's rate speed speech which could be more useful for teaching listening skill to students than other interesting movies which might be distract students from their main purpose of learning. "Multimedia applied in teaching can create a relaxing and non-threatening learning environment in which learners' motivation and self-esteem can be promoted and learners' anxiety can be reduced" (Warschauer, 1997, p. 478; cited in Fang, 2010: 10). For language teachers, a set of pedagogical implications can be drawn based on the results of the study. As the findings demonstrated, the freshman university students improve more in their listening comprehension ability by using subtitled movie in their oral interpretation course.

Multimedia teaching plays an essential role with students' anxiety and leads to increase that, and heightens the importance of "interaction" between teachers and students. Students can access massive information with the help of multimedia application and also they are more attracted to learning. Moreover, Brown (2006) mentioned that "listening must be done in real time; there is no second chance, unless, of courses the listeners specifically ask for repetition" (p. 3). In this issue, depends on the results of this study, written text of movie with the same of its oral language more facilitates students to decrease information that they could miss them. Additionally, students' anxiety will be reduced even if they are not able to

understand a word or phrase which they are not familiar depend on their knowledge, they will find them in subtitles frequently and simultaneously without miss information, therefore they focus more on listening.

In sum up, it should be noted that, subtitles give more motivations to focus on context of movies consider to L2 written text that students could link between oral pronunciation and written form of word. Moreover, the same oral language of movie and written text facilitate to enhance learners' listening comprehension ability. Another point which should be considered in using movies for teaching listening is the length of the movie to be appropriate for learners' tolerance in class. According to the studies existing in current study, educational movies should be shown around 3- 6 minutes; in other words, the less educational movies length is presented, the more students' listening comprehension is expected. Soong (2012) further suggested that, "if a film is too long and too difficult for EFL students, they won't show any interest in it" (p. 132), therefore these kinds of films are not suitable to be used in teaching a foreign language. Documentary movies expected to be one of the most appropriate types of movies regard to teaching listening comprehension to students. Overall, from results I would suggest that teachers use subtitled movies permanently in their oral course, so that they can gain hopefully more and effective outcomes in order to teach listening comprehension.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COLLABORATION AND TEACHER SELF-REGULATION DEVELOPMENT A STUDY OF IRANIAN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between collaboration among pre-service teacher trainees and their self-regulation in dealing with common problems in the language classroom. Twenty pre-service teacher trainees worked on various collaborative tasks such as Learning Together (LT), Student-Team-Achievement-Divisions (STAD), Group Investigation (GI), and Teams-Assisted Individualization (TAI) to develop strategies to handle challenges in the areas of language teaching and classroom management. Initially, the participants were given a Teacher Self-Regulation Scale (TSRS) Questionnaire and were also interviewed to discover the extent to which they engaged in self-regulation. Eventually, after 10 sessions, the TSRS Questionnaire was again employed to find out if there has been any change(s) in their self-regulation. In addition, when the trainees started to teach in their real classes, they were asked to keep a diary during their first two months of teaching to record their daily teaching difficulties and to suggest if and how they were able to draw on their collaborative experience during their teacher training course. The analysis of data reveals that the collaborative experience had a substantially positive effect on the trainees' self-regulation as it helped them develop a more positive attitude towards teaching, experience less anxiety and feel more motivated to help their students learn the language. The data also indicates that the trainees were able to largely utilize the knowledge shared during their collaboration with other trainees and could, as a result, improve their teaching practice.

KEYWORDS: Collaboration, Learning Together, Student-Team-Achievement-Divisions, Group Investigation, and Teams-Assisted Individualization, self-regulation, pre-service teachers.

Introduction

Collaborative learning is one of the most pedagogically significant areas of research and practice in education. Collaborative learning happens in the situations when students work together to accomplish shared learning goals (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Each student can achieve his or her learning goal if and only if the other group members achieve theirs (Deutsch, 1962). Over the past decades, collaborative learning has become an extensively utilized instructional tool in primary schools through graduate school levels, in all fields of studies, in all aspects of teaching and learning, in modern and traditional learning situations, and even in after-school programs. Collaborative learning is widely used in teacher preparation programs, pre-service professional development, and practitioner publications. The use of

collaborative learning saturates education in the way that it is hard to find books on instructional methods, or instructional materials that do not name and use it.

On the other hand, self-regulation is defined as "self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and adapted to the attainment of personal goals" (Zimmerman, 2000). It encompasses "cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral elements that provide the people with the capacity to adjust their actions and goals to achieve desired results in light of changing environmental conditions" (Zeidner, et al 2000, Dörnyei, 2005). According to Pintrich, self-regulation includes three types of strategies: (a) cognitive learning strategies, (b) metacognitive or self-regulatory strategies to control cognition, and (c) resource management strategies (Pintrich 1999, pp.459-470.). Cognitive and metacognitive strategies include rehearsal, elaboration, and organizational strategies as well as self-regulation.

It should be emphasized that educational contexts have extensively used theories and practices related to self-regulation, and have hence contributed to the progress of self-regulated learning theory. Self-regulation is an activity or approach that students are involved in their personal, behavioral, motivational, and cognitive learning behaviors in order to fulfill significant and valuable academic goals (Zimmerman 1998:73-86.). Self regulated learning theory claims that self-regulation is categorized into four levels: observational, imitative, self-controlled, and self-regulated levels (Zimmerman 2000:13-39).

Moreover, self-regulated learning includes three main components there are three basic components for self-regulated such as: cognition, metacognition, and motivation- which can be further subdivided into several subcomponents (Schraw Crippen and Hartley 2006, pp.111-139). Cognitive component entails simple strategies problem solving, and critical thinking. Metacognitive component consists of two general components- knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition- each includes several subcomponents as: declarative, procedural, conditional knowledge and planning, monitoring, evaluation, respectively. Finally, the motivation component includes two subcomponents: self-efficacy and epistemological beliefs the former indicating the individual's awareness of his/her ability to perform tasks effectively and the latter revealing his philosophical approach to teaching and learning.

2. Research on Collaboration

Most of the current major educational reforms call for extensive, meaningful teacher collaboration. Two of the reforms--tech prep and the integration of vocational and academic education--attempt to dissolve the dichotomy between academic study and preparation for work; in these reforms, teacher collaboration is essential: Academic and vocational teachers are expected to work together to alter the curriculum and pedagogy within subjects, make connections between subjects, and explore new relationships between the school and the world of work.

By and large, however, teacher collaboration is a departure from existing normal rates and, in most schools; teachers are colleagues in name only. They work out of sight and sound of one another, plan and make ready their lessons and details alone, and strive on their own to find a solution for their instructional, curricular, and management problems.

In spite of this, substantial collegial relationships among teachers are encouraged in some schools, and considerable benefits and advantages for students, teachers and school are caused by teacher collaboration. Apart from the unusual amount of teacher collegiality, there is nothing special about these schools. Some are small, some are large, some are in rural areas, and some are urban, and they depend on usual budgets. It seems that the difference between these exceptional schools and the other can be organizational.

It is not obvious from the survey how the initial decision to collaborate is made. The general main force to rectify schools and the main pressure of the Perkins Act, which concentrated in the unification of vocational and academic education, have created the circumstance for collaboration to occur. (Is there a source for this section?)

2.1. The Benefits of Teacher Collaboration

Although the results are not uniformly good, teachers who have worked together see substantial improvements in student achievement, behavior, and attitude. Teachers in a junior high school traced

their students' remarkable gains in math achievement and the virtual elimination of classroom behavior problems to the revisions in curriculum, testing, and placement procedures they had achieved working as a group. In schools where teachers work collaboratively, students can sense the program coherence and a consistency of expectations, which may explain the improved behavior and achievement.

For teachers, the isolation of the classroom is broken by collegiality and also career rewards and daily satisfactions are brought for them. It keeps away from end-of-year burn-out and stimulates enthusiasm. Instead of as an alternative to grasp for the single dramatic event or the special achievements attainment of a few children as the main source of pride, teachers are more able to notice and celebrate a pattern of accomplishments within and across classrooms (Little, 1987, p. 497). Over time, if teachers work closely together on matters of curriculum and instruction, they find themselves better equipped for classroom work. They take noticeable contentment from efficient relationships that withstand differences in viewpoints and occasional conflict.

Teacher collegiality avoids the sink-or-swim, trial-and-error mode that beginning teachers usually encounter. It brings experienced and beginning teachers closer together to strengthen the competence and confidence of the novice.

New curriculum or the need to refine an existing curriculum introduces these complexities, which are challenging. Teacher teamwork makes these complex tasks more attainable, stimulates new ideas, and improves coherence in a school's curriculum and instruction. Together, teachers have the organizational skills and resources to attempt innovations that would exhaust the energy, skill, or resources of an individual teacher. The results that one draws from the experiences of closely orchestrated, task-oriented groups in schools are compatible with conclusions drawn from other studies of organization: It was considered that the accomplishments of a proficient and well-organized group are widely better than the accomplishments of isolated individuals (Little, 1987, p. 496).

It can thus be argued that schools benefit from teacher collaboration in several ways:

- Through formal and informal training sessions, study groups, and conversations about teaching, teachers and administrators get the opportunity to get smarter together.
- Teachers are better prepared to support one another's strengths and accommodate weaknesses. Working together, they reduce their individual planning time while greatly increasing the available pool of ideas and materials.
- Schools become better prepared and organized to examine new ideas, methods, and materials. The faculty becomes adaptable and self-reliant.
- Teachers are organized to ease the strain of staff turnover, both by providing systematic professional assistance to beginners and by explicitly socializing all newcomers, including veteran teachers, to staff values, traditions, and resources. (Is there a source for this section?)

2.2. Increasing Student Achievement

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), assert that there is "a rarity of research investigating the extent to which teachers' collaborative school development practices are related to student achievement. Most existing investigation is in the form of surveys and case studies, which do not afford proof of cause-and-effect relationships. A study in a large urban school district in the Midwest was carried out by Goddard and colleagues for investigating the issue. First, the researchers considered 452 teachers in 47 elementary schools to discover the extent to which they worked collectively to affect decisions related to school progress, curriculum and instruction, and professional development. To determine the relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement, reading and math achievement scores for 2536 fourth-graders, controlling for school context and student characteristics such as prior achievement were used by researchers. Finally, a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and differences among schools in mathematics and reading achievement was found by them.

Goddard and colleagues argue further studies are needed on collaborative practices but that their study provides initial support for efforts to improve student achievement by elevating teacher collaboration around curriculum, instruction and professional development.

3. Research on self-regulation

As mentioned above, self-regulation is defined as 'self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals' (Zimmerman 2000: 14). Zeidner, Boekaerts and Pintrich (2000: 751) assert that self-regulation involves 'cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral components that provide the individual with the capacity to adjust his or her actions and goals to achieve desired results in light of changing environmental conditions'.

According to Pintrich (1999), self-regulation comprises three general classes of strategies: (a) cognitive learning strategies; (b) metacognitive or self-regulatory strategies to control cognition; and (c) resource management strategies.

Cognitive approach involves rehearsal, elaboration and organizational strategies. Fundamental practice includes reciting or repeating items in a list. Activation of information in working memory entails application of these strategies which seem to influence consideration and encoding processes. As Pintrich (1999) declares, these strategies by themselves do not result in higher order processing of materials to be learned. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of material for learning, elaboration and organizational strategies should be in used. Elaboration strategies including paraphrasing, summarizing and analogy-making, play vital roles in keeping information in long-term memory by creating internal connections between the items. Via organizational strategies, learners choose suitable information and apply structure on the learned materials.

On the other hand, metacognitive strategies, which are the second type of self-regulation, comprise knowledge about cognition and self-regulation of cognition (Flavell 1979). The current models of metacognitive control or self-regulating strategies have mentioned three general kinds of strategies: planning, observing and regulating. Planning strategies help learners in planning their use of cognitive strategies and in activating pertinent prior knowledge (Pintrich, 1999). Some samples of planning activities include scanning a text and forming making questions prior to reading a text. The second subcategory – monitoring activities – involves the application of self-assessment methods, test-taking strategies and comprehension checking techniques in opposition to self-set purpose (Weinstein and Mayer 1986). These observing and controlling techniques, signaling breakdowns in comprehension, hint at the need for regulating strategies to repair deficits in understanding and to re-establish performance in compatibility with self-set goals. Examples of self-regulatory strategies while reading, for instance, include re-reading materials, backtracking to check comprehension and skipping subsidiary ideas (Pintrich, 1999).

The third group of self-regulation – resource management strategies – is determined in helping individuals not only adapt to their environment but also assist the environment to their goals and standards (Pintrich, 1999). Resource management strategies include handling time, effort, study context and other individuals, such as teachers and peers via the application of help-seeking strategies. Theories and practices associated with self-regulation have been extensively applied to educational settings and school learning, leading to the development of self-regulated learning theory. Self-regulation of learning is a stage that needs students to become proactively involved in their personal, behavioral, motivational and cognitive learning endeavors in order to achieve important and vital academic goals (Zimmerman 1998). Experiential studies have showed an important relationship between academic achievement and the use of regulatory skills and an understanding of how to use these skills (Cross and Paris 1988; Zimmerman and Schunk 2001). As Weimer (2002: 102) has mentioned: 'self-regulated learners proactively seek out (try to find –look for) information when needed and take steps to learn it. When they face difficulties such like poor study conditions, confusing teachers, etc, they find a way to succeed'. Self-regulatory strategies can also improve effective independent learning skills such as writing (Zimmerman and Kitsantas 1999) and reading (Pressley et al. 1992).

Since research has shown that students' use of self-regulatory behaviors is vital for academic achievement, it is plausible that teachers' use of self-regulatory behaviors should positively affect their teaching practice.

Baylor, Kitsantas and Chung (2001) noted that students' learning during self-directed practice and also teachers' skills in developing effective lesson plans can be directed and improved by teacher regulatory strategies. Davis and Gray (2007), representing the strategies for developing self-regulation, supported self-regulation as an avenue to professional development. Similarly, Monshi Toussi, Boori and Ghanizadeh (2011) announced a significant positive connection between EFL teachers' self-regulation and their teaching effectiveness. It seems probable, conversely, to suppose that teachers who have need of self-regulatory skills will find it hard or even impossible to construct the self-regulation of their students.

A significant relationship between academic success and the use of regulatory skills and an understanding of how to use these skills were deduced from empirical studies (Cross and Paris 1988, pp.131-142, Zimmerman and Schunk 2001, pp. 289-307). In a similar way, it has been found that "self-regulated learners seek out information when needed and take steps to master it. When they confuse teachers, they find a way to succeed" (Weimer M., 2002). It has also been showed that efficient autonomous learning areas such as writing and reading are improved by self regulatory strategies. (Zimmerman and Kitsantas A., 1999, pp. 241-250, Pressley M., El-Dinary P.B., Stein S., Marks M.B. and Brown R., 1992, pp.333-358)

The trends observed with respect to student self-regulation also generalize to teachers. It has been claimed that students' learning during self-directed practice can be guided by teacher self regulatory strategies and also their skills in developing effective lesson plans can be improved (Baylor A., Kitsantas A. and Chung H., 2001, pp.56-59). Davis and Gray supported self regulation as an avenue to professional development (Davis S.G. and Gray E.S., 2007, pp. 31-47). Viewing from another perspective, it seems plausible to presume teachers who lack self-regulatory skills will find it difficult or even impossible to construct the self-regulation of their students.

Because of the potent role of teacher self-regulation in the teaching and learning processes, it seems essential to explore the factors that may contribute to its development. Based on the theoretical contentions stated earlier, CT appears to be one of the constructs associated with self-regulation (Phan 2010, pp. 284-292 and Pintrich 1999, pp. 459-470).

To empirically examine the assumption of the present study, an effort was made to investigate the possible Relationship between Collaboration and Pre-service Teachers' Self-regulation Development. In so doing, the following research question was posed and investigated in the present study:

1) Is there any relationship between collaboration and pre-service teachers' self-regulation development?

4.1. Participants

The participants of the present study were selected from B.A. students of TEFL studying in Tabaran Institute of Higher Education, Mashhad, Iran. Their age ranged from 19 to 23 and based on the prior completion of the course, they were all considered intermediate TEFL students, studying in the 6th semester. thus, they were regarded homogenous.

4.2. Instruments

4.2.1. Teacher Self-Regulation Scale (TSRS)

To assess teacher self-regulation, the researchers utilized the 'Teacher Self-Regulation Scale (TSRS)', designed and validated by Yesim, Sungur & Uzuntiryaki (2009) was developed based on Zimmerman's self - regulation model and semi-structured interviews with pre-service and in-service teachers; and consists of 40 items on a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. One item was also included as a filler item which was not used in further analyses. Confirmatory factor analysis yielded the following nine factors.

Table 1. Nine factors of TSRS along with the corresponding descriptions

Factor	Description
1. Goal setting	Process of establishing objectives to guide actions during instruction

2. Intrinsic interest	Beliefs concerning personal interest in the profession
3. Performance goal orientation	Goals to do better than others as a teacher and to have others believe in one's competence
4. Mastery goal orientation	Goals to improve competence in teaching and master the teaching task against self-set standards
5. Self-instruction	Process of monitoring one's own performance in teaching and making instructional changes when necessary
6. Emotional control	Strategies for controlling and regulating affect, mood, and emotions
7. Self-evaluation	Process of evaluating current teaching performance by comparing it with previously established goals and past performance
8. Self-reaction	Affective responses following a teaching performance
9. Help-seeking	Getting help from others to resolve problems encountered in teaching process

Scores on the 40 items were averaged to form an overall indicator of the teachers' self-regulation, defined by Yesim, Sungur & Uzuntiryaki (2009) "as teachers' own self-regulated strategies, which they use during lessons" (p. 354). In this study, the total reliability of the scale, estimated via Cronbach's alpha, was 0.88.

4.3. Procedure

Twenty pre-service teacher trainees worked on various collaborative tasks such as Learning Together (LT), Student-Team-Achievement-Divisions (STAD), Group Investigation (GI), and Teams-Assisted Individualization (TAI) to develop strategies to handle challenges in the areas of language teaching and classroom management.

Initially, the participants were given a Teacher Self-Regulation Scale (TSRS) Questionnaire and were also interviewed to discover the extent to which they were engaged in self-regulation.

Eventually, after 10 sessions, the TSRS Questionnaire was again employed to find out if there has been any change(s) in their self-regulation.

In addition, when the trainees started to teach in their real classes, they were asked to keep a diary during their first two months of teaching to record their daily teaching difficulties and to suggest if and how they were able to draw on their collaborative experience during their teacher training course.

5. Data collection and data analysis

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of TSRS in Pre-administration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
TSRS	20	109	219	164	20.5

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of TSRS in Post-administration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
TSRS	20	121	239	180	23.5

As indicated in tables 2 and 3, there was a statistically significant growth in the self-regulation development of Iranian teacher trainees from pre-administration of TSRS to the second administration.

Table 4. Independent *t*-test for gender and self-regulation

t-test for equality means					
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
Self-regulation	.367	91	.0765	2.322	4.875

As Table 3 shows, gender does not play any significant role in teachers' total self-regulation ($t=0.36$, $p<.05$).

Apart from statistical analysis mentioned above, the researchers also investigated diaries of teacher trainees.

The analysis of data reveals that the collaborative experience had a substantially positive effect on the trainees' self-regulation as it helped them develop a more positive attitude towards teaching, experience less anxiety and feel more motivated to help their students learn the language. The data also indicates that the trainees were able to largely utilize the knowledge shared during their collaboration with other trainees and could, as a result, improve their teaching practice.

6. Results and Discussion

The present study was an attempt to discover if the inclusion of collaborative tasks in teacher training courses can inform and improve the trainees' classroom teaching practice. The analysis of quantitative data indicates that the trainees benefitted noticeably in emotional control, self-evaluation, self-reaction and help-seeking. Nevertheless, the data shows that collaboration amongst pre-service teachers did not have a significant effect on goal setting, intrinsic interest, performance/mastery goal orientation and self-instruction. Likewise, the data suggests that there is no significant relationship between the gender of the participants and their overall self-regulation in teaching.

Overall, the findings of the study highlight that collaboration amongst teacher trainees has psychological and sociocultural implications for language teachers and teacher trainers. As regards the psychological effects of the study, one can easily notice that the trainees have benefitted from collaborative tasks both affectively and cognitively. This, as the data points out, is mostly in the area of teacher emotions where the trainees have revealed more self-confidence, emotional awareness and competence in dealing with their everyday classroom challenges. The data also evinces that the teachers had a more positive attitude towards their teaching because the bonding they developed in the teacher training sessions was emotionally empowering for them.

As stated earlier, the collaborative tasks had some effect on the teachers' cognition, but this as suggested by the data was not significant. This is perhaps because early teaching experiences are mostly characterized by emotional intensity and conceivably one's teaching is mostly fraught with anxiety. It can be argued, in all likelihood the trainees mostly draw on the knowledge and skills they acquired in the formal training component of their training which focuses on methods and procedures. The trainees also show a tendency to depend on the knowledge of the trainers as a more "reliable source" minimizing the likely effects of collaborative tasks in this area.

It should further be emphasized that the collaborative tasks, due to their sociocultural nature, have a significant effect on preparing teachers for their careers as these tasks offer the trainees an opportunity to share their own stories, dilemmas and predicaments and to also listen to their peers. Such an opportunity endows the teachers with requisite emotional resources to deal with their daily tasks and to have better awareness of the mostly unpredictable nature of second/foreign language teaching. Learning to talk to fellow teachers at early stages of one's training creates a desire to engage in professional discourse, encourages collegiality and thus boosts the morale of the trainees. While more research is needed in this area, it can be concluded that the inclusion of collaborative tasks in teacher training courses can have major pedagogical implications for both the trainers and the trainees; the

former can improve their relevant training skills and the latter can feel more self-assured about themselves and their teaching.

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**CUMMING'S (2007) TEACHING APPROACH TO POETRY BASED
ON THE SOCIO-CONSTRUCTIVE VIEW OF LEARNING: THE
EFFECT ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' POEM
COMPREHENSION**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effect of using two different approaches to teaching poetry in Iranian EFL classes. The question this study tried to answer was whether using Cumming's (2007) approach to teaching poetry would have any effect-as compared to the existing method-on Iranian EFL learners' poem comprehension. To investigate possible answer(s) to this question, 30 Iranian EFL learners (junior translator trainees) were selected via applying an OPT test and were randomly assigned into two groups of experimental (N=15) and control (N=15). A pretest of poem comprehension was administered to elicit the potential comprehension ability of the participants. Then, the experimental group of the study was treated by using the Cumming's approach while the control group by the existing method of teaching poetry. The groups were then exposed to the posttest of poem comprehension (a repetition of the pretest of the study). The data of the study were analyzed via running an Independent Samples T-test between the posttests of the study as well as two separate Pearson correlations between the pretest and the posttest of each group. The results indicated that the experimental group of the study received a higher mean in the posttest, and thus, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected.

KEY WORDS: Cumming's Approach, Poetry, Socio-Constructive View, Poem Comprehension, Translator Trainees

Introduction and Literature Review

Rahimy and Pourkalhor (2011) in their study on the methods of quantification of literature have focused on different issues in literature teaching and research. Accordingly, the nature of literature has always been a controversial issue, thus, it has not yet been possible to present a comprehensive definition of literature that is able to cover its aspects totally. They quoted from Maley (2001) that literature has traditionally been considered as a set of the best writings available in each language or society, and that educators have considered its appropriateness for studying a sort of rule although such an approach was totally opposed during the post-modern era. However, literature has undergone significant developments during centuries; a number of reasons for its developments can be the use of concepts including 'parallelism', 'rhyme', 'weight', and 'metaphor' in texts with no literary genre such as commercials and public declarations.

