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USE OF ONE-WAY VERSUS TWO-WAY TASKS TO IMPROVE WRITING AND LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION

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Abstract
This study was intended to find out the effects of one-way versus two-way tasks on ESL/EFL learners' writing ability as well as their motivation. A pet test was administered and then sixty intermediate participants were selected from among a group of 90. The group was further homogenized on the basis of their writing and motivation. Based on the results, the students were randomly dividedinto two experimental groups each with 30 participants. Both groups received 15 sessions of treatment using one-way tasks for the first group and two-way tasks for the second. A posttest and gardener's attitude and motivation test battery were compared through independent samples t-tests. The resultsrejected the first null hypothesis, illustrating that thetwo-way tasks had a more statistically significant effect on their performance than the one-way tasks in terms of improving their writing. The second null hypothesis was not rejected, that is, the two treatments were not significantly different in terms of improving the learners' motivation.

Key words: one-way tasks, two-way tasks, writing, motivation

1. Introduction

1.1. Writing

Writing seems to be a difficult skill for many ESL/EFL teachers. Brown (2001), asserts that writing is a process of transferring ideas and knowledge on paper to transcribe them into words, to develop main ideas, to structuralize them and make them coherent and well-organized. As Weigle (2002) believes, the ability to write effectively is getting more and more significant in our global world. Therefore, writing principles have an increasing role in foreign language education. It is essential for teachers to recognize writing stages through which learners pass in order to teach writing effectively. Indeed, "competent writing is frequently accepted as being the last language skill to be acquired for native speakers of the language as well as for foreign/second language learners" (Hamp-Lyons & Heasly, 2006, p. 81).

However, in EFL classes, considerable time and attention should be spent on writing.Several studies (e.g. Biton & Sivasurbamaniam, 2009; Hyland, 2003; Image, 2010; Lindgern & Sullivan, 2003) show that teaching writing does not suffice to help students become more creative from the selection of the topic to the organization of ideas and writing and revising drafts. Rather,creating an accurate piece of text calls for attending to many essential factors, such as grammaticality of sentences, unity and coherence of the pieces, choice of lexis, and punctuation (Peasley, Rosaen, & Roth, 1993).

It is with little surprise then that huge initiatives and endeavors are made to enhance EFL learners' writing competence through designing more effective writing courses. Many such endeavors are

being materialized within the context of task-based language teaching (TBLT) (e.g.Ellis, 2003, 2006; Foster & Skehan,1999;Marashi & Dadari,2012; Nunan, 2005, 2006; Robinson, 2005; Willis, 1996).

1.2. One-way versus Two-way Tasks

Throughout the history of language teaching a variety of approaches and methods have appeared. Compared to previous form-focused teaching approaches such as PPP, TBLT promoted a significant innovation in philosophy of teaching (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010). TBLT focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful activities using the target language with the tasks serving as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). There are indeed numerous types of tasks within TBLT, the application of which is usually determined by interactive conditional factors (Robinson, 2005); one such typology is One-way versus Two-way Tasks derived from concepts of knowledge formation.

Two-way tasks are contrasted with one–way tasks in that in the former learners are provided with an opportunity for group work or collective activities so that they can help to complete a task. The two-way tasks allow for interaction among participants and share of responsibility among learners to get involved in a learning activity in order to complete the task. There is a variety of two-way tasks, out of which, we name: jigsaw activity in which each individual holds a part or a piece of the information needed to complete the task; running dictation; text reconstruction; comprehension task; conscious raising tasks; Two-way and One-way tasks; cue-card activity; and jigsaw puzzle. Izumi and Izumi (2004),and Mackey (2012) pointed out that a two-way task teaching method has the participants in any learning activity share information with the aim of fulfilling goal which is the completion of the task. In the one-way tasks approach, as Izumi and Izumi (2004) and Mackey (2012) put forth, no interaction takes place between or among learners in a learning environment to complete a task or achieve a goal. It is also assumed that there is no share of responsibility between two individuals or among learners as a collective work plan to complete a task. Within the domain of one-way task, information is held by a single person and there is no chance for negotiation of meaning or interaction between students. Every individual is personally assigned to work on a task. Mackey (2012) suggested non-reciprocity in the case of one-way task, holding that one-way tasks involve no transfer of information or interaction and learner individually takes the burden of completing the task. Examples of one-way tasks include listen-and-do tasks, fill-in-blanks exercises, translation, and telling a personal story. According to Iwashita (2001), one-way tasks offer chances which bring about producing more modified output than two-way tasks.

Zohouri Vaghei, Taghipour Bazargani, and Pourramzan (2015) investigated the degree of effectiveness of two types of tasks including one-way versus two-way tasks on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' collocation competence (lexical collocation learning). The findings of this study revealed that incorporating tasks, in particular, two-way task-based activities in EFL classrooms enhance L2 learners' acquisition of lexical collocations.

1.3. Motivation

Dornyei (1996a) points out, motivation theories in general seek to explain no less than the fundamental question of why humans behave as they do, and therefore it would be naive to assume any simple and straightforward answer; indeed, every different psychological perspective on human behavior is associated with a different theory of motivation and, thus, in general psychology it is not the lack but rather the abundance of motivation theories which confuses the scene. Furthermore, motivation to learn an L2 presents a particularly complex and unique situation even within motivational psychology, due to the multifaceted nature and roles of language itself.Ironically, people in need of help often lack the motivation to achieve the things that they want and need in life (Dörnyei, 2001). They can cause people to seek alternative but self-defeating ways to obtain satisfaction" (Gardner, 2001, p. 376).

According to Dörnyei (2005), L2 motivation is necessarily a multifaceted construct, and describing its nature and its core features requires particular care. Unfortunately, it is common to find a limited or superficial representation of motivation in the L2 literature, for example, when the results of a few questionnaire items are equated with 'motivation'. It also happens that researchers take the concept of motivation for granted and refer to it without specifying in what sense they use the term. It seems that there simply does not exist an absolute, straightforward and unequivocal concept of motivation.

Ellis (2008) argues that "motivation is defined as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language" (p. 208). Finally,Gredler, Broussard, and Garrison (2004) provide a somewhat broad definition of motivation: "the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something" (p. 106).

Motivation is undeniably one of the most important psychological factors that could produce effective learning and can be considered "without question, the most complex and challenging issue facing teachers" (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999, p. 116) and is mostly regarded seen as the most noteworthy learner variable since without it, not much is achieved (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002). "Motivation represents one of the most appealing, yet complex, variables used to explain individual differences in language learning" (MacIntyre, MacMaster, & Baker, 2001, p. 462). The literature of ELT is a true indication of the fact thatmotivation has an immense positive impact on L2 learning (e.g.Dörnyei; 2005; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997; Kimura, Nakata, & Okumura, 2001; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Vohs et al., 2008; Vandergrift, 2005).

In line with what has been discussed so far, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether One-way versus Two-way Tasks bore a significant effect upon the writing and motivation of EFL learners and the two following two research questions were raised:

- *Is there any significant difference between the effect of One-way and Two-way task conditions on EFL learners' writing?*
- *Is there any significant difference between the effect of One-way and Two-way task conditions on EFL learners' motivation?*

2. Method

2.1. Participants

A total of 60 female intermediate EFL learners studying at Language and Thought Academy located in Karaj (Iran) participated in this study. These learners were selected based on their performance on a sample Preliminary English Test (PET) administered to a larger sample of 90 students (the sample PET had been piloted among 30 other female intermediate EFL learners). Next, these 60 participants were randomly assigned totwo experimental groups before the treatment. There were 30 students in each group while each group consisted of three classes of 10learners. Hence, a total of six classes sat in the course. The age range of the participants was between 17 and 27.

2.2. Instrumentations and Materials

2.2.1. Preliminary English Test (PET)

A sample PET was used after piloting to select a homogenous sample of participants based on their level of proficiency before the study.The PET Test consists of the four parts of reading and writing (paper 1), listening (paper 2), and speaking (paper 3).

All the three parts excluding the speaking section of the PET were administered since the present study focused on the writing ability of EFL students. Besides, the test originally consisted of 75 items, but, as a result of the item analysis after piloting, five items were discarded. The reliability of the piloting among30 students was 0.81 while that of the actual administration for the selection of the 60 participants was 0.87.

2.2.2. Rating Scale for the PET Writing Part

For the assessment of parts two and three of the writing section of the sample PET, the two raters used the PET general mark scheme which is used as a rubric for a summative score. According to the PET rating scale, the criteria include language range, variety, complexity message communication, grammatical structure, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, content points, length, and target reader.The maximum overall score would be five.

The papers were rated by one of the researchers and her colleague who taught the same level. A significant inter-rater reliability of 0.80 was observed between the two raters.

2.2.3. Writing Posttest

After the treatment process, another sample PET writing paper was administered to both groups as one of the posttests.

2.2.4. Attitude Questionnaire

The English-language version of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) for use with secondary school students studying English as a foreign language was used in this study. The items comprising each scale were presented in the 'AMTB item-key' document. The test generally

instructed participants to rate a set of statements on a scale of 1 to 7 (i.e. least likely to most likely), and on a 6-level Likert Scale (i.e. strongly disagree to strongly agree).Different statements corresponded to a certain variable (or main factor), and scores from those sets were added up to determine the extent that variable was influencing the language learning of the participants.The test is recognized universally as being valid with a reliability of around 0.87 (Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft, & Evers, 1987; Gardner &Lysynchuk, 1990; Gardner &Macintyre, 1993; Gardner &Tremblay, 1998). Furthermore, the reliability of the AMTB in this study stood at 0.87.

2.2.5. Textbook

The participants' textbook was *Passages* (Richards & Sandy, 2008), a two-level, multi-skills course that takes adult and young-adult learners of English from the high-intermediate to the advanced level. The books focus on reading skills development, Grammar and self-study section and cover the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The topic-based syllabus seeks to develop both fluency and accuracy in English and provides maximum opportunities for personalized discussion that should enhance linguistic and communication skills.

2.3. Procedure

After piloting and administering asample PET, the two experimental groups were selected, and the AMTB was administered to make sure that there was no significant difference in terms of their motivation.

In the treatment process, both experimental groups underwent 15 sessions held twice a week; each session lasted 90 minutes and a total of 60 minutes persession was allocated to teaching writing. Throughout the term, four units of the course book were taught to both groups. Each of these units comprised five titles for writing.In the first experimental group (N = 30) which received Two-way tasks and comprised three classes each with 10 learners, the teacher (one of the researchers) divided these classes into small groups of five learners. These learners chose their own groups and, in order to be able to complete the task focusing on a single outcome, these groups were engaged in information exchange. To this end, each group underwent a pre-task stage in which they performed activities to prepare themselves for the task.

During the pre-task phase, the groups were asked to think of some words related to the topic (for instance, TV). They had to write the words down on a piece of paper. Then, the teacher randomly asked the members of each group to say those words (e.g. channel, movie, and film) and the teacher wrote them on the board. After that, she made some sentences within which she inserted the new words. Another pre-task activity for the groups was asking a few questions aimed to activate their background knowledge of the topic. The students had discussed these questions in groups of five before they wrote the text.