Rahimy and Pourkalhor (2011) considered the skeleton of literature basically related to its claims about classroom teaching because the scope of literature covers the text types used for the purpose. They believed that classical texts usually contain linguistic, historical and cultural genres, which are considered useful as their contemporary usages. Quasi-literary texts such as propaganda lack those

genres, and it is for such a reason that students immediately consider them as 'simple'. Literature issues can be discussed generally in two topics of: 'the nature and applications of literature' and 'trends in literary studies' that will be elaborated on in this article. The first topic will deal with various forms of literature represented in different literary texts like prose, poem, etc. and then, the applications of literature, for instance, its role in teaching English language will be explained. The second topic will be elaborated under four sub-titles: teaching literature, research in literature, testing literature and literary criticism.

They stated that literature enjoyed a vast nature and different applications. They quoted from Moody (1971) that thinks of the word 'literature' that has trace in every statement. This shows that literature is not merely a simple word, rather, it is an extension that refers to various activities: generally, one of the usages of literature is that it is looked at as a branch of human activities different from agriculture and science, in which no race and nationality is considered a priority.

On the other hand, literature can be assumed a sort of phenomenon representing the specifications of certain nations or groups of people like French literature, English literature, American literature, Arabic literature, Indian literature, African literature, etc. in which case literature will certainly be significant cumulatively, and the significance is beyond the individuals that have established and used it. Literature can also be seen from the standpoint of circulations and movements, which are sometimes cross-cultural (specific literary eras can be found in different cultures), for example, the renaissance literature, romantic literature, surrealist literature etc. Another aspect of literature consists of its application to an issue or a topic like children's literature, industry literature, linguistics literature, in which literature means all the content written about the mentioned topics or issues.

The role of literature in daily verbal or non-verbal communication is the next role of literature. If we suppose that the nature of literature is, in fact, the role of language, then, people's whole daily verbal communication will be considered as literature. Examples for verbal communications can be daily family conversations, shopping and purchasing, personal correspondence as well as books and articles etc. Care must be taken of course that the richer is the literature, the richer will be the verbal and non-verbal communications unless specific language or literature has undergone historical changes due to some reasons.

Teaching Literature and Teaching Poems

The vastness of the concept of 'Literature' and the variety of its dimensions cause that its teaching seems complicated in different forms and levels. According to Moody (1971), the general principles of teaching literature are identically applicable to all forms of it ranging from prose to poems, novels or short stories. Accordingly, the teacher of literature is duty-bound to make the learners discover what literature is; s/he should only provide them with suggestions, also guide and encourage them when necessary.

On the other hand, the knowledge needed for the teacher of literature consists of: 'Linguistic Knowledge', and 'Operational Linguistic Knowledge'. Linguistic knowledge means the knowledge of phonological, lexical, and the word order systems for sentence and larger units. Operational linguistic knowledge means knowledge about informativeness, expression of feelings, persuasiveness, organization, thought and realities as well as hypotheses in general. Teacher of literature should also raise motivation and interest towards literature in the learners (particularly EFL learners).

Teaching literature can be done in the form of teaching poems, prose and teaching drama whether in escape or in interpretation. Each literary item can be taught via its own method(s). For instance, poems can be taught using oral methods such as reading aloud, or via practical methods including summarization, outline explanation and writing poems. Also, teaching prose can be implemented in the form of general reading while using techniques such as exemplification, suggestion of study methods, providing literary reading facilities and finally, encouragement by the teacher. Teaching drama can be done in the form of explaining drama, role-playing and discussing the drama. However, teaching of these dimensions is possible and different in different cultures with different pedagogical situations.

Cubukcu (2010) believes that today's teachers may be intuitively aware that poetry has much more to offer, but, perhaps because of negative experiences in their own school life, they have difficulty and they show

reluctance to use poetry in classes for their pupils, due to the anxiety and worry poetry evokes for them. If "the teacher is the key to the delivery of the curriculum and the teacher's own experiences, actions and attitudes will exert their own influence" (Wade and Sidaway, 1990, p. 75), then it would seem that any framework for helping teachers to teach poetry must acknowledge teachers' feelings, attitude and experiences about poetry, and encourage them to engage with poetry in a positive and nonthreatening way. This study is aimed to encourage teachers to develop their understanding of poetry to enhance creative thinking skills in the classroom.

Poems pose a challenging cognitive task. Readers must first have a basic understanding of a concept or emotion and then transform that understanding into meaningful creative expression by exploring and distilling complex ideas. Understanding a poem involves the construction of meaning, enabling its writer to see new possibilities. The rhythm and structure of poetry communicate far more than simply presenting information; the construction of imagery and choice of specific words is as meaningful as the content (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Socio-Constructivism in Teaching Poetry

Cubukcu (2010) gives an elaborated description on sociological issues in teaching poetry. Accordingly, research in cognitive science (Newman et al., 1989; Rogoff and Lave, 1984) has shown that everyday experience of the learners is the foundation upon which they construct an 'intuitive understanding' (Vosniadou, 1992, p. 349) of their cultural environment. This understanding can also be referred to as naive knowledge and could be considered by teachers as being unimportant. But, as Boekaerts (1992) argues, for high quality knowledge acquisition to take place it is extremely important to make use of the creative and critical thinking skills of the learners. Vosniadou (1992) shows that when 'school knowledge' contradicts experiential knowledge, children assign it to separate domains rather than extending and developing previous knowledge. It therefore remains separate from, rather than a part of, the restructuring that goes into appropriation.

It is well known that the theory of socio-constructivism can be applied to the teaching of many different subjects in the curriculum including foreign languages (Littledyke and Huxford, 1998). A more traditional view of construction of knowledge by mainstream educators has been that knowledge is constructed individually with little reference given to the surrounding environment. However, social constructivism sees personal constructs being developed in a social context, with particular emphasis in Western schooling on language as the main communicator of those experiences. Tobin puts it succinctly: "Social interactions using a shared language enable the teacher and learners to communicate and test the fit of their knowledge with others' representations. When the fit reaches an acceptable level it is concluded that a consensus has been achieved, in the sense that personal constructions bear a family resemblance to the constructions of others with whom negotiation has occurred" (1998, p.195).

A teaching approach to poetry based on the socio-constructive view of learning is presented below (Cumming, 2007)

Orientation

Arousing students' interest, imagination, creativity, emotion and intellect by engaging in poetic experiences that are easily accessible, e.g. reading and discussing a poem together on a subject that students can relate to.

Elicitation/Structuring

Helping students to engage with poetry and with each other's ideas by giving time for students to respond individually and corporately. This might involve periods of quiet meditation 'thinking time' followed by sharing of responses such as ideas, feelings and experiences that are stimulated by engaging with the poem.

Intervention/Restructuring

Encouraging students to experiment and play with language through engaging in activities such as sharing favourite lines, writing in different forms and communicating their thoughts and feelings in exciting ways. Students are to see poetry as an exciting medium of expressing feelings, thoughts and ideas, which can be worked on together, or individually, and shared among the classroom community. The in depth meanings are clarified.

Review

Helping students to recognise the significance of their play with language by sharing what they have found out about poetry, about themselves and about the constructs of language through meta-language.

Application Is the Last Stage in Creative and Critical Thinking

Relating work on poetry to wider constructs of language development in school and home leads to lively discussions. Teachers might encourage bridges between home and school knowledge by relating achievements to literary environments they engage in outside of the classroom and by stimulating students to participate in the development of the classroom community through active involvement and acknowledgement of private and corporate literary practices. This represents a generic approach to the teaching of poetry but the following demonstrates how socio-constructivist principles can be applied specifically in a literary session. In the following session, the poem *The Rose and the Bee* is chosen as the focus for the event.

Research Question and Hypothesis of the study

Based on the literature reviewed in this study, the research question and the hypothesis are as follows:

RQ: Does using Cumming's (2007) approach to teaching poetry have any effect-as compared to the existing method-on Iranian EFL learners' poem comprehension?

H₀: Using Cumming's (2007) approach to teaching poetry has no effect-as compared to the existing method-on Iranian EFL learners' poem comprehension.

Methodology

Participants

Adopting a quasi-experimental design, the participants of the study were 30 junior translator trainees from the Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch (Tonekabon-Iran). They were selected from among a population of 150 translator trainees via administering an Oxford Placement Test (See next section) with the criterion of at least 1 standard deviation below the mean both for the purpose of homogeneity and for witnessing the possible progression of the under-mean participants in terms of poem comprehension ability.

Materials and Procedures

The materials of this study contained the material for the proficiency test, the material for the pretest, the material for the treatment and finally the material for the posttest of the study. The material for the proficiency test consisted of the OPT (40 minutes) to homogenise the participants of the study in terms of their proficiency level. It contained 15 items of grammatical points, 15 items of vocabulary test of synonyms and two reading comprehension tests with 5 false/true items for each with a total score of 40 items and as a result 40 scores. The material for the pretest and the posttest of the study (20 minutes each) contained two poems selected from the participants' textbook: 'Poetry by Laurence Perrine (1974), Harcourt Brace Jovanovich' with 5 essay-type comprehension questions for each and the inter-rater reliability of 0.66 ($r = 0.66$). The material for the treatment of the experimental group of the study contained 5 poems with an instruction sheet in which the five main principles of Cumming's approach to teaching poems (Orientation, Eliciting/Structuring, Intervention/ Restructuring, and Review) were included and followed by the teacher. Finally, the material for the posttest of the study contained the

material used in the pretest since the effect of the treatment was supposed to be observed. All tests were administered in the form of paper and pencil.

Methods of Analyzing Data

The data of the study were analysed via running an Independent Samples T-test between the posttests of the study and two separate One-Way ANCOVAs between the pretest and the posttest of the experimental and the control group of the study. The t-test was used to show the possible difference between the means of the two groups of the study and the one-way ANCOVA was used to show the possible progress in the participants' mean score from the pretest to the posttest of the study.

Result

Findings

The findings of the current study have been illustrated in tables 1 to 4 as follows:

Table 1. The summary of the descriptive statistics of the pretests of the study

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PreEx	15	15.33	1.97
PreCon	15	15.15	1.90

Table (1) indicates the summary of the descriptive analysis of the data in the pretest of poem comprehension in the experimental and the control group of the study. Here, the means of the groups do not show significant difference which means that the groups have been homogeneous.

Table 2. The summary of the descriptive statistics of the posttests of the study

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PosEx	15	17.53	2.147
PosCon	15	15.75	2.134

Table (2) indicates the summary of the descriptive analysis of the data in the posttest of poem comprehension in the experimental and the control group of the study. Here, the means of the groups show significant differences with each other which means that the groups have been significantly different in terms of progress.

Table 3. The summary of the Independent Samples T-test of the study

T _{obs} value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	T _{crit} value
3.121	28	0.003	2.048

Table (3) indicates the summary of the inferential analysis of the data (Independent Samples T-test) between the posttest scores of poem comprehension in the experimental and the control group of the study. Here, the degree of freedom of the groups is 28 and the significance level is much lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4. Summary of the One-Way ANCOVA for the experimental group of the study

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5.470 ^a	1	5.470	5.861	0.002
Intercept	1408.714	1	1408.714	1933.816	0.000
Pretest*Posttest Experimental	5.470	1	5.470	6.961	0.012
Error	20.397	28	0.428		

Table (4) indicates the summary of the inferential analysis of the data (One-Way ANCOVA) between the pretest and the posttest scores of poem comprehension in the experimental group of the study. Here, the degree of freedom of the groups is 28 and the significance level is lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), also, the F value is 6.961 ($F = 6.961$) which is significantly higher than 1 (the base criterion to interpret the results of ANCOVA).

Table 5. Summary of the One-Way ANCOVA for the control group of the study

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5.130 ^a	1	5.130	5.861	0.002
Intercept	1408.714	1	1408.714	1933.816	0.000
Pretest*Posttest Control	5.130	1	5.130	0.981	0.002
Error	20.397	28	0.428		

Table (5) indicates the summary of the inferential analysis of the data (One-Way ANCOVA) between the pretest and the posttest scores of poem comprehension in the control group of the study. Here, the degree of freedom of the groups is 28 and the significance level is much lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), also, the F value is 0.981 ($F = 0.981$) which is lower than 1 (the base criterion to interpret the results of ANCOVA).

Hypothesis Testing, Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study reported here, now the results of hypothesis testing is presented. The hypothesis of the study targeted the possible impact of using the 5 principles of Cumming's approach to teaching poems on Iranian EFL learners' poem comprehension ability. The findings of the Independent Samples T-test of the study reject the null hypothesis: the observed t value ($t_{obs} = 3.121$, see table 3) is higher than the critical value of t ($t_{crit} = 2.048$) which confirms the existence of a significant difference between the experimental and control group posttest scores as a result of the treatment of the study, further, the level of significance of the t value is 0.003 (Sig. = 0.003) which is significantly lower than 0.05. This shows that the difference between the groups is not by chance and has been the result of the treatment of the study.

The findings of the one-way ANCOVA also confirm the rejection of the hypothesis of the study: the F value calculated between the pretest and the posttest scores of the experimental group is higher than 1 which is indicative of a progress from the pretest of poem comprehension to the posttest of reading comprehension, and this progress is not by chance since the level of significance is 0.012 lower than 0.05 (see table 4). On the other hand, the F value calculated between the pretest and the posttest scores of the control group is lower than 1 which is indicative of no progress from the pretest of poem comprehension to the posttest of reading comprehension, and this no-progress trend is not by chance since the level of significance is 0.002 lower than 0.05 (see table 5).

Thus, it is concluded that the null hypothesis of the study is rejected and such a rejection means that applying Cumming's approach to teaching poetry has worked in the experimental group. One suggestion this study may present can be that teaching poems particularly at more advanced levels such as university levels are directed towards using cognitive/constructive models so that the learners' would be motivated to analyse literature (here poems) thoughtfully and meaningfully. Perhaps, translating poems or dealing with poems as a mere reading comprehension process makes no significant and prominent change in learners' comprehension ability. Finally, the investigation of teaching poems can, by no means, be restricted to this specific study: literature is so vast in its nature that no limitations can be posed to its studies, particularly if the goal is Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to replicate the current study on other philosophical, psychological, and/or linguistic models or theories.

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GETTING ELL STUDENTS OUT OF THEIR SHELLS: ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH WRITING

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ABSTRACT

When teaching students that speak a foreign language how to speak English or any other second language, engaging the students in the lesson is integral to the students' achievement of maximum retention of the lesson. However, engaging English language learners (ELL) students tends to be difficult due to the multitude of multicultural differences that may exist between the teacher and the many different nationalities that comprise ELL students. Further compounding the problem of engagement are language anxiety (LA) or foreign language anxiety (FLA), which are interchangeable phrases used to conceptualize the same circumstance ELL students experiences when they are asked to complete any assignment involving explicit use of the second language (L2) and become overwhelmingly nervous. Writing and group activities have both been identified as effective tools for engaging students of all paradigms in the material being taught and reducing the occurrences of LA or FLA amongst ELL students. This research explores the occurrence of LA or FLA amongst several classes of ELL students to determine how effective writing and group are at alleviating the occurrence of student anxiety in conjunction with L2 assignments and whether these tools help get ELL students out of their shells to help facilitate learning and retention of the L2 for students learning another language. The determinations extrapolated from the surveys administered to ELL students indicated that the participants were less likely to experience LA or FLA when L2 writing involved group exercises as opposed to individual exercises.

KEYWORDS: ELL, LA, FLA, anxiety, language anxiety

I. Introduction

The physical condition known as anxiety has been categorically defined as three specific forms, identified as trait anxiety, which denotes this condition as a personality trait; state anxiety that occurs when an individual experiences apprehension at a precise moment in time; and situational anxiety that occurs within the context of a well-defined situation (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Naz, 2010). The feeling of nervousness associated with language learning termed as language anxiety (LA) is a form of situational anxiety (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Naz, 2010). The term 'foreign language anxiety' (FLA) is typically used to describe a generally vague impression of apprehension or fear that can arise when English language learner (ELL) students are engaged in different kinds of activities performed both in and out of the classroom designed to facilitate the acquisition of the second language (L2) (Chen, Kyle, & McIntyre, 2008; King, 2013). Foreign language anxiety is determined to stem from a multifaceted collective of behaviors, self-perceptions, feelings, and beliefs associated with classroom language learning derived from the distinctiveness of the language learning process (Chen & Chang, 2009). In the context of this definitive explanation, three overall constituents of language anxiety have been proposed, which are test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension (Young, 1991). Although language anxiety is sometimes viewed as a helpful facilitator of successful completion of the complex tasks required of L2 learning, it can also evolve into a *debilitating anxiety*, or writing apprehension, which

cannot be easily dismissed (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Naz, 2010). The potentially harmful effects of anxiety can occur frequently in the context of L2 teaching and learning (Trang, 2012).

It has been theorized that scaffolding for ELL learners through group activities can reduce the severity of language anxiety as well as writing apprehension and help improve the outcomes for the completion of the L2 activity (Foss & Reitzel, 1988). Research concerning the efficacy of pairing ELL students in groups using associative learning techniques indicates that these situations encourage oral participation when L2 students collaborated through group learning, their motivation increased, they took more initiative, and experienced lower levels of anxiety regarding their learning (Tong, 2010; Trang, 2012). This study will explore whether writing assignments that include scaffolding are more effective at enhancing student engagement through writing by encouraging and engaging ELL students in the L2 activity as opposed to writing assignments that require individual completion.

Research Aim & Objectives

The aim of this research is to examine the impact of writing apprehension on ELL learners and their ability to retain the lesson with the intention of providing an overview of the most prominent problems as well as solutions. Second language learning should be instituted within the context of the micro-social structures of the educational setting (Campbell, Combs, Kovar, Napper-Owen, & Worrell, 2009). Integrating a socio-cultural approach addresses the need to expound on situations involving instruction in linguistic knowledge that can be improved by social and cultural institutional structures as well as the understanding of how teaching relates to the pedagogical practices and the social background of the learners (Ajayi, 2008b). In examining the paradigms involving the occurrence of language anxiety, the specific objectives of this research are to:

- Specify the attributes and characteristics of language anxiety;
- Identify the frequency or prevalence in which ELL students experience language anxiety; and
- Specify the contexts of associative learning through group scaffolding and how this supports improved learning experiences for ELL students

Learning strategies are very susceptible to the learning context as well as the students' cognitive capabilities. Different tasks require different learning strategies that will help the learner achieve predetermined learning goals (Griffiths & Parr, 2001).

Research Question & Hypothesis

In achieving these aims and objectives, this research will be guided by the following research questions:

Do ELL students experience language anxiety more frequently when they engage in L2 exercises that necessitate individual work as opposed to activities that include associative learning/scaffolding through group work?

Do L2 activities that integrate associative learning through group scaffolding improve ELL students' writing apprehension and enhance student engagement?

In seeking the answer to these research questions, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1) ELL students frequently experience language anxiety but this is greatly reduced through associative learning exercises that provide opportunities for scaffolding to assist learning.

Hypothesis 2) L2 activities that integrate associative learning strategies enhance student engagement in the writing activities and facilitate learning as well as retention of the lesson better than activities requiring individual efforts.

The overall influence of teachers on student learning must be analyzed against the findings that have established certain practices as counter-intuitive in the acquisition of a second language (Katyal, 2005). These same counter-intuitive practices have been examined to assess the relevant factors specify that teacher leadership has a pronounced effect on the degree of each student's scholastic engagement (Katyal, 2005). However, teacher leadership, student engagement and home/school interaction are three areas of import that require additional clarification. The student's desire to become engaged in scholastic activities must be voluntary in order to facilitate an environment conducive to learning and ensure the student will adhere to proper classroom etiquette and protocol.

2. Review of Literature

...written language functions as both statements and linguistic artifact, demanding of the reader an "awareness of language as language."

Patrick Hartwell

ELL Development

For ELL students, the foundation they base all future knowledge regarding language acquisition is derived from the linguistic paradigms of their mother tongue (Hussein, 2013). The increasing number of ethnically diverse students exponentially increases the likelihood that there will be numerous individuals that do not speak English as their first language and are therefore vulnerable to experiencing FLA when asked to engage in L2 activities (Gholson & Stumpf, 2005). All of the attributes of the student's daily environment can have a drastic impact on the student's ability to become literate in the target language (Feeney, Moravcik, Nolte, & Chritensen, 2010). Teachers that are properly educated in the implementation of pedagogical formats tend to be conscientious of the student's needs, so they are more successful in helping their diverse students have a positive learning experience while becoming fluent in their new language (Casteel & Ballantyne, 2010).

How students interpret and comprehend spoken words determines whether they are able to develop the phonetic skills to become literate and understand written words (Giorgis & Glazer, 2008). When students develop oral competencies, they learn how to mimic the sounds as they gain an understanding of the implications of the words being spoken to them, which increases their ability to articulate thoughts, ask questions, and be better learners. Oral competency enables students to demonstrate superior literacy aptitudes in phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, syntactic comprehension and production, as well as narrative awareness and production. Facilitation of literacy development in oral language competencies includes growth in areas that will help the student acquire the skills to become literate.

Impact of FLA & LA on Learning

Experiencing FLA or LA has been determined to have ensuing effects on L2 learning and lesson retention, which can present a significant challenge to educators as well as the student since it has substantial potential to hinder the optimal learning achievement (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Naz, 2010). The L2 teaching context may also be considered as a source of anxiety if it does not support multicultural learning and this can be challenging for educators create such an open environment within the classroom (Eberly, Joshi, Konzal, & Galen, 2010). Existing research on FLA and language learning anxiety has offered insights into the nature of LA experienced by L2 learners in their learning processes (Chen, Kyle, & McIntyre, 2008).

Strategies that include relaxation techniques have been noted to help teachers create a non-threatening and relaxing atmosphere in the ELL classroom, but the research does not indicate whether the strategy actually facilitates a reduction of anxiety on the part of each individual student in class (Ajayi, 2008a). The primary concern of such anxiety-reduction techniques has previously concentrated on the teachers' ability to help students cope with their anxiety, particularly in the language classrooms (Ajayi, 2008a). In L2 learning, one blanket solution will not adequately support the L2 development of all ELL students since the acquisition of language is a complex phenomenon, which makes FLA equally complex (Helfrich & Bosh, 2011). Additionally, the actual manifestations of LA can vary from one student to another, reflecting each student's individual differences (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). In this capacity, it is appropriate to emphasize that each student has his/her own manner of dealing with their anxiety, which corresponds to their individual characteristics.

While assumptions typically favor the notion that teachers have the responsibility to help students overcome their LA by providing a relaxing multicultural learning environment, the complex and multidimensional facets of anxiety place undue pressures on the skills of the teacher (Casteel & Ballantyne, 2010). However, providing writing assignments to ELL students has been noted as an effective tool for facilitating engagement as well as affective self-management in students (Payán & Nettles, n.d.). This

suggestion does not imply that the teachers then become exempt from their responsibility to engage students despite their anxiety, but that both teachers and students can share the responsibility so that both sides can benefit from each other in their attempts to manage language anxiety in a collaborative manner (Casteel & Ballantyne, 2010). The potential benefits of writing, which are often neglected in ELL learning contexts because of the emphasis placed on other language skills, such as listening, speaking, and reading, is worth examining based on its relevance to the development of those other skills in addition to its utility as an affective FLA managing tool (Goldenberg, 2008).

Benefits of Writing

There are several established benefits associated with the act of writing that have been cited in literature although it has also been noted that such benefits vary from one person to another, depending upon the personal level of affinity toward writing. Prewriting exercises such as brainstorming is one example of how the potential of writing can be used regardless of the different levels of ELL mastery the student has (Katyal, 2005). Additional practical benefits gained from writing can be quite different based on the individual differences in the manner in which each student approaches the various writing activities, but this does not detract from the comprehensive value that writing has for ELL learners (Samson & Collins, 2012). Basically, the true value of writing is derived from the innate qualities that permit multiple variations of the same technique to be applied in response to each student's individual needs and purposes (Wei, Brok, & Zhou, 2009).

Writing is an irreplaceable utility with notable benefits that other language or non-language alternatives cannot offer. Several specific benefits of writing include the ability to formulate tangible constructs, establish self-revealing attributes, and facilitation of deeper thought. Writing helps formulate tangible constructs because it provides opportunities for the writer to examine his/her ideas with objectivity and have the ability to scrutinize the language they produce in a way that native speakers cannot (Trang, 2012). It is through the tangible nature of writing that ELL students are able to perceive the connection between the writer and what is being written, which naturally involves negotiation of meaning through interaction between the two. Furthermore, writing enables language to be regarded as an object, or language data to be examined and discussed through the use of meta-language (Goldenberg, 2008).

Writing can be self-revealing because, unlike spoken language, writing does not require an audience other than the writer unless it is intended for either informal or formal publication and will be read by others. The personal possibility of writing provides a sense of security and comfort that enables the writers to freely explore their ideas or thoughts during as well as after the writing process, which can also contribute to the facilitation of the self-searching or self-analysis processes through deconstruction and reconstruction (Helfrich & Bosh, 2011). In such processes, beliefs or assumptions can be challenged in a retrospective manner before they are reconstructed based on self-discovery and analysis. In this respect, writing allows students to view the reality from a different perspective as it draws them into a search for a connection between cognitive and intuitive understanding of the world (Ajayi, 2008b).

The tangible nature of writing can facilitate deeper thought by providing opportunities for the critical examination of the student's ideas as well as their revision. This demonstrates that the relationship between thought and writing is not unidirectional one, but instead can be influenced either way, constructing an inter-directional or interactive relationship that facilitates the development of both thought and writing (Ajayi, 2008a). Although some theorists claim that writing has enabled abstract thought and explicit manner, the same kind of abstract thinking can also be accomplished in some forms of speech, such as lectures, since ideas in these contexts are often highly elaborated or explicit in comparison to the succinctness of some forms of writing, such as personal notes or memos (Ajayi, 2008a). This demonstrates that the relationship between thought and writing is actually interdependent, whereas improvement brings benefits to the growth and refinement of both entities. It is also suggested that the reciprocity between writing and thought is such that writing empowers specific types of, but the potential of thought is what makes writing possible even though writing can facilitate thought.

Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Language Development

Linguistic and ethnic diversity impacts the ELL student's ability to learn, particularly if the teacher has not received pedagogical training educating them on how to integrate multicultural instructional methods into their educational environment (Otto, 2010). Furthermore, a multitude of aspects within the student's environment also affect their ability to develop literacy skills that the educator must consider, such as the individual traits of the student, the learning environment, and the quality and quantity of the linguistic input the student receives within the home (Ball, 2010; Crim, et al., 2008). The nativist perspective on language development emphasizes innate linguistic capabilities as the primary contributory factor to language development in students (Morrison, 2009). This perspective of linguistic acquisition encourages educators to employ a curriculum that will allow numerous opportunities for students to explore language and explore various aspects of their growing knowledge and keep their language acquisition device (LAD) active (Morrison, 2009).

The cognitive development perspective speculates that linguistic acquisition comes with maturation and cognitive development, which is the foundation for teaching language (Ball, 2010). This perspective encourages educators to pay close attention to the cognitive developmental stages of young students to encourage stimulatory activities as precursors to the onset of linguistic development (Hill, 2007). The behaviorist perspective highlights the role of "nature" and the stimuli, responses, and reinforcements that occur in the student's environment based on 'operant conditioning' along with the notion that students are "blank slates" before they are taught through various situations and learn language through imitative speech (Decker, Decker, Freeman, & Knopf, 2009). This perspective encourages teachers to focus on the types of stimuli and reinforcements regarding language that students encounter and would encourage them to communicate verbally.

3. Research Method

For this research paper, the qualitative empirical research method was followed with an aim to examine the relationship between language anxiety and group learning. The research design elucidates the strategy used to integrate the various facets of the research project in a coherent and cohesive manner (Flick, 2011). The study involves non-numerical data, which imparts empirical attributes to the research since the information is retrieved from textual analysis of the questionnaires. As such, this enquiry will be predominantly empirical although the established framework is derived from extensive literature in this area (Creswell, 2009). Since the research will be primarily empirical, much data will be collected through observations, self-administered questionnaires with explicit instructions and discussions with willing participants (Creswell, 2009).

Research Design

A case study approach has been employed to investigate the language development in the writing and reading processes of the ELL learner. The reason for adopting the approach is that it is inductive, heuristic, and descriptive (Graziano & Raulin, 2009). Based on research that has been conducted, the case study is a careful and holistic view of the relative context of the study. With this view, the researcher chose to examine the writing, and reading experiences of the ELL learners that have attended courses taught by the researcher for easy accessibility to willing participants.

Participants

The participants are ELL learners who are studying English formally whose English proficiency ranges from beginner to upper/intermediate levels. It is very crucial to any teacher to know, and identify the learners' present strategies, strengths, and weaknesses to determine his/her baseline achievement so that any subsequent progress can be adequately measured. This will assist the teacher in implementing the new strategies so that the performance of the learners is improved. The participating students encompass 480 ELL learners that have completed the surveys completely and accurately.

Data Collection Method

The study was conducted over a course of three years using students already enrolled in a total of 24 Freshman Composition 1, Freshman Composition 2, or Business Writing classes taught by the researcher. The learner was given writing and reading exercises both individually and assigned to a group for cooperative completion. The task was to produce a writing described as creative, and the participants were also requested to read their individual writing and group writing in front of the class in order to assess their reading skills. The participants were instructed to be imaginative and produce a writing that depicts their childhood experiences for both assignments.

The respondents were made to be at ease by informing them that this was not a test, and there was no need to panic or become tense when giving answers, and that any answer given was neither wrong nor right. The participants were also instructed to ask for any clarification if needed. During the whole exercise, the researcher remained in order to observe and collect data. The respondents were given all the necessary items. A duration of thirty minutes was given to the respondents for each assignment, with an additional three minutes to read the writing out loud, and the researcher ensured that time was adhered to. Once the writing task was over, the respondent was interviewed using the survey presented in Appendix A: Aggregate Survey Results, which asked specific Likert-scaled, yes/no, or multiple choice questions that were designed to determine whether the participant experienced LA, the perceived causes, and the degree in which respondents experienced LA during individual assignments versus when they were paired with peers in group assignments.

Ethical Issues

In order not violate the ethical considerations of the respondent, all participants were fully informed by verbal, and written forms, in a language that they best understand regarding all their respective rights. Each participant was well-informed of what was required from him/her, how the information collected was to be used, and that all the information given was anonymous to protect privacy. The respondents were also asked sign a form of consent showing that he/she agreed and was providing information of their own free will.

4. Results

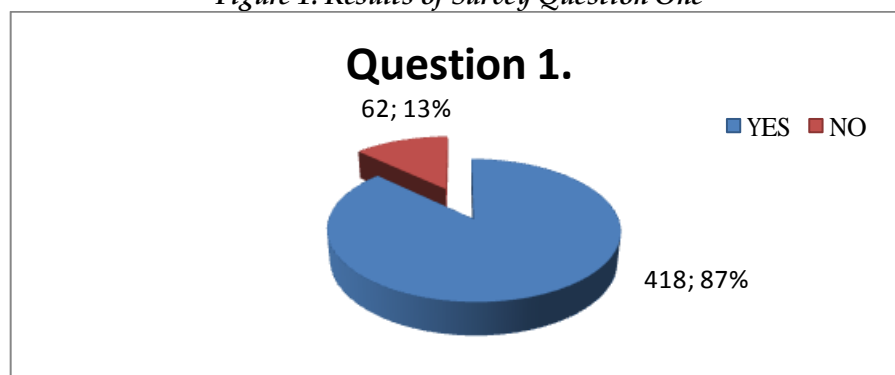
This section will detail the results of the survey questionnaire interspersed with observational notes collected by the researcher during the course of the study. The survey contained various multiple choice Likert-based questions with five or seven options, such as 'not anxious at all, slightly anxious, moderately anxious, very anxious, and extremely anxious' for the five option questions; and 'strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, neither disagree nor agree, slightly agree, agree, and strongly agree' for the seven option questions, as well as the analysis of the results for each individual survey question will first be presented followed by demographic details of the participants. The results will be presented in the form of graphical illustrations to represent the research findings. Following the presentation of the results, a discussion of the determinations that can be drawn from these results will present a comparative examination of how these results represent norms in ELL education.

Survey Results

The survey questions are precluded by instructions that state: 'This survey is intended to examine your experience with language anxiety. Language anxiety is used to describe feelings of apprehension experienced in association with completing a written L2 assignment. Please answer each question completely. Your participation is appreciated.' The survey was presented to each student written in their native tongue to avoid complications due to linguistic misinterpretation. With the understanding of LA established, the first question asked: Have you ever experienced language anxiety? The results are shown in

Figure 1: Results of Survey *Question One* below which illustrates that 87% or 418 students reported having experienced LA while 13% or 62 students stated they had not experienced it.

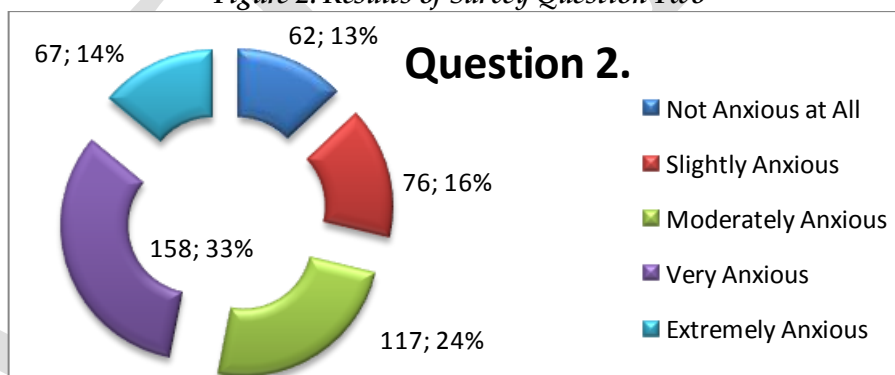
Figure 1: Results of Survey Question One



The next survey question asks: To what extent was your level of anxiety? The responses are designated based on a five-point Likert scaled selection, where the respondents could answer Not Anxious at All; Slightly Anxious; Moderately Anxious; Very Anxious; or Extremely Anxious. The respondent answers for this question are shown in

Figure 2: Results of Survey *Question Two*, shown below.

Figure 2: Results of Survey Question Two

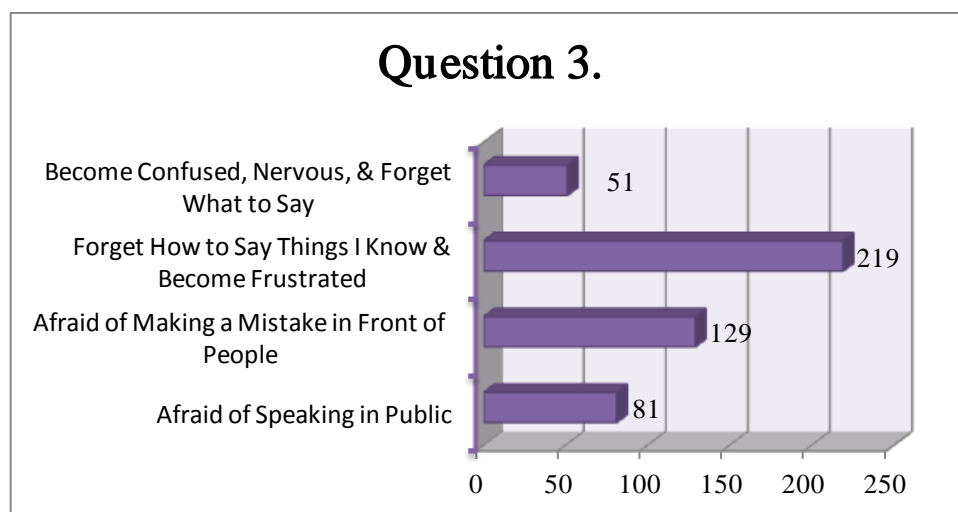


The majority of student respondents, 33% or 158, selected 'very anxious' while the next largest cohort, 24% or 117, selected 'moderately anxious'. The response, 'slightly anxious' was the next largest cohort at 16% or 76 students, while 14% or 67 students selected 'extremely anxious' and only 13% or 62 students stated they were 'not anxious at all.'

The third survey question asked: Could you tell me the reasons why you experienced language anxiety? The respondent results for this question are shown in

Figure 3: *Results of Survey Question Three* below, which shows that the vast majority of students, 45% or 219, stated that the reason why they experience LA is because they 'become frustrated' because they forget how to express their thoughts.

Figure 3: Results of Survey Question Three

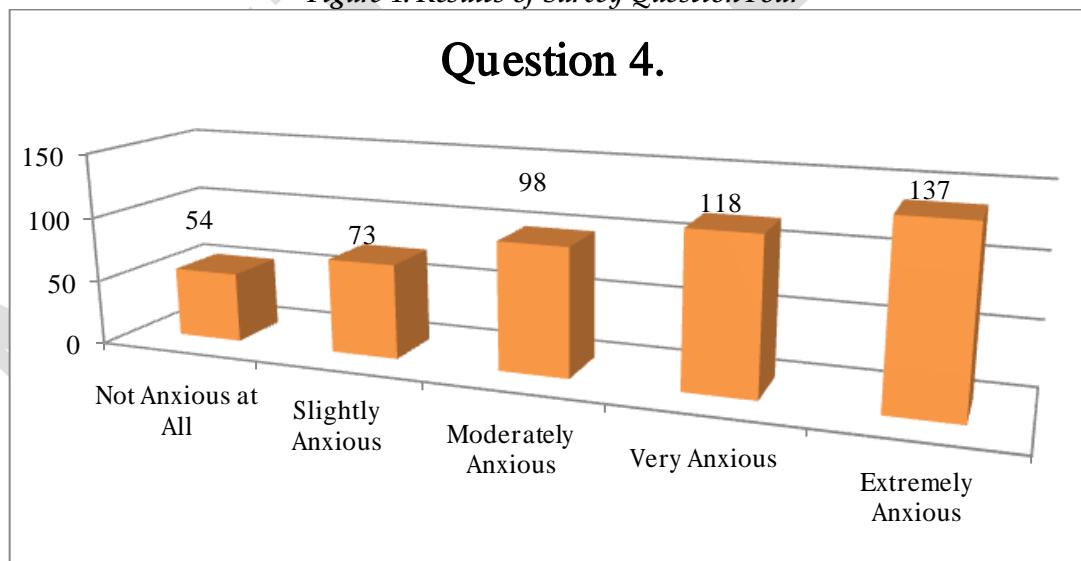


The next largest response group at 27% or 129 students stated that they are 'afraid of making a mistake' in front of their peers and 17% or 81 students said they were 'afraid of speaking in public' while 11% or 51 students said they 'become confused, nervous, and forget what to say' when asked to complete an L2 assignment.

The fourth survey question asked about the participants' level of anxiety in an independent L2 assignment, shown in

Figure 4: Results of Survey Question *Four* using the same Likert scale previously mentioned, and 29% or 137 students stated such assignments made them 'extremely anxious.'

Figure 4: Results of Survey Question Four

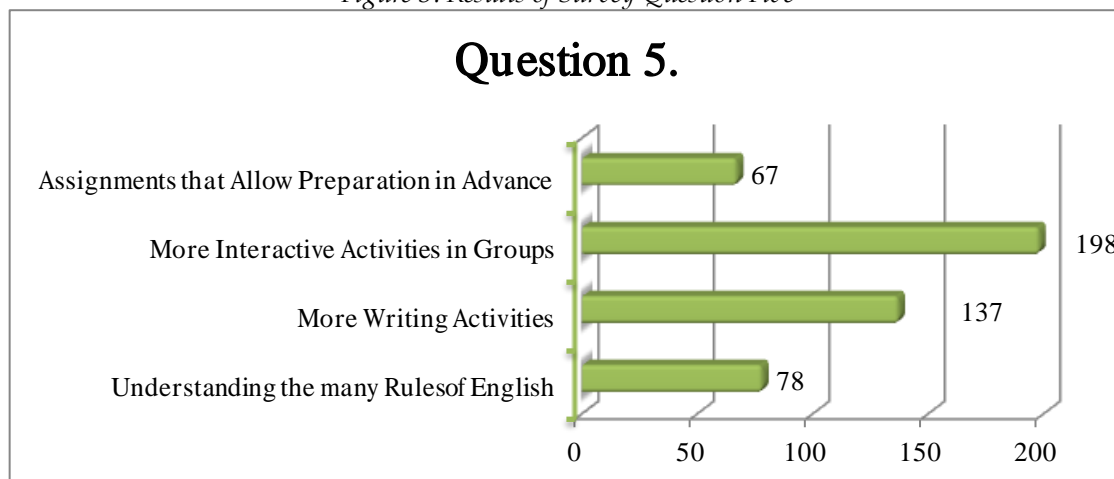


The next largest cohorts were 25% or 118 students that stated they were 'very anxious', 20% or 98 students said they were 'moderately anxious', 15% or 73 students said they were 'slightly anxious', and 11% or 54 students said they were 'not anxious at all' when given independent L2 writing assignments.

The fifth survey question asked what would encourage participation in a writing activity without anxiety, shown in

Figure 5: Results of Survey Question Five below.

Figure 5: Results of Survey Question Five

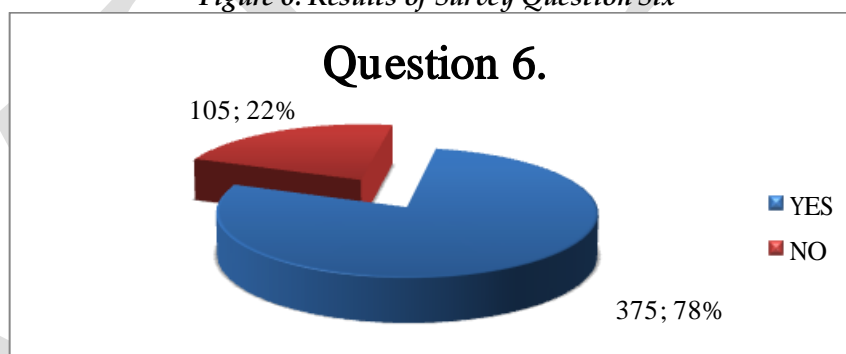


The majority of students, 41% or 198, indicated that 'more interactive group activities' would facilitate greater participation while 29% or 137 students stated 'more writing activities' would engender their engagement, and 16% or 78 and 14% or 67 students stated 'understanding the rules of English' and being able to prepare in advance for the assignments, respectively, would spark greater engagement.

The sixth survey question, shown in

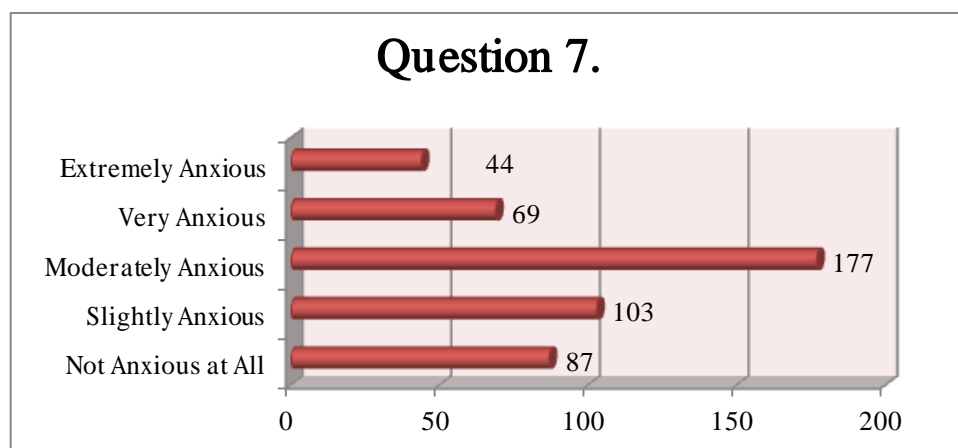
Figure 6: Results of Survey Question Six below asks whether participants experienced LA during group writing exercises and the results show 78% or 375 students said they do while 22% or 105 students said they do not.

Figure 6: Results of Survey Question Six



The next question, shown in Figure 7: Results of Survey Question Seven below asks about the level of the students' anxiety when participating in a group writing activity.

Figure 7: Results of Survey Question Seven

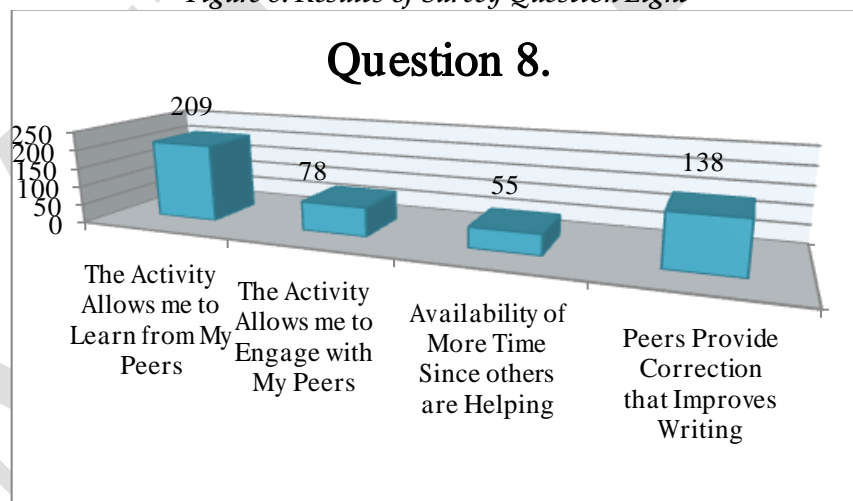


The majority of participants, 37% or 177 students, indicated that they were 'moderately anxious' about completing an L2 assignment in a group while the next largest cohort, 22% or 103 students, stated that they were only 'slightly anxious,' and of the remaining participants, 18% or 87 stated they were 'not anxious at all,' while 14% or 69 stated that they were 'very anxious,' and 9% or 44 students said that they were 'extremely anxious.'

The results of the eighth survey question show in

Figure 8: Results of Survey Question *Eight* below asked about the perceived factors students thought contributed to the group writing activity being less likely to cause anxiety than an independent writing exercise.

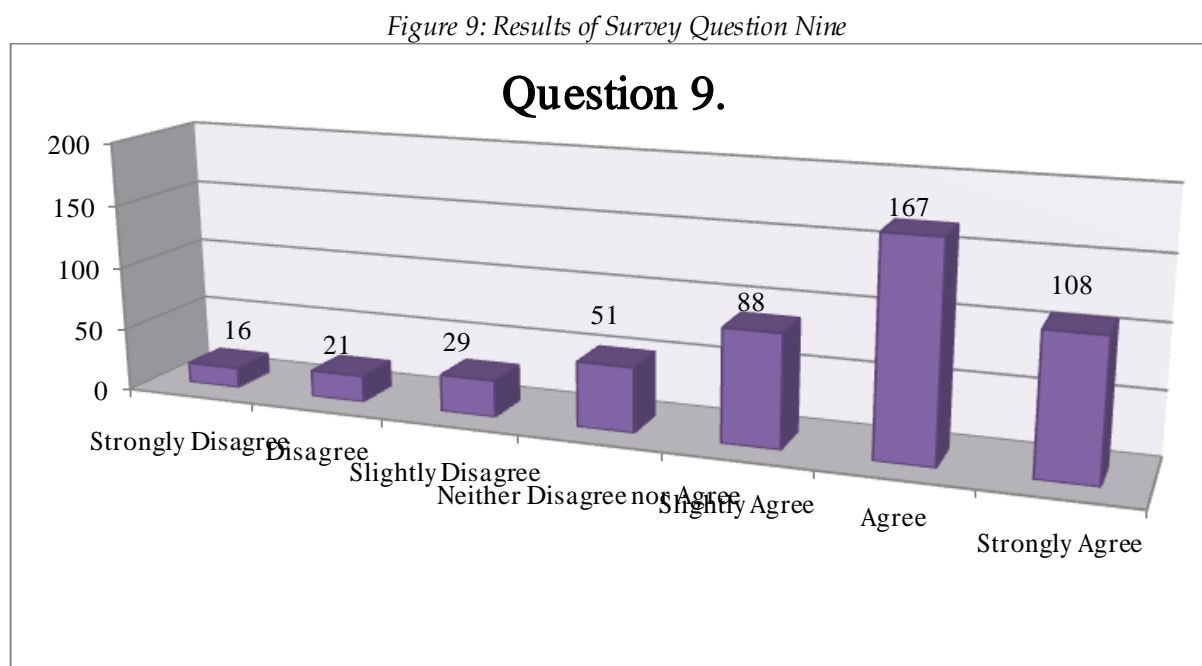
Figure 8: Results of Survey Question Eight



The majority of the respondents, 44% or 209 students, indicated that their reason was because the activity allowed the opportunity for them to learn from their peers, 29% or 138 students said that peers corrected errors in their writing, 16% or 78 participants indicated that group activity enabled them to engage with their peers, and 11% or 55 individuals indicated that the assistance of group members made the activity less time consuming.