The grouping of students remained the same during the pre- and while-taskphases. Each group was given one or two of the same topics that they had received in pre-task in order to write. After that, each group was asked to recite what they had written. Meanwhile, the teacher helped them correct their grammatical errors in this part. The teacher took notes on the common mistakes the students made. During the follow-up correction session, the teacher presented the common mistakes so that all students could benefit from an analysis of the mistakes and the reason behind them. This process gave the students clues to the type of error they were making (in writing) and also allowed them to either correct the mistakes themselves or ask other students to remark them. They were then asked to write collaboratively once more and choose some new words and rewrite their texts.

In order to cover the post-task phase, the groups were asked to do some tasks such as information gap, decision making, reasoning task, andproblem solving task; subsequently, they wrote their writing collaboratively once more. Towards the end, she asked the groups to choose one person as a representative to recite and check their writing. The students used specific forms incorrectly and the teacher paid close attention to what each group would say without interrupting them. She wrote some of these errors on the board to be corrected by the students and subsequently, commented on and corrected some of those wrong forms, wherever necessary.

The second experimental group undergoing the One-way condition was divided into small groups. The groups received the pre-task phase like the previous experimental group to complete the task. During the while task phase, the students worked individually. Each group was given the same topic in order to write. Next, they were asked to use the information from the text to report their ideas and

teacher through preparing ideas or taking notes before a discussion or, doing a short written assignment.

During the post-task phase, the groups were asked to do some tasks such as brainstorming, mind and subject mapping, or opinion exchange tasks and debates. The learners subsequently presented their writing to the whole class individually and the teacher dealt with correcting their written mistakes (grammar, spelling, and vocabulary choice mistakes in written work, mistakes of verb tenses, preposition use, etc.)and vocabulary mistakes (incorrect collocations, idiomatic phrase usage, etc.).

Finally, the teacher commented on the ungrammaticality of the sentences and wrote the correct form on the board. At the end, each learner individually rewrote her writing again and submitted it to the teacher.

3. Results

In order to test the two hypotheses, the researchers carried out a series of both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses the results of which are elaborated in a chronological order from participant selection to testing the hypotheses.

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

The researchers had to ensure that the two groups displayed no significant difference at the beginning of the study in terms of their writing.The descriptive statistics of the scores illustrate a comparison of the mean scores of the two groups on the writing component of the PET in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics on the PET writing section at the outset

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	
One-way Pre-Writing	30	9.5	15.0	12.250	1.3818	.33
Two-way Pre-Writing	30	9.0	15.0	12.283	1.5794	.81
Valid N (list wise)	30					

As observed in Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of the two groups was 12.25 and 1.38, and 12.28 and 1.57, respectively. The subsequent step was to run an independent samples *t*-test. With the skewness ratios of the scores of both groups falling within the acceptable range (±1.96), running this parametric test was legitimized. Table 2 below includes the results of the *t*-test run between the mean scores of the two groups on the writing section of the PET.

Table 2

Independent samples t-test of the two groups' writing mean scores on the PET prior to the treatment

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	*T*	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.303	.585	-.087	58	.931	-.0333	.3831	-.800	.733
Equal variances not assumed			-.087	56.9	.931	-.0333	.3831	-.800	.733

According to Table 2, with the *F* value of 0.303 at the significance level of 0.585 being greater than 0.05, the variance between the two groups was not significantly different. The results (t = -0.087, p = 0.931 > 0.05) indicate that there was no significant difference between the writing mean scores of the two groups prior to the instruction. Therefore, the assumption of equal variances applied to this case. The same procedure was conducted with the AMTB.Table 3 below shows the descriptive statistics of the administration of the ATMB prior to the treatment. As is clear in Table 3, the mean and standard deviation of the One-way group stood at 303.03 and 26.32, respectively, while those of the Two-way group were 303.33 and 22.00, respectively.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of the scores on the AMTB prior to the treatment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	
One-way PreAMTB	30	248	350	303.03	26.320	-1.03
Two-way PreAMTB	30	257	335	303.33	21.996	-1.33
Valid N (listwise)	30					

Again with the skewness ratios of the scores of both groups falling within the acceptable range (Table 3 above), an independent samples *t*-test was run on the mean scores of the two groups on the AMTB at the outset.

Table 4

Independent samples t-test of the two groups' AMTB mean scores prior to the treatment

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	*T*	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.100	.299	-.048	58	.962	-.300	6.262	-12.8	12.23
Equal variances not assumed			-.048	56.2	.962	-.300	6.262	-12.8	12.24

As Table 4 indicates, with the *F* value of 1.100 at the significance level of 0.299 being greater than 0.05, the variance between the two groups was not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances were reported here. The results (t = -0.48, p = 0.962 > 0.05) indicate that there was no significant difference between the AMTB scores of the two groups at the outset. Hence, the researchers could rest assured that both groups manifested no significant difference in their motivation degree prior to the treatment and any probable difference at the posttest level would be attributed to the effect of the two instructions.

3.2. Testing the First Null Hypothesis

To test the first null hypothesis raised in this study, that is whether a significant difference existed between the two One-way and Two-way groups in terms of their writing, the descriptive statistics of the writing posttest administration are reported first.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for the writing posttest in both groups

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	
One-way	30	11.0	15.0	12.967	1.1740	.24
Two-way	30	11.5	15.0	13.817	1.1483	-1.18
Valid N (listwise)	30					

As shown in Table 5 above, the mean and standard deviation of the One-way group were 12.97 and 1.17, respectively. In the Two-way group, however, the mean was 13.82 while the standard deviation stood at 1.15. In addition, the skewness ratios of the scores of both groups fell within the acceptable range (Table 5 above). Hence, an independent samples *t*-test was run on the mean scores of the two groups on the writing posttest.

Table 6
Independent samples t-test of the two groups' writing posttest mean

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	*T*	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.135	.799	-.143	58	.002	-.310	4.275	2.8	14.23
Equal variances not assumed			-.143	56.2	.002	-.310	4.275	2.8	14.23

As observed in Table 6, with regard to the *F* value of 2.135at the significance level of 0.799 being greater than 0.05, the variance between the two groups was not significant. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances were reported here. The results (t = -0.143, p = 0.002 < 0.05) illustrate that there was a significant difference between the writing scores of the two groups at the posttest. Hence, the first null hypothesis of the study was rejected which means that Two-way task instruction had a significant impact on EFL learners' writing compared to One-way task instruction.

Furthermore, the effect size which evaluates the stability of the research finding across samples was estimated to be 0.63. According to Cohen (1988), this is a moderate effect size. Therefore, this specific result could be moderately generalized.

3.3. Testing the Second Null Hypothesis

To test the second null hypothesis of the study, to observe whether there is a significant between the One-way and Two-way groups in terms of their motivation, the researchers administered the AMTB again this time as a posttest; first, the descriptive statistics of the AMTB administration are presented in Table 7. Based on Table 7, the mean and standard deviation of the One-way group were 314.73 and 21.68, respectively. In the Two-way group, however, the mean was 316.87 while the standard deviation was 18.06.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics for the AMTB posttest in both groups

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	
One-way	30	270	350	314.73	21.679	-1.70
Two-way	30	264	341	316.87	18.059	-.87
Valid N (listwise)	30					

With the normality of the scores in both groups having been established (skewness ratios being within the acceptable range as displayed in Table 7), running an independent samples *t*-test was legitimized.

Table 8

Independent samples t-test of the two groups' AMTB posttest mean

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	4.001	.809	-.565	58	.12	-.665	3.456	1.8	13.69
Equal variances not assumed			-.565	56.2	.12	-.665	3.456	1.8	13.69

As shown in Table 8, with the *F* value of 4.001 at the significance level of 0.809 being greater than 0.05, the variance between the two groups was not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances were reported here. The results ($t = -0.565$, $p = 0.12 > 0.05$) indicate that there was no significant difference between the AMTB scores of the two groups at the posttest. To this end, the second null hypothesis of the study was not rejected meaning that One-way versus Two-way Tasks instruction had no significantly different impact on EFL learners' language learning motivation.

4. Discussion

The researchers started the study to investigate the effectiveness of One-way and Two-way tasks which are undoubtedly an aspect of TBLT. The results of this study are in line with the studies in recent years which illustratethat TBLT has a positive effect on learning conditions and outcomes (e.g. Chandler 2003; Latchem, Latchem, & Jung, 2010; Makumar, 2010; Plews & Zhao 2010; Van den Branden, 2006).The question of the effectiveness of One-way versus Two-way Tasksas discussed earlier in this paper are in line with the results of different studies not resembling conformity (Duff, 1986; Hommel, 2011; Long, 1989; Nielsen et al., 2008; Nunan, 1989; Swan, 2005).

As reconfirmed in this study, some of the merits of Two-way tasks are that they clarify what is to be learned and also facilitate the acquisition of the various language skills and components. To this end, the researchers clearly observed in the course of the study that instruction through Two-way tasks provided learners with more successful language learning by paving the grounds fortheir further involvement and participation.

In both groups, the classroom activities of this study were designed commensurately with the required information exchange; thus the tasks could not be completed unless the learners exchanged the information required to achieve the outcome in the Two-way group.This, however, was not the case in the One-way group and perhaps lay the foundation for higher achievement in terms of writing in the Two-way group.In addition, Two-way tasks led to the production of more words and utterancesand involved taking the different pieces of a particular topic and putting them back together in an organized, structured, and understandable manner.

The findings of this study also indicate that the learners' motivation in both experimental groups increased following the treatment and that neither was significantly more effective in doing so. Indeed, both One-way versus Two-way Tasks provide learners with a wide range of advantages: for example, a comfortable learning environment that allows more introverted students to overcome stress or fear and speak or have discussions with others. Furthermore, the learners in both groups were motivated to do the tasks that were real and meaningful for them while being provided the opportunity to actively participate in completing the tasks. Naturally, such pretexts common to both teaching modalities generated a higherdegree of motivation among the learners in the two groups.

Perhaps another reason for the increased motivation in both groups which was not significantly different could be that both One-way versus Two-way Tasks were designed to match the factors that promoted intrinsic motivation. The quantity of information required in meeting the goal of these tasks was distributed between the groups rather than being exclusive to one of them only. The researchers observed clearly that in both groups, the learners seemed to be enjoying themselves through exchanging ideas, interacting, and becoming more acquainted with their classmates. Again such a congenial environment in both groups translated into motivating the learners to participate further in classroom tasks and activities.

5. Conclusion

The researchers clearly observed in the course of this study that from a pedagogical viewpoint, Two-way tasks can lower the learners' stress and anxiety by making students work in groups and providing more friendly and less authoritative classrooms as they emphasize a more cooperative ambience rather than a competitive one compared to One-way tasks. Applying the three phases of pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing plays particularly important roles in helping learners comprehend the text better with less effort. In addition, with Two-way tasks, the group members would enjoy themselves working with peers in exchanging information and interacting to comprehend the text.

When it comes to writing, teachers may encounter certain problems on the part of the learners like lack of participation and motivation. Many students do not know how to initiate their writing since they have not been provided with enough input to help them generate new ideas and enough motives to actively take part in the learning process.

The results of this study reveal that using Two-way tasks is highly recommended to ELT teachers while providing for the learners enough input, allowing them to participate actively in the classroom activities, and also exploring ways to boost their creative learning.