Question nine of the survey asked participants whether they experienced less anxiety when engaged in L2 group activities and the response selection was based on a seven point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' The participant results for question nine are shown in

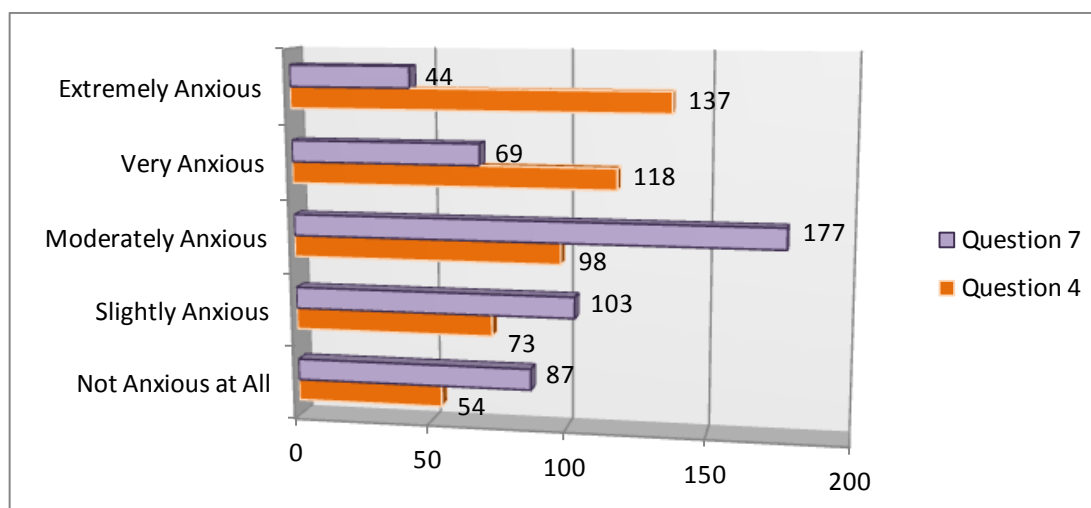
Figure 9: Results of Survey Question *Nine* below.



The largest cohort of 35% or 167 students agreed with the statement while the next largest cohort of 23% or 108 said they strongly agreed and 18% or 88 participants indicated that they slightly agreed, placing a total of 76% of participants in agreement with this statement. Of the remaining participants, 11% or 51 students stated they neither agreed or disagreed with the statement, 6% or 29 students said they slightly disagreed, 4% or 21 students said they disagreed, and 3% or 16 participants said that they strongly disagreed with the statement.

The results from survey questions one through nine enabled the researcher to determine an answer to the first research question, which asked about the frequency of LA in regards to group work as opposed to individual L2 assignments. The fourth and seventh survey questions are compared in Figure 10: *LA Experience in Group vs. Individual L2 Writing Exercises*, which shows that a total of 45% or 255 students indicated they were extremely or very anxious and only 20% were 'moderately anxious' in response to question four whereas responses for question seven, only 25% or 113 students indicated that they were extremely or very anxious.

Figure 10: LA Experience in Group vs. Individual L2 Writing Exercises

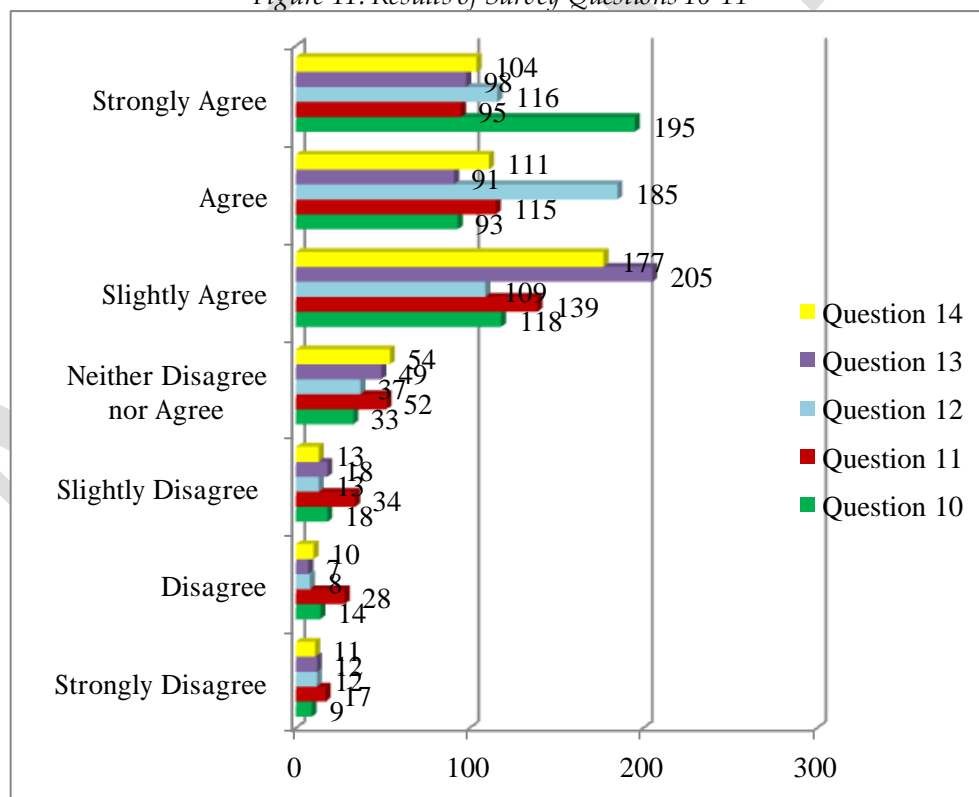


This supports the first hypothesis that ELL students frequently experience language anxiety but this is greatly reduced through associative learning exercises that provide opportunities for scaffolding to assist learning.

The results to questions ten through fourteen are shown in

Figure 11: Results of Survey Questions 10-14 below, which also provides a comparative view of the series since they are all based on the same seven-option Likert-based scale.

Figure 11: Results of Survey Questions 10-14



Question ten asked whether students felt more confident when completing group assignments as opposed to independent assignments. Overall, 84% of the students indicated some form of agreement in response to this question while 7% did not agree or disagree and the remaining 9% indicated some form of disagreement with the statement. The next survey question, number 11, asked if students agreed that

they felt more confident about their overall knowledge during group assignments, of which a total of 16% indicated some level of disagreement with this statement and 11% did not agree or disagree. The remaining 73% indicated some level of agreement to the statement.

The third survey question in

Figure 11: Results of Survey Questions 10-14 is number 12, which asks if students agree that scaffolding & associative learning in group writing assignments enhance the educational experience, to which a total of 85% of the students indicated some degree of agreement. While 8% indicated they did not agree or disagree, the remaining 7% indicated some level of disagreement with the statement. However, question 13 asked students whether they agreed that they learned more during group exercises than during independent assignments, a total of 82% of the students agreed to some degree that they had while 10% did not agree or disagree and the remaining 8% disagreed to some degree. The final question in the series, number 14, asked students if they agreed that their experience of LA was significantly reduced in group activities as opposed during independent assignments, to which 82% of the students agreed to this statement to some degree while 11% did not agree or disagree and the remaining 7% indicated that they disagreed with the statement in varying degrees.

Overall, the answers to survey questions 10-14 enabled the researcher to determine an answer to the second research question, which asked whether L2 activities that integrate associative learning through group scaffolding improved ELL students' writing apprehension and enhanced student engagement. The overwhelming majority of students that agreed to the series of statements in varying levels as opposed to the percentages that disagreed showed that more students experienced educational benefits than did not. This also supports the second hypothesis, which posited that L2 activities that integrate associative learning strategies enhance student engagement in the writing activities and facilitate learning, as well as retention of the lesson better than activities requiring individual efforts.

5. Discussion

In addition to the four options that encourage ELL students to participate in L2 activities mentioned in question five, studies suggest that the degree of oral or written participation students' give is increased if application and presentation activities are used; the right vocabulary is offered when students need it to continue; questions related to students' prior experiences are asked; and an informal and friendly classroom atmosphere is present (Tong, 2010, p. 240). When sociolinguistic skills improved, conversation increased as did the grammatical analytical input, and accuracy, which decreased the negative feedback that verbal hypothesis testing elicits (Tong, 2010, p. 240). Individuals have psychological and social differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student, and therefore cannot use the same learning strategies. Strategies used for adolescents and adults cannot be used for all students. There is a need for the ELL teachers to understand the skills and cultural heritage of their students'. Fluency and literacy in the mother tongue provides a cognitive and linguistic foundation for learning additional languages when their mother tongue is the primary language of instruction (Ball, 2010).

It has been established that language learning is especially successful when the L2 is used to facilitate understanding well as for the purpose of enhancing reading and listening skills. To achieve this end, ELL educators encourage their students to participate vocally in language classrooms and produce intelligible feedback. Such involvement can help students establish a foundation that will enable them to accurately communicate what they want to say and can be the determining factor in the level of engagement achieved, as was indicated in the responses provided for question three. Furthermore, student participation in verbal interaction offers language learners the opportunity to follow up on new words and structures to which they have been exposed during language lessons and to practice them in context, as indicated in the responses for question eight. These factors can provide students with the motivation to learn and improve their conversational skills and behavioral patterns.

Common Literacy Challenges in Multicultural Classrooms

Comprehensive linguistic input is vital to students' ability to understand oral or written language (Roskos & Christie, 2011). Customizing the lessons according to the students' age, cognitive levels, and capabilities will ensure that they are able to retain the knowledge and assimilate the new language being taught. These three factors, along with continued opportunities for development in their mother tongue, are vital to the successful development of bilingualism in students of diverse linguistic backgrounds (McNaught, 2002). Success in this area also depends on the availability of competent, bi/multilingual instructors that are able to engage the students and provide a multitude of opportunities for development of both languages (McNaught, 2002). The implementation of a multicultural curriculum should be derived from appropriate behaviors facilitated through unprejudiced thoughts and principles. Acceptance of cultural differences necessitates that preclude the emergence of indicators of good teaching and enables the teacher to create environments that confirm and respect cultural as well as linguistic diversity (York, 2006).

6. Conclusion

Reflecting the complex and multidimensional nature of anxiety, several recent techniques for anxiety reduction have placed more emphasis on the importance of the student's self-awareness in dealing with their anxiety, but such techniques as self-talk or imaginary self-dialogue do not always guarantee the actual engagement by the students especially when they are already in anxiety-provoking situations. If employed in conjunction with some personal writing activities, however, their potential utility can be multiplied, because writings accompanied by self-talk exercises seem to naturally foster the students' own responsibility or initiative to tackle their own language anxiety.

The idea of incorporating writing activities into a collection of anxiety-reduction techniques that already exist as a teacher resource seems to be quite in line with the recommendation offered, which says that the teacher encourage their students to verbalize any fears or nervous feelings that they have experienced in the process of learning and performance in L2 and write them down in a self-reflective journal or diaries. While in some cases, expressing their anxious feelings or inner conflicts in L2 orally may create another psychological burden or further anxiety in some students, writing personal journals or diaries, for example, can provide them with plenty of freedom in terms of time and security, as well as a good opportunity for self-reflection and analysis. Such advantages of writing over those of speaking seem to deserve more attention from both teachers and students alike, especially when they attempt to deal with the issue of anxiety effectively. Limitations to this study present in that the researcher was limited to students in the classes taught. Furthermore, additional studies should be conducted that also analyze how ethnic or multicultural learning differences impact ELL students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Aggregate Survey Results

Survey Questionnaires		
This survey is intended to examine your experience with language anxiety. Language anxiety is used to describe feelings of apprehension experienced in association with completing a written L2 assignment. Please answer each question completely. Your participation is appreciated.		
Question	Response	# of Respondents
1. Have you ever experienced language anxiety?	YES	418
	NO	62
		480
2. To what extent was your level of anxiety?		
	Not Anxious at All	62
	Slightly Anxious	76
	Moderately Anxious	117
	Very Anxious	158
	Extremely Anxious	67
		480
3. Could you tell me the reasons why you experienced language anxiety?		
	Afraid of Speaking in Public	81
	Afraid of Making a Mistake in Front of People	129

	Forget How to Say Things I Know & Become Frustrated	219
	Become Confused, Nervous, & Forget What to Say	51
		480
4. When you think of writing in English in an independent assignment, what is your level of anxiety?		
	Not Anxious at All	54
	Slightly Anxious	73
	Moderately Anxious	98
	Very Anxious	118
	Extremely Anxious	137
		480
5. What kinds of things would encourage you to participate in a writing activity without feeling anxious?		
	Understanding the many Rules of English	78
	More Writing Activities	137
	More Interactive Activities in Groups	198
	Assignments that Allow Preparation in Advance	67
		480

6. Do you experience language anxiety when participating in group writing exercises?		
	YES	375
	NO	105
		480
7. When participating in a group writing activity, what is your level of anxiety?		
	Not Anxious at All	87
	Slightly Anxious	103
	Moderately Anxious	177
	Very Anxious	69
	Extremely Anxious	44
		480
8. What are some factors that make the group writing activity less likely to cause anxiety over an independent writing exercise?		
	The Activity Allows me to Learn from My Peers	209
	The Activity Allows me to Engage with My Peers	78
	Availability of More Time Since others are Helping	55
	Peers Provide Correction that Improves Writing	138
		480
9. When participating in group activities, I experience anxiety <u>less frequently</u> than when completing independent activities.		

	Strongly Disagree	16
	Disagree	21
	Slightly Disagree	29
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	51
	Slightly Agree	88
	Agree	167
	Strongly Agree	108
		480
10. When participating in group activities, I feel more confident than when I complete independent assignments since I get help from my peers.		
	Strongly Disagree	9
	Disagree	14
	Slightly Disagree	18
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	65
	Slightly Agree	86
	Agree	93
	Strongly Agree	195
		480
11. When completing a group assignment, I feel more confident about what I know.		
	Strongly Disagree	17
	Disagree	28
	Slightly Disagree	34
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	52
	Slightly Agree	139
	Agree	115
	Strongly Agree	95
		480

12. Group writing assignments that provide scaffolding & associative learning enhance the learning experience.		
	Strongly Disagree	12
	Disagree	8
	Slightly Disagree	13
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	37
	Slightly Agree	109
	Agree	185
	Strongly Agree	116
		480
13. I learned more during the group writing exercise than I did completing the independent writing assignment.		
	Strongly Disagree	12
	Disagree	7
	Slightly Disagree	18
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	49
	Slightly Agree	205
	Agree	91
	Strongly Agree	98
		480
14. My learning anxiety was greatly reduced during the group writing exercise than when completing the independent writing exercise.		
	Strongly Disagree	11
	Disagree	10
	Slightly Disagree	13
	Neither Disagree nor Agree	54

Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM)

	Slightly Agree	177
	Agree	111
	Strongly Agree	104
		480
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS (for statistical purposes only)		
15. What is your age group?		
	18-22	95
	23-27	137
	28-32	77
	33-37	61
	38-42	36
	43-47	28
	48-52	25
	53 & Above	21
		480
16. What is your gender?		
	MALE	248
	FEMALE	232
		480
17. What is your nationality or ethnic origin (First Language)?		
	Spanish/Latino	121
	Italian	67
	Indian	53
	Chinese	89
	Pakistan/Middle Eastern	76
	Russian	31
	Malay	9
	Japanese	20
	African	6
	Other	8
		480

IMPLEMENTING ENGLISH STUDY IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: INVESTING IN EARLY INTERACTIVE READING AND CHILDREN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English to young students has become especially important in recent years. The present study attempted to address the question whether Iranian primary school children can learn English with a reading based approach to teaching and also to monitor the effect of working with children literature on students' development of reading comprehension skills. To this end, 26 girl primary school students in grade 5 were taught English with an interactive reading model and children literature for 15 months. To check overall achievement, four tests were administered at the end of the program. The tests tapped word meaning recognition, sentence meaning comprehension, short text comprehension, and overall comprehension of simple children stories. Analysis of the data demonstrated that students were at the good level of achievement in word meaning recognition and sentence meaning comprehension tests with reference to the criteria of achievement success applied by the Organization of Education. While students' performance in the short text comprehension test was at the acceptable achievement level, the results of the literature based test revealed that they could handle children literature short stories at the good achievement level. In the quest for finding effective ways to teach English as a foreign language in primary education contexts and to provide a motivating and engaging instructional tool in language learning, interactive reading and children literature are suggested to be employed in foreign language classes offered to primary school children.

KEYWORDS: phonics, Look-say, primary education, interactive reading, children literature, teaching reading

1. Introduction

In today's world there is an overwhelming interest in learning and teaching foreign or second languages. In the past, learning a foreign or second language was restricted to special groups of children, but today in the world of technology, the recurrent idea is that foreign language learning should be part of every child's education. Therefore, in the profession of language teaching, several methods have been devised as practical means for teaching foreign languages to children. Regarding children's educational development, the study of foreign languages has been shown positive effects on improving communication skills and explicit impacts on memory and listening skills. English is an important language in the world, and in many countries the most emphasis is on learning English as a second or foreign language. According to Brewster, Elis and Girard (2004, p.14), foreign language at a young age gains its importance from following reasons: "children are full of physical energy, are developing literacy in their first language, are developing conceptually and are good mimics". Therefore, there is a strong belief among experts that children learn languages without any problem better than adults.

Because of the fact that teaching of reading has been the center of attention over the past twenty years, there have been different approaches to teaching reading to children. Some say reading is mastery in phonics (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974), that is, in learning reading, children at first translate letters into sounds and then use their comprehension skills to recognize what words are made by the sounds. Regarding another view, known as look-say or whole word, children's reading is primarily visual. Smith (1971) argued that children can read words as visual 'wholes' without any prior translation of symbols into sounds.

Today, using children literature for teaching English to young learners is also an accepted way for teachers because children are always enthusiastic readers. The definition of children's literature is categorized based on: intended audience and the purpose. It has three subcategories including entertainment, entertainment and information, and empathy and style/quality. The widely used definition has accentuated on intended audience meaning children's literature is body of any texts that is selected for a particular individual, by any particular society. Children are defined in terms of range of socio-cultural and individual characteristics (Galda & Cullinan, 2002).

English is a compulsory course in primary education in many countries worldwide. Unfortunately in Iran children do not enjoy such an opportunity in primary school curriculum; and it is an unjustifiable weak point for the educational system in Iran in comparison to other system around the world. Therefore, this study tries to investigate the possibility of teaching English at primary school intentionally with a reading orientation so that the integration of such a program into the primary education curriculum can be carried out as smoothly as possible. To this end, the present study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. Is it possible to initiate English teaching at primary school based on the interactive model of early reading?
2. Could a program in reading children literature succeed in supplementing such an approach to teaching English at primary school?

2. Literature Review

The two major approaches to reading instruction in a foreign language are phonics and look-say. Phonics is based on the recognition of letter and sounds relationship, that is, the link between graphemes (printed letters) and phonemes (their associated sounds). In a report by Anderson et al. (1985), phonics was considered as one of the essential ingredients in early reading instruction. Investigating how the best schools teach reading, Ofsted (2010) found support for synthetic phonics in primary schools. Moreover, it was found that concentrated and systematic teaching of phonics played a central role in attaining success in school subjects. According to (Macmillan, 1997), learning to read requires understanding the fact that print is a code for representing speech sounds. The look-say method offers another angle to look at reading instruction to children. The fundamental characteristic of this method, according to Campbell (1995), is that language is taken as a whole and, accordingly, it is best learnt as a whole provided that meaningful and relevant text is presented. Goodman (1975) stated that the common controversy between the two approaches to reading simply could be boiled down to talking about the two sides of the same coin, that is, both approaches seem to deal with words as "ends in themselves". Taking account of these insights, it seems that what we need in teaching early reading is an approach to combine bottom-up and top-down reading sub-processes associated with phonics and Look-say respectively. This is what is known as the interactive model of reading. As Rumelhart (1985) elaborated, reading could be thought of as both a "perceptual and cognitive" process, that is, it is a process which phonics is based on the interaction between text and reader. Barmford and Day (2004) pointed out that decoding of the word in reading is the prior factor for meaning-construction; subsequently, the reader decodes the message that a writer has encoded into a text. Successful word-decoding gives rise to the activation of reader's information and prior knowledge so that comprehension is finally achieved. Call's (1967) study showed the effectiveness of early phonics instruction and illustrated the point that dome focus on phonics for developing decoding skills was necessary but not sufficient. She argued that as children learn how to read, they need instruction that focuses on both decoding and comprehension.

Reading is a complex process that may follow different strategies, activities, and purposes. HelleKjar (2007) defined the relationship between the cognitive and interactive processes as 'reading comprises decoding of the written text on one hand, and efficiently processing the information gained on the other' (p.23). Also in another view reading involves two main processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition is defined as understanding the way written symbols are related to one's spoken language, and comprehension is the process of making meaning of words, sentences, and connected text. For understanding written text readers usually require their background vocabulary knowledge, grammatical knowledge and being familiar with text (Bernhardt, 1991). Improving reading skill is an important end for both children and adults because the ability to read open new world, experiences and opportunities for reader. Gaining new knowledge and enjoy everything of new life to some extent depends on being able to read, and many people learn to read in their native language without more difficulties (Hulstijn, 1991).

Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) stated that reading needs learning about writing system and use it for representing speech. They reported that there is a close relationship between oral vocabulary and early reading ability. Also the ability to blend individual sounds within words which is an oral skill has a close connection with reading skill. Adams (1998) state that phonological awareness is closely associated with reading skill and it is important for alphabetic language because the link of alphabet letters on to individual sounds. They reported that children who can make the individual phonemes in alphabetic language learn more about alphabetic principles and they can identify the printed words quickly and accurately.

Block and Pressley (2002) discussed that in developing reading skill, readers use their knowledge and reasoning to know the texts. Comprehension strategies Such as, flow charts, story structure, and focusing on vocabulary are useful for students to deal with comprehension difficulties. Tuner and Paris (1995) argued that sometimes readers' motivation affect their reading comprehension, that is, motivation can affect the way a book is read by readers and teachers.

A good strategy for developing reading skills is writing. The process of writing guides children to write what they say and have experienced. It helps to make connection between oral and written language (Clay, 2001). Texts for reading practice should be specified based on the level of the learners. Texts which are not difficult and include interesting points will encourage children to read and enjoy what they are reading. Authentic texts facilitate the process of reading comprehension for both children and adults (Carver, 1994). Reading assessment in beginning levels should be done by listening to students reading aloud. In high levels of reading, assessment should focus on text comprehension, and teachers' reading assessment is necessary to provide feedback to students (Caldwell, 2002).