One implication of the study is that by introducingTwo-way tasks to English teachers, teacher training centers and institutions obviously play a considerable role in familiarizing teachers with such techniques. This training could be done both for teachers who are being trained to become teachers or those already engaged in the practice of pedagogy in the form of in-service courses.

This study has implications for Syllabus designers and materials developers. They should thus consider tasks as the building blocks for classroom teaching and for designing instructional activities. Furthermore, syllabus designers and material developers can produce textbooks which highlight Two-way writing tasks; naturally, such materials must be accompanied by teachers' guidebooks thereby assisting teachers in their application. Such an approach would, in turn, endow teachers with a more open hand in selecting some tasks according to their learners' interests. All this, of course, requires a universal emphasis on learners' creativity in performing the Two-way tasks presented in the materials.

There were two limitations in this study: the participants' age (18-26) and gender (females). Hence, the results of the study may not necessarily be generalizable to males and learners of other age groups. The researchers thus suggest further studies on this theme with male learners and/or in co-ed

contexts and also participants of other age groups to find out whether age and gender are significant or negligible factors in this context. A second suggestion would be to focus on the comparative effect of One-way versus Two-way Tasks on other language skills and/or components.

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MJLTM

ANALYSIS OF SOME SHORT STORIES OF ZAKARIA TAMER IN HEJA AL-GHATIL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUMOR AND HUMOROUS SATIRE

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Abstract
Zakaria Tamer is one of the prominent writers of fiction in Syria. Main themes of his stories are the challenges of poverty and wealth, beauty and ugliness, and long distance among human aspirations with the realities of daily life. He has chosen the short story form to express and convey his thoughts. In this paper, by studying Heja Al-Ghatil stories of Zakaria Tamer, all trying have been done according to the reading them. Humorous and deriding aspects of these stories that based on review of his own community include: examining the expression of social problems, the pains and problems of the people of his community, unveiling the problems that skirt has stuck his people and calling upon the authorities to take care, and addressing the problems and sufferings of his compatriots.

Keywords: Zakaria Tamer, short stories, Heja Al-Ghatil, humor

1. Introduction

Fiction of Syria was under the influence of fiction of Lebanon and Egypt. First fiction in these countries began in the late nineteenth century and in the beginning, it was affected by the essay writing and translating. But the story into an independent art form began to grow and develop in the thirties AD in the twentieth century in Syria and stage of maturity of the story was accompanied to respond to local demands and global developments, thus the story rid of the traditional and the stereotype of the old style that was based on preaching and guidance and advice directly. Technical form the story began to expand and be in line with social changes and contact with the West and familiarity with Western prominent writers. Syrian independence in 1946 with the opening of the science and culture of this country to the positive impact of foreign literature. Education and training expanded and women gained partly free and Syrian writers' Association was formed which was heralded slogan of art for the masses and scholars and writers joined the literary associations and movements to express your opinions. They have chosen different literary genres to express the problems and sufferings of the people, some turned to novels and others turned to short stories. Since the format and genre short stories early returns and writers who wanted to arrive early to fame and fortune for their time format was difficult. In Syria, unlike the West since the short stories find their artistic and technical steps ahead of it. Zakaria Tamer was one of the writers who work force and their efforts to express signs and only used for this important genre of short stories. He was the general consensus is one of the most important and the most prominent writers of the sixties, not only in Syria but throughout the Arab world. This is due to the structure is his unique that the combination of reasonable and unreasonable world and the dreams and nightmares and hallucinations and also a rhetorical element based on the image and imagination was allowed. The impact that Zakaria has on the novelists was not possible for any of the writers of the previous generation (Tizini, 1978: 242).

2. Story definition

Story is literary work that conveys their message and concept within a defined framework and to understand the basic concept of the story should be reconsidered its structure, every story is made up of components that are connected together and its main concept is transferred and the relationship of each component with other component and the relationship of these components can be realized with the purpose of the word, in addition, each of the components in a structure of meaning pass which means no other structure, Zakaria Tamer is a writer that bring the main concept in the form of short stories or structure makes it with their own components, Tamer was skilled and professional singer, short story structures are elements of it that must exist in the story. In other words, the main elements of the story that we call existence is essential to the short story structures. Theme, is the subject of the story and that the reader will accrue at the end of the story, what conclusion. Background is including the time and place of the story. Weather conditions, social conditions and overall feel of the story are other indicators of the field (Soleiman, 1960: 20). Story outline includes introduction, rising action, climax, the return and the end of the story. Conflict can be between two people, the society and the nature of a person, a person with feelings and so on. The author's characterization artist. The author may create a character with a faceted, multi-dimensional, static or dynamic. In introducing the characters, the author can take advantage of Imagination Technologies Imagination directly or indirectly. The story should be defined from a certain viewing angle. Here the author may view "from above" (third person), the upper limit (the third person, but by one of the characters), the first person (narrated by a character, but with the use of the first person), or the actual viewing angle (like a free camera).

3. Great short story writers in the Arab world

To investigate the contemporary Arabic fiction, it is necessary to go back a bit to find the roots of its development in the not too distant past. Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France in 1797, invaded the land of Egypt. His attack on Egypt was very deliberate and with specific measures. This means that the ancient civilization in the land of the Pharaohs amazing and full of mystery still hidden in mystery, and scientists wanted to meet west and in the East magical research. In the nineteenth month of May 1789 Napoleon's fleet of fifty-four thousand people moved to Egypt, while a library of 287 books along with supplies and military science and many scientists, including physicists and biologists. Alfred de Vigny, a French poet who was a child, later wrote that this great man while all the way to the sea to Alexandria, Egypt, was suffering from seasickness, read Quran. Interestingly, Napoleon with so little information Quran and Arabic words, could many Arabs that the Ottomans were not very happy. He promised them that their holy religion will be respected. After Napoleon's conquest of Cairo by accepting Allah as the one God, drew them into his confidence and asked them to help him in building Egypt. (Techniques art fiction by Zakaria Tamer, Ayman Issa, Issue 1.2007) French in Egypt, founded schools and libraries and newspapers and their scientists have found the archeology and Egyptology's knowledge. At this time, the Egyptians realized the greatness of history of their ancestors and against the Ottoman Turks and the French became more self-confident and left them no room for feelings of inferiority. Mohammad Ali Pasha in 1805, his reliance on the throne of the Egyptian government. These brave men changed the history of Egypt. Mohammad Ali gave great importance to the cause of press and journalism. The groups also sent to the West to learn new knowledge. Generally regarded as the beginning of a new movement in modern writing, both fiction and so founded the newspaper "Vaghaye Al-Mesriyeh" Mohammad Ali Pasha established it in 1828. This move was followed by great changes and revolutions in Egypt brought journalism to the massive Al-Ahram newspaper that was founded in Egypt in 1875 by two Lebanese brothers Salim and Bashara Taghala. The newspaper always has had a significant influence in Egyptian politics and society. Looking for journalism movement, many magazines published by all people against tyranny weapons were equipped with knowledge and faith. The most famous of these magazines, the Al-Hilal magazine, which was established by Georgie Zidane and with the slogan to Imam (Forward) in 1892. The magazine is still (edited by Hossein Mounes) is released. (Al-Dahabi, 1990: vol. 6, 116) Generally, it can be found in the fiction of the at this point in the story of

Arab fiction: The first course is dedicated to the translation and adaptation, the separation of the classical form of Arab tales. Of course, this separation is still not complete in itself and story elements of the former elements, such as "Hadith of Isa Ibn Hisham" by Almavilihi, which mimic the "official" written Bediuzzaman Hamadani. The second period can be attributed basically just the story of the new Arab and Western ways of writing. Among them is "the story of Zeinab" by Mohammad Hossein Heykal (1888-1957); the story of the first things that technically it is perfect, but at a level that can gain important points in fiction. "Zainab story", the story of a young attachment to her cousin that class differences prevented the marriage of the two, and even express this love. Heykal, in this story, depicting the outdated traditions and superstitious beliefs villages Egypt with words, and to some extent also criticized it (Farrukh, 1969: vol. 2, 102).

4. Zakaria Tamer inspires of Turath

Zakaria Tamer has taken inspiration from themes Turath including historical Turath sometimes literary and sometimes Turath and sometimes relies on national and religious Turath insists Turath characters from the history of Arabic-Islamic past have been affected and help and inspiration of the author of the content TURATH in the different types as old Arabic story structure, and the use of the trace element in the transformation creates severe forms of communications between national and historical and epics stories, when the relationship between the author through his fictional work, we see among them a hierarchical view that makes the continuing dominant and the roles of Turath characters, the author, who published the first story to last story he will be a repeat sequence, we see the religious and historical and literary characters and so the leaders of Arab and foreign celebrities we see on our new and old, Zakaria Tamer influenced by Arab and international poets and writers throughout history, including the Arab poets and authors can be named from Mutanabi and Abu Nawas and Antara Ibn Shaddad and Ibn Muqaffa, what is evident and clear that Zakaria Tamer in a series of stories during the deployment Turath sought to achieve two aims were: One social objective which aims to educate and reform his society, and by Tamer able to use the style of Turath has to deal with the government and government oppression and the pain and suffering of his people from the community who suffer interpret, and the technical framework and the technical department that is concerned, Tamer has used the characters Turath to express his goals and perhaps it was not without reason that he intends to use these characters from everything that is hidden inside and express complaints and protests in the language of the characters, perhaps in this way we can be without being harassed by the rules express the social realities of contemporary Arab society (Tizini; 243: 1978).

5. The concept of humor and humorous stories

Humor is an Arabic word meaning fun, sarcasm, fault-up, secret word to say and the mockery of someone speaking that its English equivalent is Satire that is taken from Latin and Greek roots. Humor is an art that reflects the disproportion in various social fields, which in turn, is causing laughter. Satirical art, artistic expression and aesthetic is this mismatch. Humor, this technique is committed expression in literature and gained valuable position in the contemporary era heavily influenced by political and social developments. The form and content of the works of humor in dealing with the details on the form and have been changing. Including this writer, author, journalist and satirist of contemporary is "Zakaria Tamer". Tamer often with stories written in simple language and humor of the most important elements of his works; he has used his humor to critique contemporary society with the wrong personality because satire, political, social and economic paradox, while using a beautiful expression to portray the corrupt society in their stories. He also inspired by relying on the bitter irony of historical figures like Changiz Khan, Shahriyar and Teymur Lang, Yousef Azameh, Ahmad Shoghi, etc., to challenge them in front of the inconsistencies of the era. Zakaria Tamer has already been translated into Persian was also the consequences of all for children. It seems that the major works of children's literature and has the same "Randa" he is one of the works; viewers who have insisted that a special provision -in Syria- The complex is located. Sociological approach in literary criticism, social interaction between the author and literary works are studied and representation of the signs of origin effect (Kamal

Helmi Beck, 1982: 153). Story because its characters are ordinary people and it is also common and genuine community events and happenings of interest is the sociology of literature. Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh and Zakaria Tamer are two great writers in Persian and Arabic literature. The authors in their works, especially his short stories have created a new and unique stylistic features of their own. In reviewing the works of these two great writers, the author's worldview, social class, text structure and social structure is studied. Finally, we can say that Jamalzadeh and Tamer have greatly influenced the society in which they lived and their story is a mirror of society. Social issues, poverty and hunger gap, the issue of religion, superstitions and false beliefs, and cultural question of the women in the story of two writers are high-frequency (Techniques art fiction by Zakaria Tamer, Ayman Issa, Issue 1.2007).

6. Alghazah story summary

Zakaria Tamer is the great writers and stylish of Syria, which has raised major political events and the economic and social realities of the country's national and cultural satire and derision and at the same time expressing it is rich in metaphor and imagery, one of the stories that Tamer is addressed in the analysis of social and political events in his country. Alghazah is a collection of Heja Al-Ghatil stories, he unveiled the various issues in this story of his community, the pain and suffering of his community in the political, social and cultural aspects. And what happens to the humorous and ironic language states, imagery is the only tool that Tamer has been able to express that through them the principle of their social purpose and intentions, among the various events of the presence of aliens in the country he so their impact on various aspects of political and social satirical language has raised and refers to the presence of military forces in his country and but Russian and American astronauts insist that there is no life on the moon. General: Whatever you think of everything that you think because we have to bribe them, and because the transformation price of gold. The Arab says: Why do you come to our country? Do you come to dominate oil wells or to achieve unity Arabic? General: you are Arab, where've thrown artificial satellite into space, called the "Arabsat" so what do you forbid that future launch spacecraft into space that carrying soldiers and traveled to the moon and have occupied it.

6.1 Analysis of the story

Zakaria Tamer in Alghazah story, objected to every single factor in the fate of his country and puts them under a magnifying glass and his penetrating look, from the involvement of foreigners in the country to violations of his country's leaders and the imprudence and abuse their authority but complains humor and irony and satire in the form of derision. He says: Whatever you have, hide it, except the rulers because they are ornaments and ornament earthly life, Tamer states that every aspect of people's lives the ideals and aspirations and their demands, he says it is imperative that his people hide things and take care of them well, even their legacy of their poetry and their poets and writers to their singer Umm Kulthum, Abdel Wahab al-Bayati all to protect against destruction than their rulers. He rulers and those in power through wind country to ridicule and satire can be ironic when he says: Is it possible for you that some political parties support you and take care of you? Arabi says: It's a simple question that implies ignorance is obvious that there are Arabs in everyday life as well as the demands of their compatriots.

7. Al-Gharoud Jadida story summary

Zakaria Tamer introduces encroach on this story and the involvement of every individual to another and interference of foreign countries, including America and Russia in the affairs of his country, including the causes of poverty and backwardness of the country, and writes: Writer and scribe writes in Arabic countries such as describing his country, his country is grappling with death, and whatever is said is spoken by skilled doctors, and it cannot be overstated, and this era, is mutation era: America's invasion of one country to the other as if the era of slavery, and if the people are his slaves, and are its maid, Americans express overt and covert their orders and Arabic countries also carry out those orders instantly and without any doubts. Russia was constantly invaded the great country other larger countries while trying to keep imperialism and capitalism in different types of content, and when the mutations are constantly continuing, the

country of the Somali army uses to advance its objectives. Arabic countries pushed forward from the front and from the back of the lagged behind more and more, and life is not except heavy stop. Scholars are trying and trying while the noise to arouse and takes place ugliness on persons and their accomplishments, as if the glory and greatness and immortality, but also by the literary figure who has moral problems is not achievable and cannot access, other journalists joined the stairs to the stairs and go from place to place as well as their dinner is dry bread as they have expected. Abuse leads from victory to victory, he has a great army that honor does not fail in Arabic countries will be small but they are a worthy prelude to great victories. Food prices continue to rise, as if hard times and problems unique to their own people and who does not steal and does not bribery, but the famous monkeys that jump, but it prohibits the jump to watch out for a new jumper excelling and wonder who they have the supremacy.

7.1 Analysis of the story

In this story, Tamer try to expressed articulate problems and damage to the country's political and social satire and satirical associated with a bitter derision that the dominance of America and Russia and the capitalist world powers of talks and tells this era is the era on the rights of others and interference and presence of aliens and powerful states in the Middle East and Arabic countries and Tamer says it all humorous language, and that his people while they are grappling with poverty, leaders and financiers engaged to colonization of their wealth and adding their own property. And from this era are interpreted as slavery and the oppression of powerful countries on the Arabic countries and refers to the presence of foreign troops in his country and the other military interventions and the killing of innocent people by the military is considered foreign countries and has raised the humor and irony.

8. Untaught statement story summary

In this story, Zakaria Tamer has pointed to the importance of writers and writing and its expression in the works of prose and poetry writers and methods that are used in their papers to be considered and says simply that each of thinkers and writers are responsible to the nation and to history and their country and it is imperative that the writers guild and set the operating result of the materials that work well. From grace to grace the prayers of my mother, I am the Minister of Culture and I now have what is known and not known for people to know. And if my mother was saying his prayer more loudly now I was finance minister, of course, compared to the person who is responsible to speak with someone who has been the finance minister difference is plentiful, And the difference between them just like the difference between river water and small cup of water, and it is during this period that the famous Monkey period, and I prefer that my jump without stopping and all writers and scholars insist that whatever they want at any moment to write. The author is obliged to defend their interests and to improve their circumstances coordinate, and have the oversight team football, the other group was involved in wrestling, boxing, horse riding and breeding horses mongrel third group, and the fourth group was asleep, and of course, each of these groups that would be interested in what is the way it is working. But the great historic event occurred here, we will set it is legal that the general rule is that the cultural gap between illiterate and ignorant and operating, and the law says that all cultural and educated and knowledgeable citizens. And the grace of such a law by all nations of the world consider the competition (refers to illiteracy classes of society from ignorance and illiteracy than other people in the world suffer) and this way we get people educated, and have you ever done this good performance? Tamer has studied and compared the people of his country compared to other people in different parts of the world cultural and political aspects of the story and finally the language is ironic, humorous, full of derision and irony of the political, social and cultural situation of his country compared to the rest of the world is raised and devise problem and politicians and leaders that his country will be looking for a solution?

8.1 Analysis of the story

Zakaria Tamer has raised in the untaught statement story to express his country's political, cultural and social events of authors writing to the adoption vote and to his people's cultural and social

poverty and that his people are suffering from illiteracy and lack of awareness of other people's by humorous language, so maybe the authorities are seeking a solution to the problems in his country and the variety of political, social and cultural poverty of its people does not have to think about a solution.

9. Result

Subscribe to the point of analyzing the meanings of these stories are humorous and realistic interpretation of the imperialist of Zakaria Tamer in dealing with social and political issues. In the real world the story of the series, the enduring challenge of poverty and wealth, peace and violence, ugliness and beauty, has always denied the comfort of the audience and distracted his mind. In order to express this, the two polar themes the author is trying to communicate between the real world and the world of comic and ridiculous mocking and each of these stories that were studied in this paper in the form of realism with humor and ironic sense of photo, humor and reality are interwoven to express this concept, but the main themes of all is almost one and a gap between real life, the world of irony and ridicule and satire has hidden under the cover of his bitter and ironic smile and bring the facts to the reader in the dominant form of humor and in the form of laughing.

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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON IRANIAN L2 LEARNERS' METAPHORICAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract

Metaphorical competence influences the comprehension of idiomatic and metaphoric statements. Conceptual metaphors are tightly linked to idioms and are often accessed when idioms are understood. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of social networks (i.e., WhatsApp) on Iranian L2 learners' metaphorical competence. After administering an OPT test, a group of 50 homogeneous Iranian upper-intermediate students were selected and assigned into 2 groups: experimental and control. The experimental group received the treatment through introduction, prologue, and spreading, whereas the control group did not receive any treatment at all. The results of an independent samples *t* test revealed that e-learning had a statistically significant positive effect on the participants' metaphorical competence. The results revealed that e-learning is, indeed, the cutting edge of education and an effective element in academic settings.

Keywords: Social Networks,E-Learning, Metaphorical Competence, Idioms

1. Introduction

Internet technology is becoming increasingly widespread in the world. The use of e-learning and social networks turns out to be well-aligned with strategic educational goals such as improving student retention and achievement, supporting differentiation of learning needs, and reaching L2 learners who would not, otherwise, have the opportunity to participate in education (Kukulska-Hulme, Evans, & Traxler, 2005).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), "metaphor is for most people device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish-a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action" (p. 5). Metaphorical competence, or an awareness of the underlying metaphorical organization of idiomatic meaning, impacts L2 students' ability to memorize linguistic data and interpret literary texts. Idiomatic expressions usually put nonnative speakers in hot water both in writing and oral contexts. On the other hand, materials writers and L2 teachers find it difficult to develop effective materials and teach them effectively, so that usually they relegate idioms to have a subsidiary place in L2 syllabi. E-learning has a significant place among the new alternatives to traditional teaching methods, and metaphor is revealed to be of great importance in communication. So, this study investigated the effect of e-learning on metaphorical competence of L2 students and their performance simultaneously. Therefore, the present study was an attempt to particularly address the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between the metaphorical competence of L2 learners who learn metaphors via social networks (here, WhatsApp) and those who learn metaphors via traditional methods?
2. Do social networks (here, WhatsApp) have any significant effect on L2 learners' metaphorical competence?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Technology and E-Learning

The use of technology for L2 instruction has expanded rapidly during the past two decades. Technology and pedagogical developments now allow us to better integrate mobile technology into the L2 learning process. Four different roles are identified for online instructors: pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical responsibilities (Redmond, 2011). Traxler (2005) claimed that e-learning materials motivate L2 students for a better learning and provide them with a stress-free environment. Besides helping L2 learners to learn an L2, e-learning programs also provide some computer literacy, which is becoming essential in a technological era and could be of great help in future training and career prospects.

2.2. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

Nah, White, and Sussex (2008) recently conducted a study with mobile phones in which they used mobile phones to access the Internet for learning purposes. This technology may lead to positive effects in learning environments because of its widespread use and functions such as mobility, reachability, localization, and personalization (Kennedy & Levy, 2005). It helps to raise self-esteem and self-confidence (Attewell, 2004). At the end of this quasi-experimental study, they concluded that the L2 students were more motivated to learn on WhatsApp, and eventually, revealed positive attitudes towards using mobile phones as a means of mobile online language learning.

2.3. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Within cognitive linguistics, the term *metaphor* refers to a conceptual phenomenon rather than a linguistic instance which is used metaphorically. Conceptual metaphors are not based on similarities, but on the ontological correspondences, or mappings, across conceptual domains. These mappings are grounded in, or motivated by, our bodily, physical, and cultural experiences as we live in the world (Gibbs, 1994; Johnson, 1987; Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

In the process of L2 learning, metaphor works as a tool of communication and thought, providing L2 learners with a gateway to knowledge (Cameron & Low, 2004), as well as a scaffolding system to comprehend knowledge and deepen the understanding of the learning content (Sticht, 1993). Metaphor also facilitates the memory in comprehension, retention, and future recall (Whitney, Budd, & Mio, 1996).

According to Low (1988), metaphorical competence includes the ability to construct plausible meanings, the knowledge of the boundaries of conventional metaphor, the awareness of acceptable topic and vehicle combinations, the ability to interpret and control hedges, the awareness of socially sensitive metaphors, the awareness of multiple layering in metaphors, and the interactive awareness of metaphor.