In reading comprehension, children require their prior knowledge. Topics that are familiar in one culture may be unsuitable in another, as children in rural communities have different experiences from urbanized Children. Therefore, cultural knowledge will affect reading comprehension (Gee, 2001). Reading more is an important factor to make progress in reading comprehension. By reading more students can increase their knowledge and vocabulary, and become more fluent in reading. Encouraging students to read different types of texts helps them develop their reading proficiency (Shany & Biemiller, 1995).

Phonemes which are represented in the spellings of words are different from graphemes that are units of written language (Venezky, 1999). Williams (1980) taught students how to use graphemes and phonemes to blend the words. This is word decoding. Ehri and Wilce (1987) taught learners to use graphemes and phonemes to segment words. They said this program produced more motivation on children learning a language.

In some correlational studies, researchers assessed children's capability to manage phonemes and their reading ability and they reported that there is a strong relationship between phonemic awareness and learning to read (Ehri, 1979; Stahl & Murray, 1994). Phonics instruction by spelling programs teach learners to change sounds into letters to write words. In Look-say approach, children learn to read words as wholes, and they should acquire between 50 to 100 words, then when this program is completed after their first grade phonics instruction start for them (Aukerman, 1984).

Hoover and Gaough (1990) explained that reading skill has two main processes. One process includes learning to change the letters into identifiable words. The other involves comprehending the meaning of the print. In reading skill children learn to perform both of these processes, and they acquire comprehension skill to arrive at learning to speak. For developing reading skill readers should learn to read words in different ways. The first step to build a sight vocabulary is to apply some decoding strategies to read unknown words. These caused the words become familiar to the learner. Decoding of words through the process of letter-sound relations also lead to make alphabetic connections. These alphabetic connections record the words in memory as sight words (Ehri, 1992; Share, 1995).

Systematic phonics facilitates the process of learning to read words in different ways by teaching the alphabetic system. Alphabetic knowledge for decoding words, saving sight words in memory, and using sight word, memory to read words by analogy is useful and suitable for students. Also, it helps the process of predicting words from context. Word prediction gains more importance when readers mix the context cues with letter-sound cues in guessing unknown words in text (Turner & Chapman, 1998).

Designers of phonics program want children's parents and teachers to start these programs when they are in kindergarten or first grade, as they have no reading skill. To understand the effect of age and grade, two groups of children were recognized: the younger children in kindergarten and first grade; and the older student's in second through sixth grades. The finding of the study showed that, in both groups, systematic phonics had an important impact on children's growth as reader, and both groups were equal (Chal, 1992).

The study of Tangel and Blachman (1995) indicated that phonics instruction with its concentration on teaching letter-sound relations would improve beginning readers' ability to spell words. Also, they showed that younger children used developmental spelling scoring systems that gave respect for phonetically plausible spelling. Senechal and Cornell (1993) confirmed that reading a single book was sufficient to improve children's new demonstrative vocabulary of ten target words in the stories to a large extent, and after one week, the five year - olds children were better than four year - olds in remembering words. Robbins and Ehri (1994) claimed that for understanding and teaching of unfamiliar words to children, story book reading is a helpful path.

Literature has gained more importance in the past two decades, and its relationship with language learning is still the subject of research. Kramsch (2000) claimed that literature was considered as the explicit part of the foreign language studies at the beginning of 20th century and was the authentic source at the end of century. Krashen (1982) defined that children's literature provides comprehensible input through content and style, so this fact explain its use in learning English as a foreign language.

There are a lot of reasons which explain the use of stories in foreign language classroom; for example, Bowen and Marks (1994) provided a list of reasons. First, children's literature conveys what has occurred in the past, and what is happening in the present and future. Second, foreign or second language learners make connection with the language through the plot and characters in the stories. Third, introducing new vocabularies and language forms within a good context leads to remember and reinforce them into learners mind, and at least they are also give opportunities to learners to have contact with language context instead of receiving it in pieces and bits. The result of some studies which have investigated the use of children's literature with adults in EFL/ESL settings show that it has a positive effect on student's interest and motivation (chen, 2006; Estridge, 2000; Goh, 1996). The other study based upon the relationship between student's responses to children's literature and read-aloud in college ESL classes represented that "reading such materials aloud to be extremely useful and productive, and equally enjoyable for instructors and student's" (Khodabakhshi & Logos, 1993, p.56). Some experts examine sentence length, frequency used words form, everyday life and grammatical difficulties to find a suitable language of children in different age groups. As White (1992) suggested some criteria for children such as:

- The explanation for younger children should be simple and effective;
- For older children more complex language with more words should be used;
- Providing easier sentence construction in order to consider younger as a reader;
- Books should include more basic vocabularies for younger children.

Kingberg (1978) administrated a study on reading interest, reading frequency and emotional reaction to stories between Sweden boys and girls of all social classes, age groups also in both town and country, and counted the most frequently attribute toward children's favorite books and reported that boys stated the adjective "exciting" first. On the other hand, girls stated both "exciting" and different types of emotional adjectives in first place. Children's literature is one influential factor to motivate and entertain them. Topics and themes of their interest are based on children's developmental characteristics needs. Children learn more about some concepts such as: happiness, sadness, friendship, dangerous situation, playing and so on. The socialization process happens in second language class, through which learners can think about the values and civilized standards in target language, for their own community literature helps them to touch their world and increase their understanding of life and human condition (Appleyard, 1990).

The result of some studies held that when children experience EFL classes through stories, whether by listening or reading, they can improve second language vocabulary acquisition (Carger, 1993; Collins, 2005; Ellay, 1989; Roberts, 2008). Similarly, some other experts, who investigated reading stories, reported its positive influence on children's second language reading comprehension and skills (Aranha, 1985; Eadge, 1997; Elley, 1991). Exposure to stories showed that children are influenced by second language texts and use them as a writing model when they want to write about topics, and help to expand children's imagination (Hudson, 1989; Samway & Taylor, 1993).

Children always are interested in plays and stories. The interaction and dialogues are characteristics of literature study, as Urzua (1992) noted that children like to say their ideas and interact with their friends during literature study and whenever they read an interesting story or hear an enjoyable context, they can develop verbal fluency by interaction sharing to reading and also children can improve their language learning by arranged interactions. The result of the other study showed that children use more literary language features and understand the union by using literature in class (Gohsn, 2007; Huie and Yahia, 2003).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were twenty six girls studying in the fifth grade of primary school. They were checked for homogeneity regarding knowledge of English and it was ascertained that none of them had any familiarity with English. These students were living in Izadkhast, one of the regions of Abadeh. It is about 60 kilometers from the town, so it was also definite that they had no access to any kind of exposure to English in regular classes. The socioeconomic condition of the participants' families was also checked by means of the data gathered from the school officials and it was found to be almost the same for all participants, an issue that further contributed to the homogeneity of the sample members. The age range for the participants was between 11 and 12.

3.2. Instruments

Teaching reading in English to primary school students following an interactive model and by means of children literature were the objectives of this study. To this end, some materials were prepared by the researcher for teaching with Phonics and Look-say methods. The materials included a series of flashcards for teaching English sounds and 15 units designed by Abdorahimzadeh (2005) incorporating reading practice with the help of both Phonics and Look-say in each unit. As for the second step in the teaching process, the first half of another text book was covered. It was entitled Programmed Reading 1 authored by Buchanan (1973). To further direct the route of starting to learn English through reading, supplementary materials featuring children literature were also employed. These materials included four simple short stories selected and taught for the final phase of the treatment. The titles, authors' names, number of pages, and dates of publication are given in the following:

- A) Po-Po, written by DH Howe (1987) with 19 pages.
- B) Mary and her basket, written by DH Howe (1987) with 18 pages.
- C) Turkey, written by Jo Windsor (2004) with 18 pages.

D) The Bird and the Bread, written by DH Howe (2000) with 20 pages.

Tests of word meaning recognition, sentence meaning comprehension, short text comprehension along with a literature-based test that was separately developed and validated by the investigator were used to measure achievement as a result of reading training with a mixture of Phonics and Look-say.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Participants in this study were to be taught how to read English through both Phonics and Look-say approach in the first place, and to make use of their reading ability to enjoy children literature in the target language. This study was divided into three phases. In the first phase the training with a mixture of Phonics and Look-say methods lasted for six months. During this period, students had four 30-minute class sessions per week. In the second phase which lasted for three months, twelve 60-minute sessions were allocated to working with Programmed Reading 1. The purpose of this phase was to help learners develop comprehension of individual sentences and combination of them. The third phase lasted three months; the participants took part in two 60-minute class sessions per week. In this phase, the participants were given a chance to further expand their reading ability with the help of attractive themes in short stories. In the first phase, learners were directed to phonemic awareness through phonics instruction investing in associating the printed letters with sounds. The treatment started with short vowels such as: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/. The students were provided with some flash cards holding the pictures of an "apple", an "egg", an "ink bottle", an "orange", an "umbrella" each signifying a word featuring a short vowel in focus. The short vowels that went with each picture were written under each picture and shown to the students. For teaching vowel /a/, for instance, the participants were shown the pictures of "apple", "ant" and "alligator". The teacher (the researcher) pronounced /a/ sound in these words and acted as a model for producing sounds to students. At the same time, she instructed learners how to write the letters.

As for the second step in this phase, the participants experienced reading words as a whole with the Look-say method. The goal of this step was to enhance learners' ability to recognize the selected words by sight without trying to decode the words. To this end, new words were systematically introduced to the students with the help of pictures associated with words. To better manage teaching, some flashcards were used with individual words written on them. Flash cards were shown several times to the students until they keep in mind the selected word. As a last step, a text containing short sentences and featuring the worked-on sound segments prepared by Abdorahimzadeh (2005) based on both Phonics and Look-say, was taught in this stage. After students learnt to recognize words by using phonics and look-say, the focus was shifted to teaching individual brief sentences and combinations of them. Therefore, the first half of an elementary reading text book (Buchanan, 1973) was chosen for the second phase.

The third phase involved reading simple stories selected from available children's literature. Children readers are considered to carry the basic elements of children literature were to be extensively worked with, so four simple short stories were selected. Three stories were selected from Grade One and one story from Grade Two. In each class session, first the teacher gave very short explanation of grammatical points to the students if they were new. This will help less proficient students to participate in the task as well as providing valuable input by the teacher. The investigator read each part of the story several times, and students repeated the sentences after her for receiving correct pronunciations of words. Then students were divided into groups, and they read the selected pages together and tried to understand the meaning from the pictures. If they could not understand the meaning, the investigator used body movement, gesture, and as a final resort gave students some explanations in their native language so as to guess the meaning.

3.4. Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was teaching interactive reading through phonics, Look-Say. The mean scores obtain from students on different tests were subjected to check the success and suitability of such a teaching program against the norm index (According to the experts in charge of the Organization of Education, class mean scores at or above 85% of the total possible score indicate the excellent level; those at or above 70%, represent the good level, and mean scores at or above 50% of the total score, show the acceptable

level). To find the effect of literature on teaching reading comprehension, the statistical program SPSS were used to analyze data. Again, the criterion stated above was considered as an index to conclude students' success in reading comprehension through children literature.

4. Results

Q1: Is it possible to initiate English teaching at primary school based on the interactive model of early reading?

To answer the first questions of present study, learners performed three tests, in order to find their understanding of words, sentences, and short text. Table 1 presents the statistical description for the word meaning recognition test.

Table 1. Word Meaning Recognition Test

N	Range	minimum	maximum	mean	Std. deviation	variance
26	6.00	13.00	19.00	16.42	1.79	3.24

As Table 1 shows, scores on the word meaning recognition test ranged from a minimum of 13 to a maximum of 19, with a mean score of 16.42 and a standard deviation of 1.79. The variance of the scores on the test is 3.24. The mean score represented 82.25% of the total possible scores and it represented that students were at the good level of achievement on the basis of the success criteria.

The frequencies of individual scores are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Frequency scores of Word Meaning Recognition Test

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
13.00	1	3.8	3.8	3.8
14.00	4	15.4	15.4	19.2
15.00	4	15.4	15.4	34.6
16.00	3	11.5	11.5	46.2
17.00	5	19.2	19.2	65.4
18.00	6	23.1	23.1	88.5
19.00	3	11.5	11.5	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	

With reference to the criteria for achievement success applied by the Organization of Education, Table 2 indicates that 3.8% of the participants had achievement at the acceptable level. The performance of 42.3% of the participants was at the good level of achievement and 53.8% performed at the excellent level.

Table 3 presents the statistical description for the sentence meaning comprehension test.

Table 3. Sentence Meaning Comprehension Test

N	Range	Minimum	maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	Variance
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26	7.00	11.00	18.00	15.15	2.30	5.33
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As Table 3 shows, scores on the sentence meaning comprehension test range from a minimum of 11 to maximum of 19, with a mean score of 15.15 and a standard deviation of 2.30. The variance of the scores on the test is 5.33. The mean score represented 75.75% of the total possible scores and it represented that students were at the good level of achievement according to the criteria established by the Organization of Education. As seen in above Table, there is a slight difference in the mean score of this test with previous test.

The frequency table below shows the frequency of individuals' scores on the test.

Table 4. Frequency scores of Sentence Meaning Comprehension Test

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
11.00	3	11.5	11.5	11.5
12.00	1	3.8	3.8	15.4
13.00	3	11.5	11.5	26.9
14.00	2	7.7	7.7	34.6
15.00	4	15.4	15.4	50.0
16.00	3	11.5	11.5	61.5
17.00	6	23.1	23.1	84.6
18.00	4	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	

As regards the criteria for achievement success applied by the Organization of Education, Table 4 indicates that 26.8% of the participants had achievement at the acceptable level. The performance of 34.6% of the participants was at the good level of achievement and 38.5% performed at the excellent level.

Table 5 presents the statistical description for the short text comprehension test.

Table 5. Short Text Comprehension Test

N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	Variance
26	5.00	4.00	9.00	6.69	1.31	1.71

As Table 5 shows, scores on the short text comprehension test ranged from a minimum of 4 to maximum of 9, with a mean score of 6.69 and a standard deviation of 1.31. The variance of the scores on the test is 1.71. The mean score was equal to 66.9% of the total possible scores and it indicated that students were at the acceptable level of achievement on the basis of the success criteria.

A frequency table was also used to show the frequencies of individuals' scores as depicted in Table 6

Table 6. Frequency Scores of Short Text Comprehension Test

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
4.00	1	3.8	3.8	3.8
5.00	3	11.5	11.5	15.4
6.00	5	19.2	19.2	34.6
7.00	6	23.1	23.1	57.7
8.00	9	34.6	34.6	92.3
9.00	2	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	

With respect to the criteria for achievement success applied by the Organization of Education, Table 6 indicates that the performance of 3.8% of the participants was at the unacceptable level of achievement. 11.5% of the participants had achievement at the acceptable level. The performance of 42.3% of the participants was at the good level of achievement and 42.3% performed at the excellent level.

Q2: Could a program in reading children literature succeed in supplementing such an approach to teaching English at primary school?

To answer the second question of this study, the literature based test was administered, in order to understand students' development in reading skill.

Table 7 presents the statistical description for the literature based test.

Table 7. Literature Based Test

N	Range	minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
26	8.00	11.00	18.00	15.34	2.26	5.11

As Table 7 shows, scores on the literature based test ranged from a minimum of 11 to a maximum of 18, with a mean score of 15.34 and a standard deviation of 2.26. The variance of the scores on the test is 5.11. The mean score represented 76.7% of the total possible scores and it showed that students were at the good achievement level according to the criteria established by the Organization of Education.

The frequency table below shows the frequencies of individual scores.

Table 8. Frequency scores of Literature Based Test

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
11.00	1	3.8	3.8	3.8
12.00	2	7.7	7.7	11.5
13.00	2	7.7	7.7	19.2
14.00	4	15.4	15.4	34.6
15.00	4	15.4	15.4	50.0

16.00	3	11.5	11.5	61.5
17.00	5	19.2	19.2	80.8
18.00	5	19.2	19.2	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	

Regarding the criteria for achievement success applied by the Organization of Education, Table 8 indicates that 19.2% of the participants had achievement at the acceptable level. The performance of 42.3% of the participants was at the good level of achievement and 38.4% performed at the excellent level.

5. Discussion

5.1. Research Question 1

Is it possible to initiate English teaching at primary school based on the interactive model of early reading?

In order to answer the first question, tree tests were administered, and the performances of students were considered. The outcomes of the study revealed that in teaching English with an interactive model, students can learn a foreign language more effectively and fluently. Results obtained separately from the analysis of various tests including, word meaning recognition, and sentence meaning comprehension indicated that students were at the good level of achievement in these tests but in short text meaning comprehension test students' mean scores reveled that they were at the acceptable level of achievement, and they did not perform successfully in this test. Their weak performance may be resulted from the fact that the selected text book, Programmed Reading 1 (Buchanan, 1973) was taught in the second phase was not based on students' interest. In this text book, the concentration was on reading comprehension with simple individual sentences and combination of very short sentences. Each item accompanied one simple illustration. Students' weakness in this test may be linked to the nature of the text book. The illustrations and framework given in the text book might not have been attractive enough for students to develop their understanding of short texts.

Comparing the findings of this test with Abdorahimzadeh's (2005) study in which participants performed successfully in short text comprehension test may reveal that some factors such as families' socio-economic condition and living in different areas had impact on students' learning as students with higher socio-economic condition who were living in Shiraz were successful in this test. The general conclusion drawn from other related studies show that teaching English through interactive model improved learning to read (Day, 1993; Dechant and Emerald, 1991; Burns, 2003). The National reading Panel (2000) reported that phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension are the five components to be included in reading instruction. Chien and Chen (2002), Liaw (2003), and Leou and Huang (2006) studied elementary school students in Taiwan, and one finding they shared in common is that by using explicit instruction on phonological awareness and phonics in classroom; students made great improvements on their vocabulary and reading comprehension.

Teaching English as a foreign language at primary level has a significant role in children education. As Curtain (1990) claimed, children in elementary schools are eager about the ideas of global understanding. In other words it can be said that elementary school education is a suitable time to expand the students' intercultural views and enhancement of cognitive skills.

Park (2002) reported that students believed their elementary school English had a positive effect on their English learning at middle school in the domains of reading, speaking and listening. Similar results were found in Lee, Choi, Boo, and Lee (2001). In teaching beginning reading, phonics puts great concentration on the gradually introduction of and intensive practice on performing sound-symbol relationship at different successive stages. According to Cunningham (1995), children benefit most when phonics instruction begins in kindergarten in Grade One. This instruction needs to be clear and done in sequence. Bradley and Bryant (1983) stated that regardless of children socio-economic status, explicit phonics instruction is more beneficial for them. Also children who have difficulty in learning to read gain the most benefit. The results of the Thompson's (1999) study showed that phonics instruction help

children with word recognition, spelling and reading. When children become more fluent in decoding and reading words, they are capable to concentrate on building their comprehension.

Look-say helps children associate whole concepts in their mind with their symbolic representations in the form of whole words. Flash cards with individual written words on them are used for this method usually accompanied with a related picture. Wern (1999) mentioned that one reason to start teaching early reading through look-say is that children tend to learn individual concepts as wholes rather than a combination of separate parts, or whole concepts should be represented by whole symbols. Zakaluk (1996) proposed that beginning reading was thought to be facilitated by making children memorize effective words in terms of meaning; words that are quickly remembered at sight are also easily stored in mind.

Nikolov (2009) mentioned that there is a strong relationship between parents' level of education and students performance in language learning in Hungary. According to Munoz (2008), socio-economic condition and improvement are related to each other. As students with strong social background have access to different kinds of schools and also have opportunity of exposure to the language. For example they can use private tuition and learning resources. Gardner (1985) observed the important effects of parental encouragement and rewards on students' behavior and their language learning. Lamb (2002) investigated three Indonesian learner groups, and he found that those living in provincial areas had a strongest instrumental purpose on language learning in comparison to those living in rural areas. Hornsby (2000) reported that a good reader has basic sight vocabulary of at least 50 words, and not only recognizes a word but also knows the meaning of the word. So, learning to read through Look-say approach is an effective way for learners to record the new words in their minds. Barnett, (1989), and Carrell, Devine and Eskey (1998) claimed that effective reading is the combination of both phonics and look-say approaches and for developing reading skill learners need to learn both of them appropriately. As Lee and Vanpatten (2003) mentioned in reading comprehension, readers retrieve a general knowledge about topic by using relevant information from memories, and at the same time they consider details such as, letters, words, and illustrations. So, using interactive model in teaching reading leads to a better learning of this skill.

5.2. Research Question 2

Could a program in reading children literature succeed in supplementing such an approach to teaching English at primary school?

In terms of the second question, the literature based test was administered by the investigator to show the degree of children successful in reading comprehension using literature. As it was revealed in the data analysis, the students' performance in literature based test was acceptable based upon 75% criterion level. The nature of literature based test and short text comprehension test was the same. The purpose of both tests was to measure reading comprehension with simple individual sentences and combination of very short sentences. Thus, what was the reason for students' good performance in the former test and their weak performance in latter. The results suggested that teaching reading comprehension through literature had a positive effect on the students' reading achievement. According to the findings, claims about the effect of using children literature in learning reading skill can be confirmed. Following are some examples of studies that are in line with second question of this study.

Studies based utilizing reading stories have revealed a positive influence on children L2 reading comprehension and skills (Aranha, 1985; Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989; Eade, 1997; Elley, 1991, 2000). According to these studies, children literature was used in this investigation because of the following reasons:

1. They were natural and provided engaging language experiences;
2. They had simple language;
3. Illustrations helped learners to read and understand meaning;
4. Students learned vocabularies better in context.

Bowen and Marks (1994) claimed that students learning of new words often occurred within the context of the special story or situation in which they first encountered. Myuskens (2003) affirmed that using literary

text at the beginning and intermediate levels, help students for language practice and reading comprehension. Lin (2006) study indicated that literature had a positive effect on students' attitude toward reading. Tamminga (2001) found that story telling not only provides access to different cultures but also helps to develop social skills and the ability to solve problems through cooperating with others.

Chung (1999) claimed that acquiring vocabulary naturally and a life-long reading habit as well as developing creativity and imagination is the results of using children literature in teaching English as a foreign language in his study. Van (2009) used literature in an EFL classroom and reported that literature develops cultural awareness and critical thinking as well as performing range of vocabulary, dialogues and imagination.

Gajdusek (1988) mentioned some advantages for the use of literature in language classroom such as:

- It helps students overcome negative attitude, if any, forward the target language.
- It gives variety into the language classroom.
- It is in line with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles.
- It produces highly motivated small group work.

Viggiano (2003) carried out a study on the effectiveness of telling stories to students in four classrooms. She claimed that storytelling can be a powerful tool of meaning making and teaching. To understand the learners emotionally and academically, a comprehensible framework was taught for the teachers, based on their cultural background. The researcher found that narrative story telling helped Latino immigrant students to connect their first culture to their new American culture by using their imagination.

6. Conclusion

Teaching reading in English to primary school students following an interactive model and by means of children literature were the objectives of this study. This study was conducted in Abadeh, Iran. The results obtained through the given tests confirmed that in teaching English, learners require both phonics and Look-say approach to be able to learn language successfully. One way to help students to improve their reading skill is through literature. Stories promoted learning which takes place in a more natural, interactive and meaningful context. They also motivate students to have a connection with their learning. Thus, learners' performance also supported the research hypotheses. The outcomes of the study supported the claims of Haven (2000) that students take part in storytelling tasks actively, so stories motivate students to be more interested in language learning. Ross (2000) stated that using stories help our students to develop their competence to think clearly and creatively. Students can also express their understanding in different ways.