2.3.1. Role of Metaphor in L2 Learning

In the process of L2 learning, metaphor works as a tool of communication and thought, providing L2 learners with a gateway to knowledge (Cameron & Low, 2004). Metaphor is also a powerful tool to blueprint the many aspects of the hidden world of L2 learners, teachers, and related parties in education (Cameron & Low, 1999; Low, 2008; Wan, Low, & Li, 2011).

2.4. Idioms

Idioms are among the most common figures of speech which are integral parts of our everyday life. Idioms, or dead metaphors, have conventional meanings which cannot be realized through the meaning of their individual words (Gibbs, 1994).

Idioms are also defined as nonliteral phrases (e.g., *kick the bucket*) whose figurative meanings (here, *to die*) cannot readily be derived from the literal meanings of their individual words (here, *kick* and *bucket*; Brinton, Fujiki, & Mackey, 1985; Levorato, 1993). According to Viteli (1989), English is very rich in idiomatic expressions. In fact, it is difficult to speak or write English without using idioms. Thus, idioms should be regarded as products of a conceptual system, rather than simply a matter of language. Idioms are motivated conceptually by the general knowledge of the world which is embodied in the conceptual system (Kövecses & Szabó, 1996); this knowledge entails a systematic structure.

All in all, it is supposed that MALL succeeds in both facilitating L2 students' idiom learning and recall as well as in increasing their motivations for learning English language.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

For the purpose of this study, a group of 50 male and female Persian L2 learners within the age range of about 19 to 28 years old. They were upper-intermediate EFL learners learning English in one language institute in Shahrekord, Iran, that is in Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research (Iranian Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research).

3.2 Materials

The first test was the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) to check the homogeneity of the participants, and the second test was based on the book *Speak English Like an American* (Gillett, 2004). This test was chosen as a test on idiomatic expressions because it is used by a number of L2 teachers in their teaching. The idiom test, with 60 multiple-choice items (1 point for each item), was chosen by the researchers and used in this study. Also, the test comprised informal and slang items (e.g., *greenwith envy*, *hit the nail on the head*, and *cup of tea*).

3.3 Procedure

In the first step, the OPT was administered to the participants; then, during the first meeting, all the students were given an invitation to join the WhatsApp group and they were, then, assigned into two groups: experimental and control group with 25 participants in each. Second, they were given Test I, which was higher than their current language proficiency level to identify those items unknown to the participants and to prepare the treatment content.

The method used for the experimental group was (1) introduction, (2) prologue, and (3) spreading with text. During a phone discussion, every participant could discuss about the topic on the phone and the teacher corrected his or her mistake(s) during the conversation. Also, every mistake and the problems of the participants in speaking were written by the teacher and the next session they were asked whether they had reviewed the rectified mistakes. If they had done it, the teacher started the next lesson. And, this process continued for 30 sessions.

To answer the first and second research questions, an independent samples *t* test was conducted.

The control group continued their studying lessons with other methods without using a mobile phone. At the end of the treatment, the posttests were given to both groups to evaluate their comprehension of the idioms in the learning units.

3.4. Data Analysis

After administering the OPT, 50 learners were divided into two experimental and control groups. To further make sure that the two groups did not have prior differences, their OPT scores were compared using an independent samples *t* test. So, to answer the first and second research questions, an independent samples *t* test was also conducted. So, to quantitatively find out if there was any effect of social networks on Iranian L2 learners' metaphorical competence, the following two questions were posed to be answered:

1. Is there any significant difference between the metaphorical competence of L2 learners who learn metaphors via social networks (here, WhatsApp) and those who learn metaohors via traditional methods?
2. Do social networks (here, WhatsApp) have any significant effect on L2 learners' metaphorical competence?

4. Results

The descriptive statistics regarding the participants are presented in Table 1:

Table 1.*Descriptive Statistics for the OPT*

Groups	*N*	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Experimental	25	44.11	2.87	40.00	47.00
Control	25	43.79	3.11	40.00	47.00

4.1. Results of the Pretest

To uncover the possible effectiveness of MALL in enhancing the metaphorical competence of the participants, the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups' learners had to be compared via an independent samples *t* test (see Table 2):

Table 2.*Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the Experimental and Control Groups' Scores on the Pretest*

	Groups	*N*	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error of Mean
Pretest	Experimental	25	4.24	1.45	.29
	Control	25	4.40	1.22	.24

4.2. Results of the First Research Question

The first research question was this: Is there any significant difference between the metaphorical competence of L2 learners who learn metaphors via social networks (here, WhatsApp) and those who learn metaphors via traditional methods? A paired samples *t* test was run to capture any possible difference between the performance of the experimental and control groups' participants on the pretest and the posttest (see Table 3):

Table 3. *Paired Samples t Test Results for Comparing the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups Participants*

	t	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Standard Deviation	StandardError of Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Experimental Group: Pretest-Posttest	-29.21	24	.000	1.84	.36	-11.56	-10.03
Control Group: Pretest-Posttest	-20.86	24	.000	2.02	.40	-9.27	-7.60

4.3 Results of the Second Research Question

The second research question investigated whether social networks (here, WhatsApp) have any significant effect on L2 learners' metaphorical competence? A paired samples *t* test was conducted (see Table 4):

Table 4. *Descriptive Results for the Paired Samples Statistics*

		Mean	*n*	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	1st Performance	4.24	25	1.45	0.29
	2nd Performance	15.04	25	1.42	0.28

As shown in Table 4, the first performance of the experimental group had 4.24 as its mean and 1.45 as its standard deviation, whereas the mean score and standard deviation of its second performance were 15.04 and 1.42, respectively. The results of the paired samples *t* test for comparing the pretest and posttest scores of the proverbs and idioms test are indicated in Table 5:

Table 5. *Results for the Paired Samples t Test*

		Paired Differences				*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
		Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest Posttest	1.84	.36	-11.56	-10.03	29.21	24	.000

5. Discussion

This study was intended to investigate the effects of social networks (in this study, WhatsApp) on metaphorical competence of L2 learners. Our first research question was addressed to investigate if there was any significant difference between the metaphorical competence of L2 learners who learned metaphors via social networks (here, WhatsApp) and those who learned metaphors via traditional methods. The results of an independent samples *t* test indicated that the experimental group received a treatment which was more effective than the instruction to which the control group was exposed.

E-learning, as a technology tool, makes collaboration among L2 students much easier because it is far easier (and often more comfortable) to work in and because it does not necessarily need face-to-face communication, as in speaking. These findings support the effectiveness of mobile supplementation (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009).

E-learning techniques by using introduction, prologue, and spreading with text help L2 students to learn metaphors. Because L2 learners spend lots of time making use of their mobile phones, so having an idioms software on their mobile phones encourages them to read and review the idioms on a quite regular basis. Wheeler, Yeomans, and Wheeler (2008) claim that social networks "afford students unprecedented opportunities to share their ideas, celebrate their creativity, and receive immediate feedback from fellow students" (p. 988).

To answer the second research question, the results obtained from the paired samples *t* test revealed that the significantly outperformed the control group, and the participants had positive attitudes experimental group with regard to learning English collocations via the introduce, prologue, and spreading with text method.

Another study supporting the findings of this study is that of ELI Horizon Report (2007) in which it is argued that social networks "not only attract people, but also hold their attention, impel them to contribute, and bring them back time and again—all desirable qualities for educational material" (Social Networking section, para. 4).

Finally, it is necessary to cover the view that technology would be able to increase the learning potential of L2 students exposed to its user. The literature shows that technology is not just a fad but has a central role to play in the education of L2 students in modern society (Palloff & Pratt, 2013).

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of social networks (here, WhatsApp) on Iranian L2 learners' metaphorical competence. The present study was an attempt to compare a certain method (i.e., introduction, prologue, and spreading with text) and the traditional method of teaching to see which one was the most effective for learning metaphorical expressions.

The results of the current study revealed that e-learning influenced the Iranian L2 students' performance, that is, the experimental group outperformed the control group on the metaphor test. According to the results, e-learning caused motivation and excitement in the experimental group and their scores increased sharply at the end of week 4. This particular finding is also supported by studies such as Kennedy and Levy (2008) which report that MALL applications contribute positively to vocabulary learning.

Cennamo (2012) found that technology is now thought to be central to future success in adulthood and so there has been a rise in positivity towards technology in the classroom. In this study, the students were extremely positive in their attitudes toward the use of technology and were the largest supporters of its use in the classroom and using e-learning (here, WhatsApp) for their course books and in-class learning.

Cooper (1999) studied the online processing strategies used by nonnative speakers of English who were asked to give the meaning of the idioms presented in a written context. The findings showed that most participants were engaged in a heuristic approach to idiom comprehension.

This study helped to produce some implications for future research with regard to L2 idiom instruction in an online environment. First, it deems essential for L2 teachers to encourage L2 learners to use e-learning and nourish them with challenging opportunities to use various e-learning techniques. Second, e-learning provides a personalized experience that allows each student to work at his or her own pace and it provides responsibility for L2 students' own learning. Third, L2 instructors can focus on the use of introduction, prologue, and spreading with text in education. That is, they should pay attention that those methods can be employed as a tool to improve L2 students' idiom learning and their metaphorical competence.

Summing up, the results from the current study also suggest thatvocabulary knowledge can provide an aid to comprehension and use of metaphorical expressions. If lessons in metaphor use and/or metaphoricity awareness are provided for L2 learners, their deeper appreciation of the language and context will be enhanced. In addition, Hashemian and Talebi Nezhad (2007) believe that Iranian L2 students require a meaningful context to work from and to which they can relate what they learn.

Like any other study, the present study has some limitations. First, this study was conducted with a small sample size only. Therefore, the generalization of the findings must be treated with caution. Second, the problem is identified by the small screen size of mobile phones, low resolution, inconvenient keypad mechanisms, and many lecturers believe that to make more effective use of e-learning, they would need to have more time set aside to develop ways of using it to its full potential. And, more varied and appropriate technology should be embedded in the technology to encourage the development of other language skill areas. Recorder, speech recognizer, audio file controller, memo pad, course management services (CMS) could be more widely and properly utilized for developing productive speaking and writin

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MJLTM

THE EFFECT OF TEST-TAKING STRATEGY INSTRUCTION ON IRANIAN PRE-INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' TEST ANXIETY

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Abstract

The present study aimed at discovering a potential solution for the most common type of educational anxiety called test-anxiety. Following a pre-test, treatment, post-test design, the study included 36 intermediate level participants in two groups of experimental and control. After homogenizing the participants they were given tas questionnaire as the pre-test of anxiety. Then while the control group followed a conventional reading course, the experimental group received an eleven-session instruction on twenty two major test-taking strategies for reading test. Tas questionnaire was repeated once more in both groups as the post-test of test-anxiety. The results of independent samples t-test revealed that the two study groups had almost equal test-anxiety index at the outset of the study. At the end of the study, however, the experimental group managed to suppress the text-anxiety to a great extent and as a result of using test-taking strategies revealed a statistically significant difference with the control group. Language teaching practitioners can take the advantage of instructing test-taking strategies for reducing the debilitating effect of test-anxiety in language classes.

Key words: test-taking strategies, reading comprehension, test performance, test-anxiety, reading test, EFL learners

Introduction

Test anxiety is a significant variable that affects learning process (Sarason and Mandler, 1952). Test anxietyas a type of performance anxiety means the fear of poor performance on tests. It is a conscious or unconscious fear of failure in an examining context. Even the well prepared and intelligent students often make mistakes because of this type of anxiety. Despite being one of the components of language anxiety, EFL test anxiety is more specific to test-taking and more concrete than the feeling of language learning anxiety in general (Saha, 2014).

Reviewing the Research studies about the test anxiety, Abdul Kadir, et al (2012) concludes that test anxiety has impact on students' educational, professional and emotional factors. The researchers pointed out that test anxiety is a widespread problem for many students around the world, particularly for female students (Abdul Kadir, et al., 2012). Therefore, different treatment approaches and techniques should be utilized by psychologists and counselors to reduce test anxiety.

Therefore, by being in the focus of the researchers, one of the main concerns of recent language teaching and testing methods is to decrease the amount of test anxiety as much as possible. There

might be two broad categories to be dealt with in order to solve the mentioned problem. These two broad categories are learners' internal factors (e.g. performance, skill, metacognition, stress, self-esteem, etc.) and external factors (teaching methods, external pressure on passing the exam, fear of failing, lack of test-taking strategy knowledge). It is often seen that two individuals with almost the same degree of knowledge take the same test but perform differently and gain different scores. Therefore language test results may play a highly significant role in the respondents' life and likewise passing exam has greater importance in Iran's educational context which is mainly test-based.

Considering this problem, knowing how to prepare for exam and how to take the exam can affect learners' performance, attitudes, and test anxiety and consequently help them to have better achievement. Cohen (2004) believes, it is vital for the language test-takers to employ strategies to improve their performance on specific types of test items. Similarly, it is important for the test-developers to be aware of the strategies that test-takers may employ while taking language tests.

Test-taking strategies are the skills which includes specific skills of taking tests. These strategies trace back to the concept of 'test- wiseness'. Test-taking strategies are operations or steps used by test-takers to facilitate the retrieval of information in order to express suitable response to the test item (Jimenez et al., 1996). Test-taking strategies are a key to completion and performance on a test task (Bornholt, 2000). So it seems that test-taking strategies can have impact on the internal factors of the learners such as their test-anxiety.

Mentioning the existing problem of test-anxiety which exists among the Iranian EFL learners and expressing different possible solution for this problem, this study amid to familiarize EFL learners with test-taking strategies to see whether it can have an effect on test-anxiety of the learners. Putting in another way, the present study aimed at investigating the probable effect of test-taking strategy instruction on decreasing Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' test-anxiety.

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following question was raised:

RQ_1: Does test-taking strategy instruction has any effect on test anxiety?

Review of the literature

From almost 35 years ago, the researchers and scholars have started to investigate on strategies that respondents use in the process of performing a language test (e.g., Cohen & Aphek, 1979; Homburg & Spaan, 1981; Cohen, 1985; etc.). Even, in recent years, many language testing researchers have been concerned with the identification of various issues that cause variation in test takers' performance. One of these issues which has been found to be effective is the explicit instruction of test-taking strategies to the learners. (Rupp et al, 2006; Dolly & Williams, 1986; Dodeen & Abdelmabood, 2005; Carraway, 1987)

To start with simple definition, the test-taking strategies are tactics, rules, or procedures that help the learners to increase the successful performance in a test (Bruch, 1981). Jimenez et al. (1996) bring up the similar definition which identifies test-taking strategies as operations or steps which test-takers use in order to acquire the needed information for response and they classify these strategies into four groups of reader-initiated strategies, text initiated strategies, bilingual strategies and interactive strategies.

According to Skehan (1991, p. 290), "all learners use strategies; what good learners do is to choose the right strategy for the right occasion." So there is a difference between the learners in applying the needed strategies for responding the test items. Some of these strategies are common (e.g. using the information obtained from other places in the test in answering particular items, crossing out the response options which are wrong, etc.) and most learners learn to apply these strategies by themselves after a few or more test taking experiences.

Therefore not only the learners themselves acquire some strategies, but also there is need for explicit instruction of more and higher level test-taking strategies. To support this Rogers and Harley (1999) mention that test-taking strategies increase scores in a test-taking situation and it enable learners get familiar with the format of the tests. Beside explicit instruction of test-taking strategies, as Nikolov (2006) points out, the appropriate use of test-taking strategies are very important too.

Test-taking strategies can be divided into three largely distinct sets: language-learner strategies, test-management strategies, and test-wiseness strategies. These strategies help the test taker to get

the needed general skills such as grammar, vocabularies (language-learner strategies), timing the test and skip the difficult items (test management strategies) getting familiar with test formats (test-wiseness strategies). Therefore test-taking strategies are cognitive abilities to deal with any testing situation in appropriate manner and to know what to do during tests (Sarnacki, 1979).

It has been suggested that knowing test-taking strategies can affect students' attitudes toward exam, reduce their test anxiety, build up their self-confidence, make a difference in exam scores, and reach better achievement (Pour-Mohammadi & Abidin, 2011). Therefore one of the positive effects of the test-taking strategies can be on the learners' test-anxiety.

Testing strategies help students translate their knowledge from classroom learning (McLellan & Craig, 1989). Students who have or acquire test-taking strategies or skills will positively affect their testing competency and, hence, their academic performance. Studies indicate that those students with test-taking strategies: (1) have improved attitudes toward tests; (2) have lower levels of test anxiety; and (3) achieve better. Even students who are familiar with the subject matter may do poorly in tests because of the lack of test-taking skills (Sweetnam, 2003).

Test anxiety is one of the most important negative aspects, which has direct negative effects on school performance. A reasonable level of test-anxiety is useful to do better in tests but a high level of test-anxiety is an interfering factor with performance which can negatively affect the learners' concentration, organizing of ideas and thoughts, understanding of questions, and retrieving the facts. Highly anxious students spend much more time in irrelevant thoughts rather than on the tasks, and they usually have poor study habits, and finally they show poor performance inn test (Culler & Holahan, 1980; Rocklin & Thompson, 1985).

Test anxiety as a strong emotional reaction of the learners may exist before and during an examination (Akca, 2011). As a result of this affective factor an evaluative situation affects the test taker's mental health and academic life (Zeidner, 1998; Rothman, 2004). The results of this negative emotional factor causes to the less performance or score (Hassanzadeh, et al. 2012), fear of education, fear of the related course (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004), stressful learning context which can cause to double negative effect in learning.

Approaching the solution, test-taking strategies can be used to effectively help examinees cope with the problem of test-anxiety. Test-anxiety is "feeling of tension and anxiety that interferes with the ability to communicate what one knows in a test situation" (Austin, Partridge, Bitner, &Wadlington, 1995, p. 10). Test anxiety is a fairly common problem in students especially at the college level (Chang, 1986).

Dolly and Williams (1986) investigated the effect of teaching test-taking strategies on improving students' scores on exams. Strategies such as guessing, the similarities or oppositeness, and deduction were applied in the study. The Results indicated that students who were taught test-taking strategy outperformed the students in the control group. In support of the mentioned study, Rezaee (2006) also reported a high correlation between the participants' achieved scores and their test-taking strategy use. Yien (2001) suggested that the more test-taking strategies that test-takers apply, the higher test scores they achieve. The results of Yien's study indicated that significant relationships among test-taker characteristics, test-taking strategies, and test performance existed. It was suggested that test-taking strategies may play a role in mediating between test-taker characteristics and test performance. Likewise the results of studies from Pourdana et al. (2012), Raojevic (2009), and Pour-mohammadi and Zainol Abidin (2012) supported the positive effect of test-taking strategies on academic performance.

Test anxiety is really common among college students. It is normal to feel some level of anxiety or stress regarding upcoming exams, papers or presentations. One of the main concerns of recent language teaching and testing methods is to decrease the amount of test anxiety as much as possible. There might be various approaches to solve the problem but the probable solution proposed in this study is familiarizing EFL learners with test-taking strategies. As a result of the review, it seems that the role of test-taking strategy instruction on test-taking anxiety needs more study. Therefore this study focused on the explicit instruction of test-taking strategies to see how this external factor can have effect on the internal effect which represents itself in the performances of the learners.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 36 female Iranian second grade high school students. They were selected through convenient sampling. The participants were students of one of the researchers. Two intact classes were selected as control and experimental group. And they were in the same level of proficiency which was determined through PET test, and also they had the same age range (15-16), native language, cultural background.

Data Gathering Instruments

In this study two types of instruments were utilized to gather the relevant data.

Preliminary English Test (PET)

To make sure about the homogeneity of the participants and equality of the language proficiency in both experimental and control groups, PET test was used. The number of them (n=36) was determined using the standard deviation of class. The test-takers whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean score were selected as homogeneous participants. The outliers (n=4) were not informed and they participated in their class procedures, but their scores were not considered as the data of this study.

TAS Questionnaire

Regarding the second instrument, the student's test anxiety scores were specified by test anxiety questionnaire (TAS questionnaire). The Westside Test Anxiety Scale is an extremely brief screening instrument meant to identify students with anxiety impairments. The scale was comprised of ten items, and took about five to eight minutes to administer. It had been used by school counselors over several years. Despite the common use of this scale in educational context, to make sure about its reliability in Iran's academic context, in a pilot study on a similar group of 15 learners the reliability of this instrument was measured as 0.85 which is in the range of good reliability level.

Data Gathering Procedure

To make sure about the homogeneity of the participants in language proficiency, PET test was administered, thorough which the researcher homogenized the students (n=40) and the number of them was determined using the standard deviation of class. Since the study groups were intact schools class, it was not possible to rearrange the classes and the out-liars (n=4) were permitted to participate in class. Their scores, however, were not considered as the data of the study.

At the outset of the study, the students' test anxiety scores were specified by test anxiety questionnaire, Westside Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAS questionnaire). Prior the application of this instrument, its reliability was checked in a pilot study (0.84 based on Cronbach's alpha).

After homogenizing the participants, the researchers randomly assigned one the groups as the control and the other as the experimental group. Then the treatment began. While the control group followed the conventional class procedures defined by school curriculum, the experimental group was given an additional training in test-taking strategies. Two strategies were introduced and practiced each session. This lasted for 11 sessions, and each treatment session lasted only 20 to 30 minutes, making a total of almost 5 hours. The remaining time was allocated to curriculum based class procedures. During the treatment, both groups had the same teacher, book, and number of sessions.

After the treatment period, TAS questionnaire was administrated to the groups of study once more to measure their test anxiety after the treatment.

Findings and discussion

The current study was done to investigate the probable effect of test-taking strategy instruction on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' test-anxiety. The gathered data were analyzed to check the hypotheses of the study. The hypothesis of the study was as:

H_1: Test-taking strategy instruction can decrease test-anxiety of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners.