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A SURVEY OF IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHENTIC LISTENING MATERIALS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to deal with attitudes of teachers and learners toward authentic listening materials at pre-intermediate level. Present study addressed EFL teachers and students at pre intermediate proficiency level. Participants included 60 students, from both genders; male and female university students studying at Rodaki Higher Institute Education in the following fields: Accounting, Computer Engineering and Commercial Management and also 30 teachers who have been teaching listening at Rodaki Higher Institute Education. Students were randomly selected and assigned to two groups. Then, a standard placement test was distributed among them (Oxford Placement Test) to check their proficiency levels. The participants were divided into two groups, one group (authentic) was exposed to and received authentic listening materials, taken from the UK radio program, and the other group (simplified) received simplified listening materials, taken and adopted from the authentic listening materials used in this study. After that, to be sure that they know what authentic materials are, they were exposed to two each of related materials, and then the questionnaire was distributed among them the results taken from the questionnaire showed that the participants of this study (Iranian students at pre-intermediate level) prefer authentic materials and have positive attitudes toward using them. By the same token, the analysis of teachers' questionnaire also denoted their satisfaction and positive attitudes toward authentic listening materials. The teachers asserted a cautious orientation toward using this material in the classroom. These findings can have implications for language learning/teaching, curriculum development paving the way for educational policy makers, teachers and learners to introduce authentic listening materials to EFL learners at pre-intermediate proficiency level.

KEY WORDS: Listening Skills, Authentic Materials, EFL, pre-intermediate

1. Introduction

Listening is one of the most important but Cinderella skill in EFL situation. Traditionally it was considered as a "passive skill ... our ears were receivers into which information was poured..." (Schmitt2002:193). Having been demystified those unjustly-neglected simplistic views, (myths) nowadays; it is regarded, as Schmitt (2002) aptly cited, an ... "active, interpretive process". For the variety of reasons maneuvering on this domain is really a worth-while process in applied linguistics and related disciplines in new millennium. Ever since the advent of communicative approaches in teaching, lots of efforts have been made by material developers and educational policy makers to make learning materials (tasks) as real-life like as possible. However there is significant difference in opinions regarding the presence of authentic materials in the FL classroom. Views range from strong caution to encouragement. The term *authentic material* has been defined in different ways throughout the literature. Scholars argue for the motivating power of authentic materials. By reviewing the related literature it become clear that using authentic materials has been mentioned a lot. It directly and effectively affects and is affected by other skills especially, speaking. In other words, our speaking shapes and are shaped by listening, how we involve in listening, what we listen, how we listen and how we are grown up with it. McNeil (1994) and Kilickaya (2004) indicate that the use of authentic texts is now considered to be one way for increasing students' motivation for learning since they give the learner the feeling that he or she is learning the real

language—the target language as it is used by the community that speaks it. Empirical studies (Bacon & Finnemann's, 1990; Otte, 2006; Thanajaro, 2000) have confirmed that students' motivation and self-satisfaction increased after exposure to authentic aural texts... However, Guariento and Morley (2001) assert that such difficulties can be overcome by designing tasks that require only partial comprehension; the benefits that authentic materials bring to the FL classroom greatly outweigh the challenges. In addition, it is possible to overcome the challenges through task design. Thus, integrating authentic materials will merit the extra time and effort required of FL teachers and learners. The issue of when to introduce authentic materials has been surrounded by controversy in the field of language teaching. On the one hand, researchers such as Kilickaya (2004) and Kim (2000) claim that authentic materials can be used with intermediate and advanced students only. These researchers believe that the use of authentic materials at lower levels causes students to feel frustrated and de-motivated since students at these levels lack many lexical items and structures used in the target language. According to Guariento and Morley (2001), "At lower levels, however, even with quite simple tasks... the use of authentic texts may not only prevent the learners from responding in meaningful ways but can also lead them to feel frustrated, confused, and, more importantly, demotivated" (p. 347). Kim (2000) further argues that authentic language may not expose students to comprehensible input at the earliest stages of acquisition. However, others claim that exposure to authentic materials should start in the earliest stages of language learning (McNeil, 1994; Miller, 2005), asserting that an early exposure to such texts will help students develop useful strategies for more complex tasks later on.

1.1 Statement of the problem

It is thought that non-native speaking teachers' and learners' views would be valuable as they themselves, are often successful learners and would know better of its benefits if any. Miller (2003) indicates that a survey conducted on The ESL Magazine website concerning the most used medium for obtaining authentic listening materials for ESL/EFL instruction found the TV the most used one). The literature indicates that researchers have investigated the impact of authentic materials on language comprehension and performance at various levels. Studies have demonstrated that adults spend nearly half of their communication time on listening (Gilman & Moody 1984; cited in Vandergrift, 1999), but according to many (Nunan, 1999; Oxford, 1993; Schmitt, 2002; Vandergrift, 1999) it has not been dealt with as it was supposed to be. Since the role of listening comprehension in language learning was taken for granted, it merited little research and pedagogical attention. Listening comprehension, despite the prominent roles it plays in language learning, has been ignored in language learning. In EFL situation, it has been viewed as a great issue that lots of students are bereft of an acceptable level of comprehension in a par with other skills. Having unique characteristics such as, being ephemeral, enjoying non-written language feature, redundancy, etc., made listening by nature different from other skills. . It plays a significant role in daily communication and educational process. In spite of its importance, the development of listening ability has received only slight emphasis in language instruction. From the other hand, there are many limitations and restrictions in getting access to materials. Most notably the lack of 'exposure' to real life situation for 'natural' development of language, EFL learners are bereft of a balanced level of listening. It is, therefore, important for EFL educational policy makers to prepare students for successful listening in EFL contexts by implementing and introducing authentic listening materials in the EFL classes. Iranian students live in an EFL environment, where they do not need to communicate with each other in daily life. Some studies provided insights about learners' attitudes toward authentic input. In addition, pedagogical research sought to provide recommendations for material selection and sources. However, no study has been conducted with the aim of eliciting teachers' and learners' perceptions toward using authentic materials in their classes. Because of the importance of the teachers' role in providing authentic input for the students, the present study attempts to address this issue. A cursory glance on the literature shows that there is a virtual gap survey research on EFL teacher's and learners' attitude on using authentic listening materials and its contributions on learning.

1.2 Significance of the study

Listening is the most frequently used form of language skill (Thanajaro & Shrum, 2000), which plays a significant role in daily communication and educational process. According to what has been stated by Krashen (1987) in input hypothesis, listening materials plays a great role in 'natural' development and moving from one step to the others, to learn effortlessly. He argues that, learners should be in a acquisition-rich environment and be in natural exposure to language. Undoubtedly, this is one of the most rigorous claims which ascribe great importance to listening functions. Developing listening skills comes 'naturally' for some students, but with great difficulty for others. Acquiring listening skills can even be frustrating for some students. For some time, listening was regarded as a 'passive' or 'receptive' skill and, consequently, not particularly crucial as a skill area to be taught. Researchers then began to recognize the importance of listening and its role in comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), and attention to and adoption of newer comprehension-based methodologies brought the issue to the fore. Listening became a skill to be reckoned with and its key position in communication was recognized (Feyten, 1991; Hadley, 2001). There are some issues in the literature regarding the teachers' and learners' attitude toward authentic materials that are pertinent and are reviewed. As a matter of easiness we discuss them separately. Authenticity brings back the enquiry of what is accurate, real and integral about language (Breen 1985). As far as the learners considerably depend on textbooks that are frequently used in Iran, and this may influence the language they produce, so the issues of authentic or inauthentic materials are posed. In addition, Kim (2000) argues that authentic materials make a major contribution to overcoming certain cultural barriers to language learning. On the other hand, some scholars do not see the value of using authentic materials. Clark (1983) claims that media do not affect learning under any conditions; thus, the question of authentic versus non-authentic makes no difference (as cited in Miller, 2005). Kilickaya (2004) further points out that authentic texts are random in respect to vocabulary, structures, functions, content, and length; thereby causing a burden for the teacher. Teachers face challenges regarding access to authentic materials, the expense of purchasing them, and the time required to find an appropriate authentic text and design suitable pedagogical tasks (McNeil, 1994; Miller, 2005). Such issues often make it impractical for instructors to integrate authentic materials into the curriculum successfully. Schmidt (1994) argues that authentic discourse may panic learners who find themselves faced with the speed of delivery coupled with a mixture of known and unknown vocabulary and structures. In teaching methodology, by advent of communicative approaches in teaching, educational policy makers tend to provide a real-life task (materials) as possible. Even after the advent of post method, exposing learners to language is a tenet. Building learners' autonomy, facilitating and internalizing motivation are all principles in post method can be exerted by authentic materials. As a post method tenet, there is "an urgency & restructuring of classroom content and procedure" (Kumuravadevelu 2001, p. 538) serves as a notable way for building autonomy, it helps for providing many enriched, ubiquitous and easily-accessible sources for extensive learning, learn to learn, raising cultural consciousness all be achieved by authentic materials.

Regarding teachers' perception, the literature is laden with various forms of teachers' and learners' opinions about different tips in applied linguistics in general. As McDonough (in Johnson and Johnson 1998:14) says attitude can be "opinions and belief, ways of responding with respect to some set of problems". Further attitude as it was suggested by Littlewood (1981) can be used for the investigation of subjects in need analyses. Overall exploring teachers' and learners' attitude toward authentic materials will be worthwhile.

1.3 Review of literature

The definitions of authentic materials are slightly different in the literature. Rogers (1988) defines it as "appropriate" and quality in terms of goals, objectives, learner needs and interest and natural in terms of real life and meaningful communication "(p. 467). Harmer (1991; cited in Matsuta, (2004)) defines authentic texts as "materials which are designed for native speakers; they are real texts designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language".

Jordan (1997, p. 113) refers to authentic texts "as texts that are not written for language teaching purposes".

According to Peacock (1997) authentic materials are those materials that have been produced to fulfil some social purposes in the language community. Martinez (2002) defined that "authentic would be material designed for native speakers of English used in the classroom in a way similar to the one it was designed for" (p.1). Widdowson (1983) stated that "authenticity...is a term which creates confusion because of a basic ambiguity" (p.30). Therefore, the term 'authentic material' has been defined in different ways in the literature. What is common to these definitions is 'exposure to real language and its use in its own community'. Nunan (1989; cited in Adams, 1995) refers to authentic materials as "any material which has not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching" (p.4). Little *et al.* (1988, as cited in Guariento & Morley, 2001) define authentic material as "an authentic text ...created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced" (p.347). Bacon & Finnemann (1990) define authentic materials as texts "produced by and for native speakers of the target language" (p.469). Rogers & Medley (1988) used the term 'authentic' to refer to "language samples ... that reflect a naturalness of form and an appropriateness of cultural and situational context that would be found in the language as used by the native speakers" (p. 468).

Other definitions of authentic material have emphasized the primacy of communicativeness. For example, Lee (1995) states that "a text is usually for a real life communicative purpose, where the writer has a certain message to pass on to the reader" (p. 324). On the other hand, others believe that there are more elements to the definition of the term 'authentic than' textual authenticity (Breen, 1985; Chaves, 1998; Jacobson, Degener, & Purcell-Gates, 2003; Rings, 1986; Ur, 1996). Widdowson (1990), for example, distinguishes between authentic text and authentic discourse, saying that "the language presented to [SL learners] may be genuine record of native speaker behavior, genuine, that is to say, as textual data, but to the extent that it does not engage native speaker response it cannot be realized as authentic discourse" (p.45). Similarly, Breen (1985) suggests that authenticity does not relate only to the language selected to be taught (authentic texts) but to the tasks on which the learners are engaged and the social setting created in the classroom. He explains that "authenticity to the target language needs to be seen as only one of a number of demands for authenticity which confront the teacher. ... The learners' own contributions, the activity of language learning, and the actual classroom situation are also constituent elements" (p.61).

1.3.1 The role of authentic materials in FL teaching and learning

There is growing body of research on the impact of authentic materials on FL teaching. Researchers and teachers have increasingly acknowledged the need for and usefulness of authentic materials in the field of language teaching. Empirical studies have substantiated the positive results taken by learners who have opportunities to interact with and deal with authentic texts. Studies, such as Miller (2005) and Thanajaro (2000), revealed that incorporating authentic materials lead to aural language development. In addition, Otte (2006) investigated the impact of aural authentic texts on listening comprehension abilities of four adult ESL students at an American university. He concluded that exposure to authentic materials would lead to improving students' listening comprehension abilities and motivation. By the same token, conducting a study on intermediate-level students, Herron & Seay (1991) found that those students who listened to authentic radio tapes as a substitute for regular classroom activities demonstrated significantly greater listening comprehension than those students for whom the authentic radio program was not a part of the semester's curriculum. Their research confirmed that the more exposure to authentic speech, the more improvement in listening-comprehension skill. Moreover, Berardo (2006) argued that several studies have asserted that authentic materials can increase reading development by representing students to new vocabulary and expressions. For example, Young (1999) examined reading comprehension of 127 second year Spanish language students at a state university. It was revealed that authentic materials, as opposed to simplified, tended to better recall score versions of the same texts. Similarly, Leow (1993, as cited in Devitt, 1997) investigated learners' intake of selected linguistic items from both authentic and simplified texts and found that although the simplified versions were significantly more comprehensible, but authentic texts did facilitate greater levels of intake.

Besides, Crossley, McCarthy, Louwerse, and McNamara (2007) examined differences in linguistic structures between sampled simplified and authentic reading texts using computational tools. They found when teaching more mature students, simplified texts show more syntactic complexity than authentic texts do. In this regard, Carney & Franciuli (1992) stated that the use of authentic texts has obvious advantage over simplified texts in reading. Further, many professionals in the field of language pedagogy argued that using authentic materials will lead to improve the communicative competence of learners (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Wilcox et al., 1999). Comparing the impact of authentic versus textbook materials on developing learners' communicative competence, Gilmore (2007) investigated the impact of authentic versus textbook materials on developing learners' communicative competence in a one-year quasi-experimental study at a Japanese university. He found that those who received the authentic input, made statistically significant improvements over those who received textbook input on six out of eight tests designed to measure different types of competence. He found that "this result was attributed to the fact that the authentic input allowed learners to focus on a wider range of features than is normally possible ... and that this noticing had beneficial effects on learners' development of communicative competence" (p.111).

In this regard, Weyers (1999) examined the impact of exposure to authentic video on the language acquisition process of university students of Spanish. The results indicated that those students who were exposed to authentic video showed a significant improvement in listening comprehension skills and some component parts of the communicative competence.

According to Ur (1996), understanding texts outside the classroom is troublesome for students because classroom reading materials do not depict the real-world language. She argues that "we want our learners to be able to cope with the same kinds of reading that are encountered by native speakers of the target language" (p.150). Similarly, Brantmeier (2008) claims that authentic reading materials should be an essential component of language programs. Moreover, Hadley (2001) concludes that the "use of real or simulated travel documents, hotel registration forms, biographical data sheets, train and plane schedules, authentic restaurant menus, labels, signs, newspapers, and magazines will acquaint students more directly with real language than will any set of contrived classroom materials used alone" (p.97). Thus, it seems sensible to base students' reading practice on a variety of authentic texts.

Moreover, Morton (1999) asserts that developing strategies in comprehending authentic texts can help students to develop writing proficiency in the target language. He explicates, "Students ... need to learn the register that is appropriate for their own essays. For this, there is no substitute for authentic academic texts which can develop students' ability to master basic rhetorical devices" (p. 182). In this regard, Carter & Nunan (2001) asserted that the use of authentic materials raises learners' awareness of not only grammatical and lexical but also stylistic features. Moreover, professionals in favor of authentic materials assert that exposure to authentic materials should be introduced to the learners in the earliest stages of language learning (Bacon, 1989; McNeil, 1994; Miller, 2005), claiming that an early exposure to such texts will aid students to develop useful strategies for more complex tasks later on. Herron and Seay (1991) stated that using authentic materials pave the way for students to experience the language learning.

Authentic materials can still be useful in another way; empirical studies have confirmed that less proficient students can benefit from such materials. In an investigation of high school students studying German as a FL, Bernhardt and Berkemeyer (1988, as cited in Otte, 2006) found that all levels of students have the capacity to manage using authentic texts. Maxim (2002) concluded, "The students' limited linguistic competence did not short-circuit their ability to read authentic texts in class with the support of their classmates and instructor" (p.29).

The findings of the above-mentioned studies have indicated that authentic materials can be useful in many ways. Such materials introduce students to how language is used in the real world and improve their overall language proficiency as well as reading and listening comprehension, communicative competence, and lexical and stylistic knowledge. However, such advantages run counter to arguments that the use of authentic materials at early stages hinders the language learning process. Nevertheless, incorporating authentic materials in teaching a FL offers more than just linguistic advantages. In this

regard, scholars maintain for the motivating power of authentic materials (Gilmore, 2007; Sherman, 2003), which by and large, is a key factor in successful language learning (Keiko Komiya, 1992; Krashen, 1981; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). As Gilmore (2007) states, "Claims that authentic materials are a motivating force for learners are widespread through the literature" (p. 106). Similarly, McNeil (1994) and Kilickaya (2004) argue that since authentic texts donate the learner the feeling that he or she is learning the real language – the target language as it is used by social colonies that speak it, their use is now regarded as one way for enhancing students' motivation for learning. Rivers (1987) asserts that students who work with authentic materials have a practical intention and dynamic interest in the language. Kim (2000) argues that authentic materials provide a means for learners to overcome certain cultural barriers to language learning. Sherman (2003) states, "One reason why [authentic material] is so important for language learning is that it is a window into culture" (p.12). McGinnis and Ke (1992), in their study about using authentic cultural materials to teach reading in Chinese, concluded that "through a carefully organized and richly divergent variety of authentic materials, students can acquire ... the greater ability to develop cultural understanding by themselves" (p. 238).

Despite these, some scholars rarely see any worth for authentic materials. Clark (1983) claims that there is no effect learning via media under any conditions; thus, the question of authentic versus non-authentic makes no difference (cited in Miller, 2005). Similarly, Kienbaum et al. (1986) pointed out that there is no significant difference in the language performance of children using authentic materials compared with those in a more traditional classroom context.

Authentic materials, says Martinez (2002), may be too culturally biased and difficult to understand outside the language community. Nostrand (1989) says that "authentic texts from one culture may give a false impression to a student from another unless they are presented in an authentic context which makes it clear precisely what they exemplify" (p.49). According to McNeil (1994), Kilickaya (2004) and Ur (1996), lower-level learners may feel frustration and de-motivation when confronted with an authentic text. According to Guariento and Morley (2001), "at lower levels, however, ... the use of authentic texts may not only prevent the learners from responding in meaningful ways but can also lead them to feel frustrated, confused, and, more importantly, de-motivated" (p. 347). Kim (2000) further argues that authentic language may not expose students to comprehensible input at the earliest stages of acquisition. In sum, the idea of authenticity in language teaching has been debated over the past three decades. However, the benefits that authentic materials bring to the FL classroom may be said to greatly outweigh the difficulties they might give rise to. In other words, there is a trade-off. In addition, it is possible to overcome such challenges through task design. Field (1998; in Richards & Renandya, 2002) stated that "instead of simplifying the language of the text, simplify the task that is demanded of the student. ... With the text above the language level of the class, one demands only shallow comprehension" (p.244). Guariento and Morley (2001) also claimed that such difficulties can be overcome by designing tasks that require only partial comprehension.

In conclusion, it is clear from the above review that incorporating authentic materials into the FL/SL classroom is worthwhile. To sum up, here are the positive effects of authentic listening materials reiterated in the review above. The main advantages of using authentic listening materials are (Philips & Shettlesworth, 1978; Clarke 1989; Peacock, 1997; cited in Richards, 2001):

- They have a positive effect on learner motivation.
- They provide authentic cultural information.
- They provide exposure to real language.
- They relate more closely to learners' needs.
- They support a more creative approach to teaching

1.3.2 Selection of authentic materials

According to Berardo (2006), there are three criteria for choosing authentic texts: suitability of content, exploitability, and readability. Suitability of content refers to the idea that the text should be in congruence with students' needs and interests.

For Bacon and Finneman (1990), the culturally relevance of the text to the experience of the students should be taken into account. In this respect, Lee (1995) stated that "a careful and wise selection of materials focused on learners is a must if we want a positive response from them" (p.325). Moreover, exploitability refers to usability of the texts for developing the students' competence and its exploitability for teaching purposes. Finally, readability refers to the language of the text, including the structural and lexical difficulty as well as the amount of new vocabulary and grammatical forms. Brown and Eskenzai (2004) indicted that the primary criteria for selecting appropriate authentic text should be the reader's current vocabulary knowledge and the desired vocabulary knowledge throughout the curriculum, in addition to grammar difficulty and text cohesiveness. However, Rivers (1987) claims that the primary criterion for selecting appropriate authentic text is content. He states that "although length, linguistic complexity, and interest for the student all play significant roles in the selection of materials, the single most important criterion for selection is content" (p. 50). Meanwhile, Rivas (1999) and Mishan (2005) argue that learners' interests and needs are the most essential factors in the choice of authentic texts. In this respect, Little et al. (1989, p. 71) state, "The more texts are related to learners' personal concerns and interests the deeper and more rapid the processing will be" (cited in Mishan, 2005, p.28). Moreover, Lee (1995) states that the text must be in harmony with the course objectives, i.e., it can improve the language skills educators want the learners to practice.

Besides, both the length of the text and teaching approach must be considered by the teachers. Further, a variety of genres must be selected, such as articles, advertisements, interviews, poems, application forms, train timetables, and brochures.

1.3.3 A review on the research on realm of authentic listening texts (materials) on teaching

A study by Lingzhu & Yuanyuan (2010) revealed that using authentic materials is a non-negotiable item but in dealing with that, encountering some problem is inevitable. Its probable challenges are being "too culturally based" containing "difficult language, unneeded vocabulary items and complex language structures (Richard, 2001, p. 287). Therefore, students should be equipped with sufficient cultural background knowledge and vocabulary and grammar knowledge. They also mentioned that authentic materials could be problematic for the teachers, too. Therefore, they claimed, special preparation is necessary for them. Moreover, they added that although authentic listening materials are most useful for advanced learners but using authentic materials should not be dismissed in early levels. They pointed out to the ways for introducing authentic (listening) materials to elementary students. These ways, of course, are reiterated in the literature by various scholars: (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Field, 2008)

1. **Simplifying the task:** as teachers may counter-balance the increased linguistic difficulty of the text by simplifying the requirements of the task (Anderson & Lynch, 1988). It is not necessarily the language that makes a piece of listening difficult. Difficulty may also arise from the task that is set. It is possible to use a listening passage which is well beyond the learners' level, provided that what is demanded of the learner is correspondingly simple. If one notches up the text, one notches down the task. (Field, 2008)
2. **Grading the text:** it is important to bear this point in mind that even in the authentic materials the types, mood, and genres of texts is not the same for learners in terms of difficulty, so having different sample is important. Finally, bearing following points into account is important while grading: (Field 2008; cited in Lingzhu & Yuanyuan, 2010)
 - More frequent vocabulary;
 - Simple syntax;
 - Simpler and less dense ideas and facts;
 - A degree of redundancy, with ideas/facts expressed more than once;
 - A degree of repetition, with the same form of words repeated;
 - A very specific context or genre of communication which to some extent pre-determines how participants behave (Field, 2008, p.123).

3. Staging the listening: it refers to simplicity and presentation of task in progression manner.

Peacock (2000) carried out a study to investigate whether authentic materials increase the classroom motivation of learners to test a hardly-ever claim. He selected two beginning-level EFL classes and used authentic and artificial materials alternately. Results from two observation sheets and a self-report questionnaire revealed that on-task behavior and observed motivation increased significantly when authentic materials were used. However, authentic materials were significantly less interesting than artificial materials for them.

Madden (2008) in his study followed a series of techniques for adapting authentic listening and proposed a sort of dealing with materials from media and its repetition in oral mood. Chavez (1998) did a survey asking 190 university-level learners of German to rate 53 situations (composed of 12 authenticity factors) on their level of (a.) authenticity; (b.) contribution to language learning; (c.) ease/difficulty; and (d.) resulting anxiety/enjoyment. Results showed that learners view authentic materials as essential to language learning and enjoyable. In contrast, positive correlations between authenticity and perceived difficulty were rare. He found that learners enjoy interacting with authentic materials but are appreciative of pedagogical support, especially in listening situations and when reading literary texts. In short, he found that learners prefer grading tasks to grading texts. Norris (2011) in his thesis on authentic video and audio for developing cultural awareness in listening explored the positive aspects of combining the visual and auditory modes to present authentic samples of contextualized language and culture through video. He notably made authentic listening materials more tuning for beginner by combining tasks. As he concluded, accompanying tasks provide authentic means for beginning English Language Learners to gain exposure to, and learn to use, the English language as it is spoken by native-speakers in the local setting. He found that the videos, materials, and tasks also highlight varied cultural themes and can be used as supplementary materials.

1.3.4 Research in the realm of authentic materials in Iran

The numbers of studies in the realm of authentic materials in Iran are not so many. Here are some of them:

A thesis under the title of 'a study of the problem of authenticity and comprehensibility of linguistic input in second language acquisition' was carried out at Tabriz University by Nowrouzi (1997, cited in Naseh, 2007). This study concentrated on the issues of comprehensibility of linguistic input and its authenticity in second or foreign language acquisition. If the learners are exposed to adapted, simplified texts, though comprehensible as an essential for acquisition, but might be bereft of naturalness and lose its authenticity. From the other hand, exposing learners to original authentic texts might be difficult, if not impossible, for learners to grasp very, if any. In his study, he discussed a controversial but covered issue regarding the dilemma how to compromise between simplified materials and authentic ones for arriving at appropriate outcome regarding learning. Having discussed the nature of each, he came up with some solutions in doing so. He recommended that the presentation of materials should be as authentic-like as possible. In addition, the activities should be simplified via instruction.

Another study (thesis) was conducted by Keshavarz, Hedayati (1999, cited in Naseh, 2007) at Tehran Azad Islamic University, Central Branch under the title of 'the effect of authentic broadcast materials on the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners'. This study was carried out to examine the probable significance of authentic materials over simplified materials and its effect on learners' motivation. Having selected two groups of both male and female in each, the researcher assigned them to control and experimental group randomly. As it was claimed in the study, seemingly they passed their intermediate courses. Having been fed with authentic broadcast and simplified materials, experimental and control groups each received a different treatment respectively. The experimental group also received necessary background knowledge. After 13 sessions of teaching, for either group, a similar test was administered. Having analyzed the elicited data, he concluded that using authentic materials has a significance effect on students' comprehension and their motivation also improved.

One of the latest study in the realm of authentic listening materials was carried out by Mousavi & Iravani (2012). They investigated the effect of authentic aural materials on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at high intermediate proficiency level. Having selected two groups randomly, they

exposed two series of listening materials to the two groups, namely authentic radio-tapes and non-authentic listening materials to experimental and control group, respectively. They found that those who had received authentic radio-tapes gained a higher degree of listening comprehension and proficiency than non-authentic groups. They confirmed that the use of aural authentic listening materials in EFL classrooms improves learners' listening comprehension, and it has positive effects on EFL learners.

Finally, Khalili & Mahsefat (2012) conducted a research under the title of the impact of authentic listening materials on listening skills of EFL learners at elementary level. They selected 60 students at elementary proficiency level and divided them two groups, experimental and control group. After running a pretest, these two groups exposed to two series of material, authentic and simplified materials for experimental and control group respectively. The analysis and comparison of results taken from two groups in posttest revealed that, using authentic listening materials has positive effect on the listening skills of EFL elementary learners. Further they reported positive feedback on the part of students exposed by authentic listening materials.

1.4 Research questions

The following questions will drive the present study.

1. What are the Iranian students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of using authentic listening materials in the EFL classrooms?
2. What are the Iranian teachers' attitudes toward the effectiveness of using authentic listening materials in the classrooms?

Based on the research question (question number 1) and the nature of the study the hypothesis is as follow:

First hypothesis: students have positive attitudes regarding using authentic listening materials.

Second hypothesis: teachers have positive attitudes regarding using authentic listening materials.

2. Method of the study:

2.1 Participants

The study was carried out at the Rodaki Higher Institute Education, Mazandran, Iran. 100 students and 30 teachers participated in the study. They were from both genders, male and female. They were randomly selected. In order to control the level of the participants, Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (2007)(appendix A) was administered to make sure that they are unanimously at the pre-intermediate proficiency levels. As a result, 60 students were at pre-intermediate level. The students were all in their courses of English for general purpose, aged from 18 to 30. They were majoring in non-English fields, such as computer software, business management, sociology, law etc. As stated earlier, pre-intermediate levels. Their mother tongue was Persian. Besides a few of them had background in the Turkish (Azari) language. All participants had the same syllabus (coursework/book) in their English classes.

2.2 Instruments

The instruments in this study were an English placement test (Oxford Placement Test, 2007, appendix A), m teachers and a student feedback survey: Oxford Placement Test (OPT) is a paper-based test administered to determine the proficiency level of the participants. This placement test (appendix A) consisted of 50 multiple choice questions which assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary from elementary to intermediate levels. A reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions and also an optional writing task that assesses students' ability to produce the language. The time allotted for this test was 65 minutes. According to its manual, it enables teachers to have a greater understanding of what level their students are at. in order to provide a deeper understanding of Students and Teachers' Attitudes Toward Presenting Authentic Listening Materials in the EFL Listening Class was deemed to conduct an interview. It was conducted with 80 students and 30 teachers who had agreed in advance to participate in follow-up interview for the purpose of the study. Before interview they signed consent form to in which they agreed to be audio-taped. Both teachers and learners were asked five questions designed to elicit qualitative data regarding their belief, and opinions on the use of authentic materials in listening classes, the interview was conducted face to face, the first three questions for both teachers

and learners were the same, whereas the two were different, all of the questions were about their perception to authentic listening materials. Finally, the students had a chance to provide feedback as far as the materials they were exposed to, was concerned. The instructor administered a student feedback survey (adapted from Al-Musallam, 2009) which asked a series of questions to generate the students' opinions and perspectives on instructional materials, i.e. authentic listening materials (See appendix D). The survey asked how effective the students found the authentic materials. It is a Likert-based scale questionnaire. Results of the survey provided valuable information helped the explanations of the conclusions of the study provided by the analysis of the data which is collected. The questionnaire consisted of 35 multiple-choice questions which is designed to collect information related to the authentic listening materials. It was adapted from Al-Musallam (2009). It was covered with a consent form, which informed the participants that completing the questionnaire meant that they consented to participate in the study. To avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the students, the questionnaire was translated into Persian, the participants' mother tongue (appendix E).

3. Result

The results were depicted in following tables.

Table1. students attitudes regarding authentic listening materials

	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean	Std. D
1	13	36.1	15	41.7	3	8.3	5	13.9	2.00	1.014
2	19	52.8	10	27.8	2	5.6	5	13.9	1.81	1.064
3	3	8.3	7	19.4	18	50.0	8	22.2	1.86	0.867
4	14	38.9	6	16.7	12	33.3	4	11.1	2.17	1.082
5	15	41.7	11	30.6	7	19.4	3	8.3	1.94	0.984
6	1	8.3	7	19.4	5	13.9	21	58.3	3.22	1.045
7	11	30.6	13	36.1	8	22.1	4	11.1	2.14	0.990
8	2	5.6	2	5.6	10	27.8	22	61.1	3.44	0.843
9	17	47.2	7	19.4	6	16.7	6	16.7	2.03	1.0158
10	19	38.9	17	27.8	6	16.7	6	16.7	2.11	1.116
11	16	44.4	12	33.3	2	5.6	6	16.7	1.94	1.094
12	9	25	12	33.3	12	33.3	3	8.3	2.25	0.937
13	10	27.8	10	27.8	13	36.1	3	8.3	2.25	0.967
14	9	25	7	19.4	12	33.3	14	38.9	2.69	1.231
15	7	19.4	2	5.6	14	38.9	13	36.1	2.92	1.105
16	3	8.3	2	5.6	12	33.3	19	52.8	3.31	0.920
17	12	33.3	15	41.7	7	19.7	2	5.6	1.97	0.878
18	13	36.1	18	50.0	4	11.1	2	5.6	1.92	0.906
19	20	55.6	9	25	6	16.7	1	2.8	1.67	0.863
20	1	2.8	5	13.9	11	3.6	19	38.9	33.3	0.828

The survey contained 35 multiple-choice questions (appendix D). The mean for each question has been depicted in the table. Questions (1,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19) which ask the participants' attitudes toward authentic listening materials and their preferences received high numerical value for mean score (mean=3.5 and p=65%). Conversely, questions (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 20) which ask participants about the no use of authentic listening materials received lower mean score (mean=2.10 and p=30%). By the same token question (20) who asks participants about the motivation also received high mean and high percent (mean=3.24 p=60%). Regarding the sources which are most preferred by participants are movie and music (mean=3.24 p=65% and mean=3.1 p=63%). Finally the tools which has the highest preference among participants is film and TV (mean=3.5 p=67%). The findings of the survey revealed that the experimental group receiving treatment responded favorably on the majority of the questions,

exerting a higher level of satisfaction with the authentic listening materials. The percentages explicate that the experimental group who received treatment scored higher in the most of the variables, such as willingness and preference to use authentic materials, tendency towards listening to authentic listening materials, usability of authentic listening materials in society and out of class situation, motivational power of authentic listening materials, the effect of authentic listening materials on speaking, grammar, vocabulary proficiency and the effectiveness of authentic listening materials on listening skills. Moreover, movie and music were the most significant sources of authentic listening materials for the participants of the study. Besides TV and movie were the most accessible sources for the students. The results of this survey confirmed that Iranian EFL learners' at pre-intermediate proficiency level have positive attitudes toward using authentic listening materials.

Table 2. Teachers attitudes toward the type of listening materials

Types of materials /	Authentic		simplified		Both		Mean	S.d
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Q2	3	10	3	10	24	80	2.70	.651
Q3	3	10.0	18	60.0	9	30.0	2.20	.610

This table illustrates teachers' ideas regarding the type of materials for listening classes namely, authentic, simplified or both. As it is obvious, majority of the teachers (about 80%) believed that a listening class with both authentic and simplified materials would be the best one.

Table 3. Teachers attitudes toward the importance of listening

Q _n	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	S.d
Ite	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Q4	8	26.	6	20	6	20	6	20	4	13.	2.73	1.41
Q5	16	53.	5	16.	4	13.	3	10.	2	6.7	2.00	1.31
Q6	5	16.	7	23.	7	23.	6	20.	5	16.	2.97	1.35
Q7	9	30.	7	23.	5	16.	5	16.	4	13.	2.60	1.42

This table depicts teachers' ideas toward the importance of listening in EFL. About 70% believed that listening course enable students to listen and comprehend the materials outside the classroom. Teachers had similar ideas about (60%) the motivation caused by listening class which they say push forward learners to learn out of school or in the real life situation. They stated that listening class paves the students to listen out of class to other materials.

Table 4. Teachers' attitudes regarding authentic listening materials

Qn	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	S.d
Item	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Q8	6	20.0	7	23.3	6	20.0	6	20.0	5	16.7	2.90	1.398
Q9	6	20.0	6	20.0	7	23.3	6	20.0	5	16.7	2.93	1.388
Q10	8	26.7	7	23.3	5	16.7	5	16.7	5	16.7	2.10	.845
Q11	8	26.7	6	20.0	6	20.0	4	13.3	6	20.0	2.80	1.495
Q12	6	20.0	7	23.3	6	20.0	6	20.0	5	16.7	2.90	1.398
Q13	6	20.0	9	30.0	6	20.0	4	13.3	5	16.7	2.77	1.382
Q14	5	16.7	8	26.7	7	23.3	6	20.0	4	13.3	2.87	1.306
Q15	5	16.7	8	26.7	9	30.0	4	13.3	4	13.3	2.80	1.270
Q16	8	26.7	9	30.0	7	23.3	3	10.0	3	10.0	2.47	1.279
Q17	8	26.7	7	23.3	6	20.0	4	13.3	5	16.7	2.70	1.442
Q18	5	16.7	7	23.3	6	20.0	6	20.0	6	20.0	3.03	1.402
Q19	6	20.0	7	23.3	8	26.7	5	16.7	4	13.3	2.80	1.324
Q20	11	36.7	6	20.0	5	16.7	3	10.0	5	16.7	2.50	1.503
Q21	7	23.3	6	20.0	6	20.0	5	16.7	6	20.0	2.90	1.470
Q22	8	26.7	6	20.0	7	23.3	5	16.7	4	13.3	2.70	1.393
Q23	5	16.7	8	26.7	7	23.3	4	13.3	6	20.0	2.93	1.388
Q24	5	16.7	7	23.3	6	20.0	6	20.0	6	20.0	3.03	1.402
Q25	3	10	6	20	5	16.7	8	26.7	8	26.7	2.97	.928
Q26	7	23.3	11	36.7	1	3.3	10	33.3	1	3.3	2.57	1.278
Q27	10	33.3	6	20.0	5	16.7	4	13.3	5	16.7	2.60	1.499
Q28	8	26.7	9	30	5	16.7	5	16.7	3	3.3	10	.980

The following table shows that, question (7, 8, and 9) around 50% of teachers believed that authentic listening materials introduce students the real life use of language. Question illustrates that 45% of the teachers state that authentic listening materials help students to fulfill their needs. By the same token they around 55% of the participants believed that it improves learners' listening comprehension more than simplified materials. They said in comparison with simplified materials, authentic materials help students develop their speaking abilities. They had no similar ideas regarding authentic listening materials and familiarity with the use of grammar rules in the original context.(Question, 15). On the contrary, about 50% stated that(Question, 17) authentic listening materials increase knowledge of vocabulary item. About 56% said that authentic listening materials have more motivation on outside listening. Teachers participated in the study said that it is difficult to get access to authentic listening materials and they unanimously argued that selecting authentic listening materials is a barrier and difficult.(Questions, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28).

Table 5. Teachers' attitudes regarding the starting the exposure to authentic materials

Qn	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	S.d
ite	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Q2	8	26.	8	26.	6	20	4	13.3	4	13.	3.73	1.61

Q3		16	53.	5	16.	3	10	4	13.3.	2	6.7	3.78	1.31
Q3		5	16.	7	23.	7	23.	6	20.0	5	16.	2.97	1.35

This table extracts teachers' ideas regarding the starting time of exposure to authentic listening materials. Unlike many experts in the realm of the TEFL, 60% of teachers in this study believed that learners should be exposed to these materials early (Question, 29). About 70% of teacher (Question, 30) said they prefer intermediate level the frontline of exposure to authentic materials. Finally, teachers stated that advance proficiency level is late to expose authentic listening materials.

Table 6. Teachers' attitudes regarding the kinds of authentic materials in class

Q _n / item	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	S.d
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
TV com mer cials	6	20	9	30	6	20	5	16.7	4	13.	2.73	1.33
cartoons	16	53.	5	16.	3	10	4	13.3.	2	6.7	2.53	1.43
News clip s	10	33.	6	20	6	20	4	13.3	4	13.	2.97	1.35
Soap ope ra	9	30.	7	23.	3	10.	11	36.7	4	13.	2.53	1.27
Internet mat erial s	6	20	8	26.	6	20.	6	20.0	4	13.	2.80	1.34
Taped shor t stori es and nov el	17	56.	3	10.	4	13.	3	10.0	3	10.	2.07	1.43
Radio	5	16.	13	43.	9	30.	1	3.3	2	6.7	2.40	1.03
Song	11	36.	8	26.	6	20	2	6.7	3	10	1.97	.928

Regarding the type of authentic listening materials, Taped short stories and novel, cartoons, TV and Songs received highest selections by teachers. 75% of teachers in this study said that they prefer Taped short stories and novel, around 65% of them stated that they select cartoons, TV. The least was Radio, only 45% of teacher said they select it.

Table 7. Teachers' attitudes regarding factors in selecting authentic materials in class

Q _n / item	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	S.d
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Language level	12	40	6	20	4	13.	4	13.	4	13.	2.40	1.47
Length of text	6	20	7	23.	5	16.	6	20	6	20	2.97	1.45
Students needs	5	33.	8	26.	6	20	5	16.	6	20	2.97	1.40
Students' interests	6	20.	7	23.	6	20	6	20	5	16.	2.90	1.39
Percentage of new vocabulary	10	33.3	9	30	2	6.7	9	30	5	16.	2.33	1.24
Complexity of grammar structures	10	33.	8	26.	6	20	3	10.	3	10.	2.37	1.32
Course objectives	11	36.	4	13.	7	23.	8	26.	3	10	2.40	1.24
Types of materials	12	40.	7	23.	2	6.7	6	20	3	10	2.37	1.45

Teachers participated in this study had similar idea regarding the factors based on which they select their authentic listening materials. 60% of them stated that they select authentic listening materials according to the language level, 53.3% said their criteria to select authentic listening materials is the Length of text. Similarly, 53.3% stated that Students needs is their light in material selection. 66.3% believed that Percentage of new vocabulary is important to them in selection of authentic listening materials. 60% teachers participating in this study believed that, Complexity of grammar and structures is their

favorite factor in their selection. Finally, Course objectives and Types of materials received 49.3 and 63.3 percent respectively, by teachers as factors of selecting authentic materials.

4. Discussion

In this study, in order to have homogenous groups, a preliminary test (Oxford Placement Test) was administered to both groups and based on the results, all students were at the same level. Similarly, they were divided to two groups to receive two series of materials, authentic materials and simplified materials.

The results suggested that Iranian EFL learners at pre-intermediate proficiency level have highly positive attitudes toward the use of authentic materials in listening classes, which confirms findings of previous studies (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Chaves, 1998; Gonzalez, 1990; Hillyard et al., 2007; Kienbaum et al., 1986; Kim, 2000; Peacock, 1997). Indeed, this result is not surprising as the students moved from their limited learning environment (using only textbooks) to another environment connecting them with the language as it is used in the real world by native speakers. The use of authentic materials also seemed to arouse a great deal of interest among the students; they appeared to enjoy learning by being able to deal with a variety of authentic texts away from their usual classes (simplified). The students' positive attitudes were based on the merits that authentic materials bring into FL instruction. The students agreed that authentic materials (a) increased their knowledge of vocabulary items needed in real situations, (b) introduced them to how language is used in the real world, (c) improved their cultural understanding and language proficiency as well as listening comprehension, (d) were interesting, (e) fulfilled their needs, and (f) enabled them to enhance their writing styles. These findings are consistent with the current literature, which shows that several researchers (e.g., Berardo, 2006; Carter & Nunan, 2001; Guariento & Morley, 2001; Hadley, 2001; Miller, 2005; Morton, 1999; Thanjaro, 2000; Ur, 1996) provided evidence supporting the advantages of using authentic materials in improving FL learning. The results of the current study further revealed that the majority of the student participants indicated that authentic materials increased their motivation. Previous research also found motivation to be a key justification for the use of authentic texts in language learning (Gilmore, 2007; Kilickaya, 2004; Sherman, 2003).

The majority of students participating in the current study did not believe that authentic materials were difficult to comprehend, made them feel frustrated, or would cause cultural conflict and thus hinder comprehension. This finding contradicts the claims of some scholars who argue that the use of such materials may not be beneficial as they may be too difficult for EFL/ESL students to understand and cause cultural conflicts, thereby making students feel frustrated when confronting authentic texts (Martinez, 2002; Nostrand, 1989; Young, 1999).

However, more than half of the students preferred the use of a combination of authentic texts and textbooks, supporting Hadley's (2001) claim that a combination of both authentic and instructional materials seems to be more appropriate. Almost all of the students indicated that a reading class that used a textbook only was the worst. This supports previous research arguments that textbooks do not expose students to examples of real language and fail to reflect students' needs and interests (Brown & Eskenzai, 2004; Brusch, 1991; Swan, 1991).

The analysis of the results showed that the teacher participants have a positive attitude toward the use of authentic materials in their listening classes. As stated earlier, a growing body of researchers believes that authentic materials introduce students to how language is used in the real world and improve students' overall language proficiency as well as reading and listening comprehension, communicative competence, cultural awareness, lexical and stylistic knowledge, and motivation (Bacon, 1989; Berardo, 2006; Garcia, 1991; Herron & Seay, 1991; Otte, 2006; Peacock, 1997). The extra advantages such materials provide clearly justify the teachers' positive attitude.

Moreover, almost all of the teachers indicated that the ideal listening class uses a combination of both authentic texts and textbooks, which provides further support for Hadley's (2001) claim that such a combination is more appropriate. Most of the teacher participants also stated that a listening class that exclusively used textbooks was the most ineffective, which supports previous research findings that

textbooks can build a wall between the students and the real language and fail to reflect the students' needs and interests (Brown & Eskenzai, 2004; Brusch, 1991; Swan, 1991).

The teachers in the current study also indicated the types of authentic texts they preferred for use in their listening classes. As with students, short stories were the most preferred, whereas poems were the least preferred, providing further support for Ghosn's (2002) claim that authentic short stories effectively motivate students and promote the development of skills necessary for L2 academic literacy. The current study also examined the teachers' attitudes in regard to the right stage to introduce authentic materials to EFL learners. The results revealed that the majority of instructors believed that exposure to authentic texts should start at the intermediate levels of language learning. However, several previous studies have found that even beginning language learners can benefit from the use of authentic materials in language instruction (Allen *et al*, 1988; Bernhardt & Berkemeyer, 1988; Maxim, 2002). Regarding the selection criteria they would apply in their selection of authentic materials, the teachers indicated that language level was the most important factor in selecting authentic texts. The students' interests were second and their needs third. Moreover, the teachers ranked the percentage of new vocabulary fourth and course objectives fifth in deciding upon texts to use. The length of the text, complexity of grammatical structures, and type of text all placed sixth. However, Rivas (1999) and Mishan (2005) argue that learners' interests and needs are the most essential factors in the choice of authentic texts, and Brown and Eskenzai (2004) claim that the primary criteria for selecting appropriate authentic texts should be the reader's current vocabulary knowledge and desired vocabulary knowledge throughout the curriculum in addition to grammar difficulty.

To sum up, the findings of this study show that students at pre- intermediate have a positive attitude toward authentic listening materials. The study also shows that comprehension in EFL students improves after their exposure to authentic materials in the classroom due to the treatment, apparently. It can be concluded that to better prepare students and enable them to react accurately to the listening outside the classroom, it is necessary that teachers provide their students with ample opportunities to listen to samples of natural or real language, i.e. authentic language, in the classroom. It was also showed that participants in experimental group had positive attitude toward authentic listening materials. Finally, authentic listening materials are found to be more effective than simplified listening materials at elementary level, provided that they are instructed in logical manner as it was reiterated in the literature (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Field, 2008; Lingzhu & Yuanyuan, 2010). As they pointed out, limiting listeners to graded materials, fitted with their levels, leads to their disqualification from the outside face to face wrestling with the language. As they indicated, task simplification, text gradation and staging the listening progression should be taken into account while introducing authentic (listening) materials to pre- intermediate students. By the same token it can be understood teachers also have a positive attitudes toward authentic material at pre-intermediate level.

5. Suggestion for further researches

The conclusion of this study maintains the need for further study into the impact of authentic listening materials in developing listening skills.

Due to favorable impact of authentic listening materials, there is a need to investigate the effectiveness of different genres of authentic listening materials. It also worth recommending that, the impact of different modes and genres of authentic materials investigate at elementary level.

Next, the study can be wider in scope if it includes all possible modes and sources of authentic materials such audios , videos, from different sources, it also enjoys more pedagogical significance if compares contrasts these discrepancies and their efficiencies in developing listening skills.

Also the impact of authentic listening materials can be investigated to see its effect on other aspect of language acquisitions such learning and intonation, stress patterns, vocabulary proficiency, incidental learning, extra linguistic factors, grammar, establishing speaking and so forth.