To check the normal distribution of the sample with regard to their English language proficiency, PET test was given to the participants. Descriptive statistics of the scores are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of PET Scores

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Experimental Group	19	9.00	43.00	24.58	7.68	.31	.52	1.06	1.01
Control Group	17	15.00	40.00	25.41	6.10	.59	.55	.76	1.06

As it is shown in Table 1 the values of the Skewness and Kurtosis for control group and experimental group were within the normal distribution range (±2); therefore regarding English language proficiency the participants were homogeneous in both control and experimental groups and the distribution of the participants in both groups was normal.

After providing the descriptive statistics of the data, to investigate the possible difference in English language proficiency between two groups of the study prior to the treatment, an independent t-test was run for PET test scores. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Independent Samples T- test for PET

		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
PET Scores	Equal variances assumed	2.14	.15	1.24	34	.22	2.84	2.28	-1.79	7.48
	Equal variances not assumed			1.21	27.68	.23	2.84	2.33	-1.93	7.62

As shown in Table 2, the results from the independent t-test showed no significant difference between control and experimental groups prior to the treatment ($p= 0.22$ (2-tailed), $t (28) = 1.24$, $p> 0.05$).

To investigate the possible difference in test anxiety between two groups of the study prior to the treatment, an independent t-test was run the results of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Independent Samples T-test for Test Anxiety Pre-treatment

		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
Test Anxiety Scores	Equal variances assumed	.55	.46	-.27	34	.78	-.30	1.09	-2.52	1.92
	Equal variances not assumed			-.27	34.0	.78	-.30	1.08	-2.51	1.91

Table 3 clearly presents that the results from the independent samples t-test showed no significant difference between test anxiety of control and experimental groups prior to the treatment (p= 0.786 (2-tailed), t (28) = -0.27, p> 0.05).

To check the hypothesis of the study another independent samples t-test was run for the post test scores of test anxiety scale to see whether there was any significant difference between the conventional instruction group and test-strategy instruction group after the treatment. The results of this analysis are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4

Independent Samples T-test for Groups' Post treatment Test Anxiety

		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
Post treatment Anxiety	Equal variances assumed	.015	.90	2.76	34	.009	6.40	2.32	1.69	11.10
	Equal variances not assumed			2.83	30.26	.008	6.40	2.26	1.79	11.0

As it is shown in Table 4, the results (p = .009 (2-tailed), t(28) = 2.76, p < 0.05) indicate a significant difference between the groups' test anxiety scale after the treatment. Therefore the test taking strategy instruction group as the experimental group of this study (*M*= 27.23, SD = 5.05) had lower test anxiety than the conventional instruction group which was the control group of the study (*M*= 33.63, SD = 8.26) after the treatment.

Therefore the research hypothesis of this study indicating that "Test-taking strategy instruction can decrease test-anxiety of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners" was proved and test-taking

strategy instruction proved to be successful in decreasing test-anxiety of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. This positive effect of test-taking strategy instruction can be explained considering the nature of the test-taking strategy instruction. As Dolly and Williams (1986) mentioned test-taking strategies such as selecting the correct option by guessing, the strategies of the length option, the similarities or oppositeness, and deduction make test takers aware of what can be done to get higher scores in the test and this is also a great motivating factor which consequently decreases test anxiety and modifies the attitude toward test taking. Therefore test-taking strategies can be used to effectively help examinees cope with the problem of test-anxiety (Austin, Partridge, Bitner, & Wadlington, 1995).

Test-taking strategy instruction also can develop a special type of test-wiseness and make the test takers aware of what to do with the test. Explicit instruction of test-taking strategies as an external factor and appropriate application of these strategies by the learners as an internal factor can hand in hand lead to the better performance in the exam which yields in lowering the anxiety in test.

Test anxiety is a fairly common problem in students (Chang, 1986). The problem is even greater in Iran's test-based educational context where test results play an influential role in learners' academic life and even future.Since alternative assessment has not been prevalent in academic context of Iran, students' performance on a single test will be determining to a much greater extent. Controlling factors polluting the test score and presenting the actual performance and ability of the learner is, therefore, of great importance. Test-anxiety is one of the common problems polluting the test scores. Highly anxious students generally have poor test-taking strategies. They, for example, spend much more time in irrelevant thoughts rather than on the tasks, and they usually have poor study habits (Culler & Holahan, 1980). Majority of studies have found that test anxiety involves many negative effects including poor performance, low motivation, negative self-evaluation beliefs, and low concentration, as well as an increase in school dropout rates and general anxiety (Hancock, 2001; King, Mietz, Tinney, & Ollendick, 1995; Tobias, 1979; Whitaker Sena, Lowe & Lee, 2007).

Teaching test-taking strategies especially metacognitive ones, makes it possible for test-takers to manage the test and shows them how to do the drudgery of test-taking more effectively and successfully. It, therefore, results into a kind of calmness on the part of the individuals because along with application of their knowledge and skill, they are equipped with the extra tool of managing the test and recognizing the features of the test items which guide them in performing the test. Being familiar with the procedures of performing a task can be always soothing, especially in the case of preforming stressful EFL tests.

This finding is in line with the results of Carraway (1987) and Rogers and Harley (1999). Carraway (1987) studied the effect of teaching a test-taking seminar on decreasing test anxiety and increasing test scores. Rogers and Harley (1999) also mentioned that test-taking strategy enables learners to take advantage of the characteristics and the format of the test to improve their performance.

Most teachers may not have realized the effectiveness of teaching test-taking strategies, or they are so much involved in teaching English content that they do not devote any time to teaching the strategies. But as the findings of the present study suggest, there are positive effects of test-taking strategy instruction and teachers should pay more attention to this instruction in their classes in order to reduce the test. Syllabus designers and curriculum developers can also put some importance on this instruction and devote a part of a program for test-taking strategy instruction.

The findings can also have attributions to test-developers and testers. Considering the effects of test-taking strategies on test performance of the individuals, they can have a more accurate picture over abilities of the testees and consider the positive washback effects of it for classroom instruction.

Conclusion

This study indicated the positive effect of test-taking strategy instruction on decreasing test anxiety of Iranian EFL learners. Therefore it can be concluded that test-taking strategies can be used to effectively help examinees cope with the problem of test-anxiety. Test anxiety is a fairly

common problem in students (Chang, 1986).Learners with high anxiety generally have poor test-taking strategies. They, for example, spend much more time in irrelevant thoughts rather than on the tasks, and they usually have poor study habits (Culler & Holahan, 1980). So this weak performance causes test-anxiety.

Majority of research have found that test anxiety involves many negative effects including poor performance, low motivation, negative self-evaluation beliefs, and low concentration, as well as an increase in school dropout rates and general anxiety (e.g. Hancock, 2001; Whitaker Sena, Lowe & Lee, 2007). Students who repeatedly experience test failures or low-test performances despite putting in much effort commonly feel shame, stupidity, and incompetence (Sarason, 1980; Rothman, 2004). The findings of this study can be a useful contribution in solving the above problem mentioned in the previous literature.

Accordingly, to cope with test-anxiety problem, the teachers, syllabus designers and curriculum developers can apply test-taking strategies and try to explicitly instruct these strategies to the learners in order to lower their possible test-anxiety.

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THEEFFECTOFPEDAGOGICAL ENGLISHSMARTPHONEAPPLICATIONSONIRANIAN INTERMADIATE ESL LEARNERS'ACTIVEVOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract
The researcherinthisstudyistoinvestigatetheeffectofmobileassistedlanguagelearnigapplications (malla) ondeveloping ESL learners'activevocababularyknowledgeinirancontext. Thestudywasconductedin pardis English institutein chalous, mazandaran, Iranian. Therehavebeen 120 ESL learnerswhoafterbeinggiven an oxford placement test (opt), 40 studentsatthelevel ofintermediatewereselectedandwererandomlyassigned intotwo groups ofexperimental and control group. The two groups took a pre-test using ielts interview and composition exam to measure their current level of active vocabulary knowledge. Then, they received a treatment of 18 sessions by using English vocabulay smartphone applications. The control group was left intact between pre-test to post-test. As post-test, another version of ielts interview and composition exam was administered in order to remove the effect of test wiseness. Because of the abnormality of data by using kolmogorov-smirnov statistic alalysis, Mann Whitney statistical measurment was used to compare the means of two groups. The comparison between pre-tests and post-tests of each group indicated that the instruction using malla positively affected the development of ESL learners' active vocabulary knowledge. Based on the results obtained it is implied that mobile phones can be used as a complement to traditional vocabulary learning such as the use of vocabulary books and dictionaries, as well as context-based vocabulary learning.

Key words: active vocabulary, smartphone, smartphoneapplication, ESL learner, pedagogical methodology

Introduction
Technology is transforming how we communicate, socialize, play, shop and conduct business. These profound changes place pressure on the traditional models of language learning, such as teaching in a formal classroom setting. They also present us with amazing opportunities to re-design the way we teach and learn English.

Mobile devices allow you and your learners to interact seamlessly with each other, in both formal and informal learning contexts. For example, a teacher can encourage students to create a personal visual story about their daily routine. The student can take a series of snapshots of moments in their day — for example, their alarm clock, a toothbrush, a cup of coffee, their walk to work, etc. — and describe the actions to the teacher. For example, 'I take a shower and get dressed…' This will often highlight aspects of language that require teacher input.

Trifonova and Ronchetti (2003) states that (M- learning) mobile learning is "e-learning through mobile computational devices. Generally speaking, by mobile technology we mean all mobile devices that include Personal Digital Assistance (PDA), digital cell phones and IPOD. These devices are "small, autonomous and unobtrusive enough to accompany us in every moment in our every-day life, and that can be used for some form of learning". However, in this study the researcher is going to investigate the effect of Mobile Assisted Language Learning Applications (MALLA) on developing active vocabulay Knowledge in Iran EFL/ESL context.

Theoretical Framework

Caroll (2007) suggests that language acquisition is only triggered when there is a parsing/processing failure, and this can only happen during the act of comprehension. Attempting to comprehend input is a key focus of several SLA theories which have roots in the Comprehensible Input hypothesis, one of a number of hypotheses is Krashen's (1981) Monitor Theory. Comprehensible Input suggests that acquisition occurs when learners understand messages that are just beyond their current stage of development. While this hypothesis and other aspects of Monitor theory have been criticized (VanPatten& Williams, 2007) they are still very influential in the SLA field. For example, Input Processing Theory (Van Patten, 2007) explains that a good deal of language acquisition is dependent on learners correctly interpreting what a sentence means, and proposes an instructional intervention called "processing instruction" that seeks to intervene during input processing, thus altering learner's processing behaviors and leading to more grammatically rich intake. For example, learners may rely on lexical items like "yesterday" and "tomorrow" to understand an utterance, without ever processing the grammatical tense markers that indicate past or future. Processing Instruction involves asking learners to distinguish between sentences and utterances that are only differentiated by the grammatical distinction in order to facilitate acquisition. The implication for an ideal MALL system would be to record utterances in context, and dynamically construct counter-examples, e.g. if the learner hears an utterance beyond their current grammatical level and bootstraps a response, then the MALL system could immediately provide paired examples and counter-examples only differentiated in terms of the target linguistic construct. Again, this is an AI-Hard problem.