Different listening strategies in relation to authentic listening materials and non-authentic materials (simplified) in different levels of proficiency can be a fruitful study as well.

Finally attitudes of teachers and learners at other levels of proficiency will be valuable study as well.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TYPES OF DICTIONARY USED AND IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION ACCURACY

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between types of dictionary used [Monolingual, Bilingual (L1-L2), and Bilingual (L2-L1) dictionaries] and Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy. Oxford Placement test was administered to select 80 intermediate EFL learners as the main sample. Two questionnaires were used to collect data. Questionnaire I was given to the 80 participants to collect some quantitative data about their preferred type of dictionary. Based on the participants' preferences in dictionary use they were divided into three groups including monolingual, bilingual (L1-L2), and bilingual (L2-L1) groups. The participants of the three groups then responded to the questionnaire II which reported their habits in dictionary use. They also took part in a task to check their skill in dictionary use. Subsequently, they were asked to read aloud a story in order to measure their pronunciation accuracy. Finally, some of them from each group were selected to attend an interview. According to the results of questionnaire I, the most frequently used dictionary type was Monolingual Mobile Dictionary and the least favored dictionary was Bilingual (L1-L2) Computer Dictionary. The data obtained from questionnaire II showed that consulting a dictionary for word definition, sentence example, pronunciation, and finding meaning were the most common habits of students. The results of Eta test showed a significant relationship between the type of dictionary used and pronunciation accuracy. Based on the results of the Pearson Correlation Test, it was found that there was a correlation between skill in dictionary use and pronunciation accuracy.

KEY WORDS: dictionary use, habits, types of dictionary [monolingual, bilingual (L2-L1), bilingual (L1-L2)], pronunciation accuracy

1. Introduction

English is an international language and a good command of this language is essential to function in the world. Learning English for non-native speakers has become so important that it cannot just be confined to formal school curriculum: it is an activity which people feel they need to engage in throughout their lives. English teachers are unavailable outside the schools, so learners need to find a reliable source to refer to when they encounter a variety of problems related to English. Several studies (Ryu (2006); Cubillo (2002)) introduced dictionaries as a reliable source that provides learners with useful linguistic and cultural information, especially when teachers are unavailable and the learners are responsible for their own learning.

The first thing a foreign language learner purchases is a dictionary (Baxter, 1980). Huang (2003) considered dictionaries as useful, fairly common and even necessary tools in language acquisition by EFL learners. It is as

an essential source, if not the main source, of information on language for all literate persons who have questions on form, meaning, and/or use of a word(s) in their L1 or in another language (Kirkness, 2004). Pronunciation is viewed as a sub-skill of speaking. Fraser (2000a) explains that being able to speak English includes a number of sub-skills of which pronunciation is by far the most important one.

1.1. Statement of the problem

The dictionary is one of the common learning tools for second and foreign language learners. Various types of dictionaries are used to help learners work on their language development. Inappropriate dictionaries and inappropriate use of dictionaries can be destructive to learners' language proficiency in EFL context. Untrained user of dictionaries may encounter some problems: unfamiliarity with the layout, inability to use phonemic script, lack of competence to locate the right meaning of a word according to the context, frustration and wasting time. There are some students who are too weak in productive skills and these are among the learners who either do not use dictionary or they use bilingual ones.

Pronunciation is an important aspect of language and it needs special attention for both teachers who teach it and learners who try to learn it. It is one of the problems that students in the ESL programs and also in their communications in the real world face it; because in all of them the sensation is how to say something in a foreign language. Fraser (2000) reported that many learners of English as second language have major problems with pronunciation. This could be the reason why many textbooks or learning materials usually include pronunciation section.

1.2. Significant of the study

There are some studies that have worked on importance of pronunciation as one of the most important skills in English language teaching. If speakers have very bad pronunciation, their speech will not be understandable to the listeners (Gilakjani, 2011). Therefore the focus of this study is on dictionary use and pronunciation accuracy which, in spite of their high importance, have received little attention in Iran. Dictionary use would be of great concern for language teachers. This study is important in that using dictionary plays a vital role in language development especially in EFL context, so by knowing the type of preferred dictionary, the educator can recognize the strengths and weaknesses and consequently can use these results to prepare a course for training good habits and also recommend the best type of dictionary. So by knowing the relationship between the dictionary used and pronunciation accuracy, students can use the best type of dictionary for improving their pronunciation.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between types of dictionary used and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy. It also tried to explore the types of dictionary which intermediate students use at Fouman language institutes. It also tried to determine if there was any correlation between the skill in dictionary use and pronunciation accuracy.

1.4. Research questions and hypotheses

Q1: What type of dictionary do intermediate students use at Fouman language institutes?

Q2: Is there any relationship between the type of dictionary used and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy?

Q3: Is there any correlation between the skill in dictionary use and pronunciation accuracy?

In line with the mentioned research questions, these null hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: There is not any relationship between the type of dictionary used and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy.

Hypothesis 2: There is no correlation between skill in dictionary use and pronunciation accuracy.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Related theoretical studies

2.1.1. Classification of dictionaries

According to Alhaysony (2011) different criteria can be used to classify dictionaries. They can be classified according to language (monolingual, bilingual, or bilingualized), according to variety of language (British English, American English) or according to the medium through which dictionaries are presented and accessed (paper, On-line, electronic, etc.). Other criteria related to the age of the users and the size of dictionary can be used to classify the dictionaries, too. Most frequently used dictionary types among EFL learners with different proficiency level were bilingual dictionaries especially at the initial stages (Battenburg, 1989; Kent, 2001; Kharama, 1985; Marin-Marin, 2005; Tomaszcyk, 1979) and Monolingual dictionaries are infrequently used (Baxter, 1980; Tomaszcyk, 1979).

2.1.2. Research on dictionary use

Since 1980s, a lot of attention was paid to the research on dictionary use. Hartmann (1987) identified four areas of research on dictionary use:

1. Research into the information categories presented in dictionaries ('dictionary typology')
2. Research into specific dictionary user groups ('user typology')
3. Research into the contexts of dictionary use ('needs typology')
4. Research into dictionary look-up strategies ('skills typology')

The first researcher who initiates an investigation into dictionary use by EFL learners was Tomaszcyk (1979). He distributed a survey questionnaire among Polish EFL learners at university level, foreign language instructors, and translators. The results showed that translation was the most reason for using dictionaries and after that writing and reading tasks were of secondary importance. In this study, the majority of learners preferred bilingual dictionaries over monolingual ones.

Bejoint (1981) studied the use of monolingual dictionary by French EFL students. Contrary to the result of Tomaszcyk's study, minority of participants preferred a bilingual dictionary. The results showed that dictionaries were used more frequently for decoding than encoding, and more specifically for meaning.

Al-haysony (2011) conducted a research to identify patterns of dictionary usage among EFL students in Saudi Arabia and concluded that bilingual (L2-L1) dictionaries are the most frequently used dictionaries and hand-held electronic dictionaries are used more than the printed ones and looking up the meaning of words was the prime objective for dictionary use.

2.1.3. Dictionary types on different skills and sub-skills

Hayati and Fattahzade (2006) investigated the effect of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries on vocabulary recall and retention of EFL learners. They found bilingual dictionaries more beneficial when there was time limitation but totally they concluded that dictionary types have no significant effect on the retention and recall of vocabulary.

Some researchers such as Hayati and Pour-mohammadi (2005) investigated the effect of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries on reading comprehension of intermediate EFL students. Results showed that the performance of students using bilingual dictionary was not significantly different from the ones who used the monolingual one. They concluded that both dictionaries are useful for reading comprehension but monolingual dictionaries are more effective, so advised EFL learners not to resort to a bilingual dictionary except as a last resort.

Ard (1982) studied the bilingual use as a part of composing process during writing. It was concluded that the success rate of dictionary use depends on the native language background of the writer. He found that the use of bilingual dictionaries may lead to certain types of errors that most of them are the results of shortcomings in the dictionaries (i.e. lack of meaning distinction, collocation information, frequency), but he did not encourage the dictionary use.

2.2. Research on pronunciation accuracy

As cited in Hariri (2012), in investigating pronunciation accuracy, at first, we must notice the definition of accuracy to measure it. Accuracy in pronunciation does not mean to pronounce like natives, but it is a subcategory of intelligibility and we can say that it is a kind of mastery in speech production. Another significance of accuracy is in EIL (English as an International Language), that is related to distinct and fluent pronunciation of different consonants and vowels. Van den Doel (2007), in his article explains that an efficient EIL is the one that speakers attempt to make themselves understood to non-native and even native speakers.

According to Burns (2003), Clear pronunciation is essential in spoken communication. Even where learners produce minor inaccuracies in vocabulary and grammar, they are more likely to communicate effectively when they have good pronunciation and intonation.

Pronunciation involves features at:

- The segmental (micro) level
- The supra-segmental (macro) level.

There are some important factors that affect the learning of pronunciation. They are age factor, motivation, exposure to target language, attitude, instruction, and mother tongue influence (Gilakjani, 2011).

Accurate pronunciation involves discovering how sounds are articulated and pronounced for each letter or group of letters when vocalizing a word and to follow what is accepted as standard by native speakers. To have accuracy in pronunciation doesn't necessarily mean to have native-like accent (Jahandar et al, 2012).

3. Method

3.1. Materials

To achieve the final goal of this study, five different instruments were used to collect the data in the present study:

- 1) Oxford Placement Test was administered to 120 EFL intermediate learners.
- 2) Two questionnaires were used: Questionnaire I and Questionnaire II. After checking the reliability of both questionnaires, questionnaire (I) was used to collect some quantitative data about participants' preferences in using dictionaries; Questionnaire (II) was used to identify dictionary habits of the learners.
- 3) An open ended interview also was used to solicit in-depth responses on learners' choice of dictionaries and their habits.
- 4) A task which administered during class time without any time limit was given to tap students' skill in dictionary use.
- 5) An Oral test of pronunciation was used to check learners' pronunciation accuracy on segmental and supra-segmental level.

3.2. Data collection procedures

The standardized Oxford Placement test (OPT) was administered to 120 EFL students to ensure the subjects are at the same level of language proficiency. Based on OPT direction, eighty intermediate students whose score was 31+ in grammar and vocabulary and 8+ in reading section was selected as main sample for the present study. In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, a pilot study was conducted with 15 intermediate students. Questionnaires I and II, Skill in Dictionary Use test, and pronunciation test were administered to the participants in order to ensure their reliability and validity.

In the next step, the main process of the study was carried out. To this end, the instruments were administered to intermediate students. First, the objectives and procedure of the questionnaires were explained to the participants. Then they completed the Questionnaire I during 10 minutes and 30 of them completed the Questionnaire II during 25 minutes. Thirty six of participants were asked to do the Skill in Dictionary Use task in 30 minutes afterwards these participants who completed the Questionnaire I were asked to participate in oral test of pronunciation in 10 minutes.

3.3. Data analysis procedures

Descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion along with measures of distribution were presented for the OPT test as a placement test and two questionnaires. For the statistical analyses, the data was examined under three subheadings: first running Eta test to the results of the questionnaire (the preferred type of dictionary used) and the pronunciation scores to examine whether there is a significant relationship between the participants' pronunciation score and each of the three types of dictionaries determined in the questionnaire. Secondly, running Pearson correlation in order to determine the relationship between the skill in dictionary use (task scores) and pronunciation scores. Before running Pearson correlation, Normality assumption was examined through applying Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. In sum, the relationship between the participants' pronunciation scores and type of dictionary they were used to was examined. For the face-to-face interview, the results of the participants' use of dictionaries reported at the interview were summarized.

4. Findings and results

4.1. Results of pilot study

A pilot study was done with 15 EFL learners who were representative of the main sample with respect to their general foreign language proficiency. The reliability of 60 items of the OPT test as well as the two questionnaires and the pronunciation test used in the study were estimated through running Cronbach's Alpha. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability analysis

Cronbach's Alpha		N of Items	N
OPT test	.835	60	15
Questionnaire 1: preferences	.778	9	15
Questionnaire 2: habits	.746	22	15
Pronunciation test	.732		

4.2. Results of the main study

4.2.1. Measure of EFL Proficiency (OPT test for the sampling purpose)

To ensure the main subjects were roughly at the same level of language proficiency, the standardized Oxford Placement test (OPT) was administered to 120 EFL students. The objective was to select a homogeneous sample. A cut-point of one standard deviation above and below the mean was set and 80 learners whose proficiency scores were within this range (+ 1 SD from the mean) were selected as the main participants of the present study. The descriptive statistics of the OPT test are presented in table 2.

Table 4.2: Statistics for the OPT test

N	Valid	125
	Missin	0
	g	
Mean		38.6880
Median		38.0000
Mode		38.00
Std. Deviation		13.28740
Variance		176.555
Range		60.00
Minimum		.00
Maximum		60.00
Sum		4836.00

4.2.2. The first research question: What type of dictionary do intermediate students use at Fouman language institutes?

Descriptive statistics including the mean scores, standard deviations, and frequencies, were used in order to scrutinize the participants' preferences in using dictionaries. Table 3 represents the statistics that were collected from the first questionnaire and shows the participants' preferred types of dictionaries.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics (the first Questionnaire: preferences)

		N	Missin	Mean	Std.	Sum
		Vali	g		Deviation	
		d				
Monolingual Dictionary	Desk	80	0	2.4250	.88267	194.00
Monolingual Dictionary	Computer	80	0	1.6250	.93287	130.00
Monolingual dictionary	Mobile	80	0	2.8750	1.05991	230.00
Bilingual (E-P) Dictionary	Desk	80	0	2.5000	.87149	200.00
Bilingual (E-P) Dictionary	Computer	80	0	2.0625	1.07142	165.00
Bilingual (E-P) dictionary	Mobile	80	0	2.6250	.89124	210.00
Bilingual (P-E) Dictionary	Desk	80	0	1.7000	.84793	136.00
Bilingual (P-E) Dictionary	Computer	80	0	1.3750	.60326	110.00
Bilingual (P-E) dictionary	Mobile	80	0	1.5625	.86922	125.00

Table 3 showed that, the participants announced their highest preferences for using Monolingual Mobile dictionary ($X = 2.8750$), followed closely by the Bilingual (E-P) Mobile dictionary ($X = 2.6250$) and Bilingual (E-P) Desk Dictionary ($X = 2.5000$). Use of Bilingual (P-E) Computer Dictionary, and use of Bilingual (P-E) Mobile dictionary were among the least favored types of dictionaries ($X \leq 1.56$).

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics, the mean scores, standard deviations, and percentages with respects to the learners' dictionary habits.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the second questionnaire (habits in dictionary use)

	Mean	Std.	N
		Deviation	
		n	
1) How often do you use your dictionary while reading?	1.53	.900	30
2) How often do you use your dictionary after reading?	3.20	.961	30
3) How often do you use your dictionary before reading?	2.33	.711	30
4) How often do you use your dictionary before writing?	2.57	.728	30

5) How often do you use your dictionary while writing?	3.27	.828	30
6) How often do you use your dictionary after writing?	1.57	.774	30
7) How often do you use your dictionary before speaking?	2.33	1.061	30
8) How often do you use your dictionary while speaking?	1.57	.626	30
9) How often do you use your dictionary after speaking?	1.63	.615	30
10) How often do you use your dictionary before listening?	1.33	.479	30
11) How often do you use your dictionary while listening?	1.80	.761	30
12) How often do you use your dictionary after listening?	3.10	1.062	30
13) While using your dictionary how often word definition is important to you.	3.60	.621	30
14) While using your dictionary how often synonym and antonym are important to you.	3.30	.651	30
15) While using your dictionary how often word collocation is important to you.	2.47	.629	30
16) While using your dictionary how often sentence example is important to you.	3.53	.629	30
17) While using your dictionary how often cross comparisons are important to you.	2.27	.828	30
18) While using your dictionary how often pronunciation is important to you.	3.53	.629	30
19) While using your dictionary how often grammatical pattern or features are important to you.	2.97	.718	30
20) While using your dictionary how often Persian equivalent is important to you.	3.27	.828	30
21) How often do you refer to dictionary to find meaning?	3.53	.629	30
22) How often do you refer to dictionary to learn language (word, grammar, pronunciation and spelling)?	3.10	.803	30

The findings of the second questionnaire that was related to the respondents' habits in dictionary use revealed that habits like consulting a dictionary for "word definition, sentence example, pronunciation, and finding meaning" were of great importance for the respondents. These habits held the highest mean rank (mean ≥ 3.50). Peculiarities like consulting a dictionary "while reading, after writing, while speaking, after speaking, before listening, and while listening" were amongst the least favored habits (mean ≤ 2).

4.2.3. The second research question: Is there any relationship between the type of dictionary used and Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy?

In order to find the relationship between the type of dictionary used and pronunciation scores, a chi-square Test along with Eta Test was used. Tables 5 and 6 present the result of chi-square and Eta test respectively.

Table 5: Chi-square test for the type of dictionary and pronunciation score

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	66.000 ^a	42	.010
Likelihood Ratio	73.555	42	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	29.521	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	36		

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the chi-square statistic was lower than 0.05, so it was appropriate to conclude that the relationship between type of dictionary used and pronunciation ability was not due to chance variation, which implied that use of each type of dictionary caused different levels of pronunciation proficiency. The significance value of the test was (.010) was lower than (.05), consequently, it can be inferred that the association illustrated in the cross-tabulation is real and not due to chance and thus the first null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6: Eta test for the type of dictionary and pronunciation scores

	Value
Nominal by Eta Pronunciation scores	.922
Interval Dependent Types of dictionary	.979
Dependent	

Based on Cohen's (1988) guideline, values between 0.5 to 0.9 show that the relationship is strong. Thus the results showed that the association between preferred type of dictionary (monolingual, bilingual L2- L1 and bilingual L1-L2) and pronunciation ability was positive and relatively high (Eta= .922).

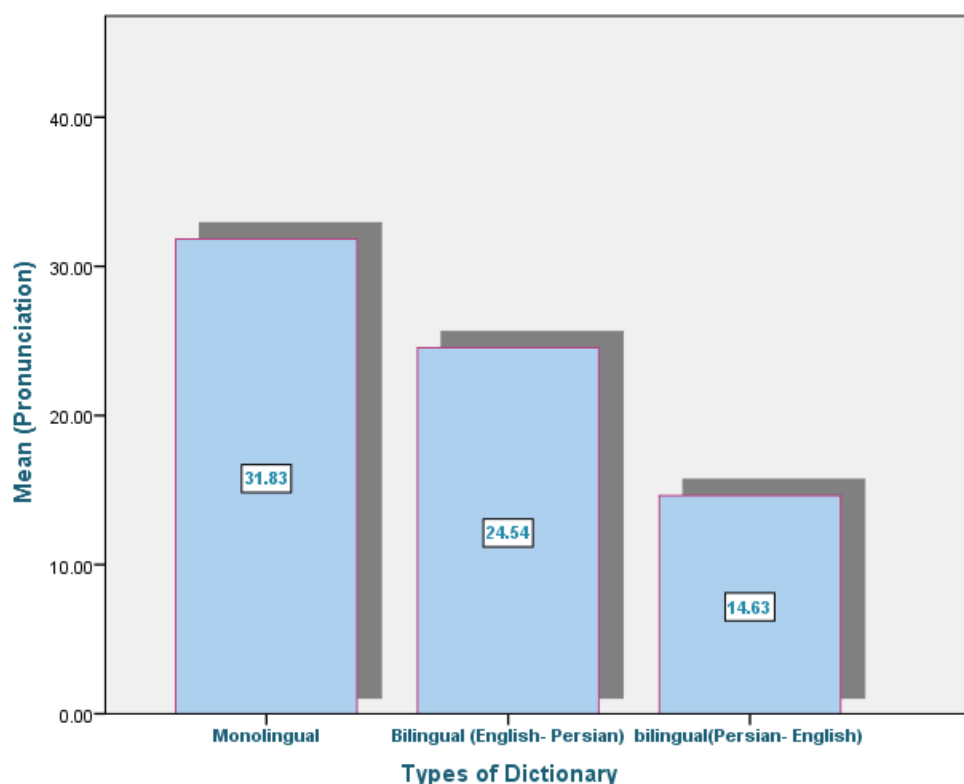


Figure 1: the relationship between the type of dictionary used and Iranian EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy

4.2.4. The third research question: Is there any correlation between skill in dictionary use and pronunciation ability?

To address the third research question, that is to discover the possible correlation between Iranian EFL learners' skill in dictionary use and pronunciation ability, a Pearson correlation test was run to the results of the task and pronunciation scores.

Table 7: Correlations for the task and pronunciation scores

		Pronunciati on	Task
Pronunciati on	Pearson Correlation	1	.779**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	36	36
Task	Pearson Correlation	.779**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	36	36

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

The statistically significant correlation coefficient (value = .779) which is statistically significant (sig= 0.000, $P \leq 0.05$), roughly indicated that the observed sample data provided ample evidence to reject the second null hypothesis concluding that there was a significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' skill in dictionary use and their pronunciation ability.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study attempted to identify the dictionary use preferences of Iranian EFL learners. The aim is to investigate not only the preferences but what type of dictionary is the most frequently used in different learning situations. Looking at the dictionary preferences of the respondents, the researcher noticed that the majority of students reported using Monolingual Mobile Dictionary ($x=2.87$) followed closely by Bilingual (E-P) Mobile Dictionary ($x=2.62$) more frequently than any other type of dictionary reported in the study. Analysis of data gathered revealed students' willingness to use bilingual (E-P) dictionaries (sum=7.18) more than monolingual ones (sum=6.91). This preference does not necessarily mean that bilingual dictionaries are actually more helpful.

According to Bejoint (1981), bilingual dictionaries are ideal for quick consultation, while monolingual ones "though more difficult to use, have the extra merit of introducing the user right into the lexical system of L2".

The preference for the E-P bilingual dictionary over other types of dictionaries coincides with the results of other studies which found that L2-L1 bilingual dictionaries were used more frequently than other types of dictionaries (Tomaszczyk, 1979; Baxter, 1980; Kharm, 1985; Battenburg, 1989; Alqahtani, 2005).

Data obtained from the second questionnaire suggested that looking up the meaning of words, definition of words, sentence example and pronunciation were the prime purposes of dictionary use. Using a dictionary to find definition of a word obtained a mean frequency higher than any other situations with a mean of 3.60 and SD of .62. This is in line with what was discovered in other key studies on dictionary use where subjects mostly checked their dictionaries for the meanings of words and findings the definitions of the words (Tomaszczyk, 1979; Bejoint, 1981; Battenburg, 1990; Alqahtani, 2005).

Eta measure of association with value equal to .922 close to 1 indicated a high degree of association between the type of dictionary used and pronunciation scores. The findings showed that monolingual dictionaries as well as bilingual (L1-L2) and bilingual (L2-L1) dictionaries were all useful tools for guiding language learners through looking up the relevant information and thus learning new vocabulary in this study. Based on the information in Table 4.3, the participants in this study favored using monolingual dictionaries and bilingual (E-P) dictionaries more than bilingual (P-E) dictionaries. But monolingual users seemed to benefit more from information provided and thus improved their pronunciation accuracy. It seems that using monolingual dictionaries provide more precise information about the word than bilingual dictionaries. In other words, monolingual dictionaries improve pronunciation accuracy more than bilingual dictionaries.

Pearson correlation confirmed the strength and direction of the association between skill in dictionary use and pronunciation accuracy. Actually, the purpose of the third research question was to examine the relationship between pronunciation accuracy and the task. Pronunciation accuracy of the participants was measured by a rating scale which included some features such as vowels, consonants, intonation, stress, linking. It is quite obvious that pronunciation accuracy and skill in dictionary use are important for successful foreign language learning. The results of the Pearson correlation depicted significant relationship between the task which was used to measure the skill in dictionary use and the participants' pronunciation accuracy.

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