Another SLA theory with an associated approach to instruction is Gass & Mackay's (2007) Interaction Framework; which incorporates not only the comprehensible input hypothesis but also the comprehensible output hypothesis (Swain, 2005) that producing comprehensible output is essential to acquisition, i.e. learners who fail to speak and write the L2 will not achieve native competency. As well as placing importance on the availability of comprehensible input and the generation of comprehensible output, the Interaction Framework focuses on learner interaction, negotiation over meaning and various types of feedback as the key mechanisms for language acquisition. An approach to instruction called Task Based Learning (Ellis, 2003) is informed by the Interaction Framework and advocates instruction around real world tasks such as calling an airline to confirm a reservation. There is clear application to MALL, in that a learner might well be using a mobile device to perform such a real world task. The importance of a task like calling an airline to confirm a reservation is that it provides a backdrop for the negotiation of meaning to take place, i.e. one speaker trying to confirm what the other speaker meant. Rounds of successive feedback allow the speakers to reach agreement on what is meant, and the IF argues that this kind of activity is essential to language learning. The challenge is the role for a mobile intervention. One can imagine a real

situation where a non-native speaker tries to hire a car, or book a flight in L2, a real situation where they might have their mobile device present. There are at least two possible roles for the mobile device in this situation. One to actually help them achieve their goal, and the other to help them get the greatest language learning benefit. Just struggling through as people do is likely to be beneficial in itself, but may be too challenging or intimidating for many. The role of the mobile device can be to make it more convenient to carry some kind of electronic phrasebook, to record the event for later review by the learner, to try and intervene through some sort of automatic translation system, or to help a learner connect with other learners and/or native speakers.

Review of Literature

Chu (2011) asserts that many studies interested in how learners use mobile devices to learn the L2 are actually beneficial for students learning languages. In terms of learners' pedagogical use of mobile phones, most research found that students rarely used mobile phones to study. Based on the research data, smart phone applications are not only commercially successful but also pedagogically beneficial. In another study, Basal, Yilmaz, Tanriverdi ,and Sari (2016) speak about the Effectiveness of Mobile Applications in Vocabulary Teaching. Smartphones are increasingly becoming an ordinary part of our daily lives. With their remarkable capacity, applications used in these devices are extremely varied. In terms of language teaching, the use of these applications has opened new windows of opportunity, innovatively shaping the way instructors teach and students learn. This 4 week-long study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a mobile application on teaching 40 figurative idioms from the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) corpus compared to traditional activities. Quasi-experimental research design with pretest and posttest was employed to determine the differences between the scores of the control (n=25) and the experimental group (n=25) formed with convenience sampling. Results indicate that participants in the experimental group performed significantly better in the posttest, demonstrating the effectiveness of the mobile application used in this study on learning idioms. The study also provides recommendations towards the use of mobile applications in teaching vocabulary.

Muhammadineko (2010) studied Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) andexplored three MALL applications, Cell phone-based electronic dictionaries, word lists, and audiobooks. The researcher also conducted an investigation into the effect of the three applications versus their traditional vis-à-vis. seven-page Questionnaire was handed out to thirty-one EFL learners. In order to find out more, interviews were held with 13 of the participants. The results showed that the participants who are receiving instruction through MALL were more successful than the others on the vocabulary test. The results of the MALL Questionnaire and interviews also indicated the participants' openness of MALL. Mahmoodi Moemen Abadi (2015) studied "Exploring Iranian EFL university students' attitudes toward mobile applications for vocabulary learning". In the modern world, mobile phones as a new addition to information and communication technologies have provided new ways to help learners in the process of language learning. Given the importance of vocabulary, this study thus investigated the learners' attitudes toward vocabulary learning by mobile applications. To this end, one hundred higher-intermediate university students in Sirjan, Iran, participated in this study. After administering a pretest, the next phase started. During the experiment which lasted for four weeks, the participants in the experimental group were expected to use 504 Software installed on their mobile phone to do all vocabulary learning activities. Meanwhile, the control group worked with the 504 printed Book. At the end of the experiment, they were given a vocabulary test to see the effect of mobile application on their vocabulary learning and then attitudes' questionnaire was given to the experimental group. Then, their pre- test and post- test scores were compared using an independent t-test. Results of t-tests revealed that the experimental group students significantly outperformed their control group in EFL vocabulary learning. Moreover, the students exhibited their positive attitudes to use mobile applications in vocabulary learning.

The finding of the study underscored the vital role mobile phones play in extending learning out of the classroom anywhere anytime. In addition, this study has some implications for syllabus designers to incorporate technological and mobile-based learning into the pedagogical language courses.

Significance and purpose of the Study

By Smart phone applications learners are more eager to learn vocabulary, because they use photos, sound, pronunciation, games all together. Young people are interested in playing their own games and applications which are brought up by the era of new technologies. Therefore, this current study and potential outcome of its findings can have contribution to enthusiastic English teachers who are willing to use new technologies in their classroom to improve their teaching efficiency. They may also use these games and applications on smart phones as homework assignments for their students. Therefore one of the uses of this study can be related to the pedagogical approaches which can be inferred from the results.

This study is to do a research on the effect of smart phone applications on English active vocabulary of ESL learners. The main purpose of this study is to introduce a new practical and attractive way of learning vocabulary Therefore, the findings of this study can also contribute to Iranian researchers who are willing to conduct new research about different aspects of using smart phones applications in English teaching and also material designing in Iran.

Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, vocabulary learning is an important factor in language teaching especially where English is taught as a foreign language. Vocabulary plays an important role in language learning because not enough vocabulary knowledge conducts the learners to face with difficulties in language learning. Knowing vocabulary is one of the most important attributes that diagnose writing quality which was mentioned In Lee (2003) studies that insufficient vocabulary accounts for writing difficulty for foreign language learners.

Turgut and Irgin (2009) expressed that learners who grew up in the digital age think vocabulary learning is boring. New technology and using Mobiles applications which has recently emerged is a new way of teaching vocabulary has created some possibilities to improve the vocabulary supply of learners. Learners utilize vocabulary to recognize (receptive) and use (productive) words to obtain and convey meaning. It is an important prerequisite for developing reading comprehension and oral and written expression. When a student does not have a strong vocabulary he/she may struggle to gain meaning from text while reading and understand new concepts presented in oral discussions.

Most universities and private institute in Iran don't use smartphones to allocate to each student in their English classes and this might be due to the lack of well-grounded research in this field in Iran. What is common in the point of view of many Iranian English teachers and instructors is that just simple educational smart phone applications may be helpful in teaching some simple concepts to children with the low proficiency level of English. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the effect of using smart phone games and applications on English active vocabulary learning and of sample adult students in Chalous with intermediate English proficiency level.

This study wants to show whether using smart phone applications which are nowadays of interest to the English learners improve active vocabulary knowledge of learners or not. This study aims at finding out whether smartphone applications can help learn vocabulary better or not.

Participants

The participants of this study were selected after administering an OPT (oxford placement test) exam to 120 institute language learners. In this research 40 intermediate learners were selected that Gender and age were not a case. The participants were divided into two groups, the experimental group whichhad smart phones and the control group which did not have smart phones to use as a source to develop their knowledge of active vocabulary. 20 students were in the experimental group and 20 students in the control group. The experimental group was advised to use the smart-phone application and the control group was not.

Materials

The materials which were used in this study were the smart-phone applications (Wlingua phrasal verbs and TOEIC vocabulary), pretest and post-test which were used for assessing the participants' improvements. In each test an interview and writing a composition were given to the participants. The pretest was used to diagnose participants' prior knowledge of vocabulary. The post-test was used to discover participants' active vocabulary knowledge and to compare the score differences between groups. The results of the tests were used to validate the effectiveness of the mobile applications as tools to increase active vocabulary knowledge. The pre and post-test were IELTS Speaking and Writing test. As speaking test an interview was held with participants, and as writing test the first task of IELTS was given to students towrite a composition which contain at least 150 wordsin 20 minutes. Australia–January 2016 Academic Module test were selected for pre-test and for post-test Canada–March 2016 Academic Module test were selected.

Here are some applications that are useful for learning English vocabulary 'Learning English 6000 Words', 'Rubi', 'My Word Book', and 'Fun Easy Learn English'

The Design of the Study

Design of this research is a quasi–experimental research design that is when the researcher has limitation about selecting of participants(Creswell, 2012).Creswell and Miller (2002) note a quasi-experiment is an empirical study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on its target population. Quasi-experimental research shares similarities with the traditional experimental design or randomized controlled trial, but they specifically lack the element of random assignment to treatment or control. Instead, quasi-experimental designs typically allow the researcher to control the assignment to the treatment condition, but using some criterion other than random assignment (convenience sample procedures).Quasi-experiments are subject to concerns regarding internal validity, because the treatment and control groups may not be comparable at baseline. With random assignment, study participants have the same chance of being assigned to the intervention group or the comparison group.

Methods of Analyzing Data

According to Best (2006) the parametric tests are generally quite robust; they are useful even when some of their mathematical assumptions are violated. However, sometimes it is necessary, or preferable, to use a nonparametric or distribution-free test. Nonparametric tests are appropriate when

1. The nature of the population distribution from which samples are drawn is not known to be normal.

2. The variables are expressed in nominal form (classified in categories and represented by frequency counts).

3. The variables are expressed in ordinal form (ranked in order, expressed as first, second, third, etc.).

Nonparametric tests, because they are based on counted or ranked data rather than on measured values, are less precise, have less power than parametric tests, and are not as likely to reject a null hypothesis when it is false.

Best (2006) believes that of the many nonparametric tests, two of the most frequently used are: the chi square (I) test, and the Mann-Whitney test.

Based on this study that there are two groups with one variable in which the data are on ordinal scale and the data do not meet the stringent assumption of the parametric techniques, Mann-Whitney test is used. As Pallant(2007) asserted Mann-Whitney is used to test for two differences between two independent groups on a continuous measure. This test is the non-parametric alternative to the t-test for independent samples.

Best (2006) also claims the Mann-Whitney U test is designed to test the significance of the difference between two populations, using random sample drawn from the same population. It is a nonparametric equivalent of the parametric t test. It may be considered a usefu1alternative to the t-test when the parametric assumptions cannot be met and when the observations are expressed in at least ordinal scale values.

Descriptive and Inferential Analysis of the Data

The following table shows the vocabulary scores of the two groups before and after the treatments were implemented. The descriptive analysis of the data was employed to show the number, mean, standard deviation, and standard error of measurement for scores. The highest score after the study and the lowest score before the study was observed in the experimental and the control group respectively.

Table1 Descriptive Statistics of the Subjects' Scores in each Group

student		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Variance
experimental	pretest	20	4.60	12.13	8.3425	.59001	2.63859	6.962
	posttest	20	8.40	17.80	11.9580	.77291	3.45658	11.948
control	pretest	20	4.50	12.00	7.5485	.62172	2.78042	7.731
	posttest	20	7.70	11.33	9.6535	.31717	1.41842	2.012

Regarding inferential statistical analysis, it always involves the process of sampling and the selection of a small group,which is assumed to be related to the population from which it is drawn. In this study because the result of normal distribution of data was not normal, a nonparametric test was chosen to analyze the data. Mann-Whitney U test which is the nonparametric equivalent of parametric t-test, is designed to test the significance of the difference between two populations' control and experimental groups.

Results of Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the hypothesis is tested to determine its accuracy.

H0: Using smart phone applications do not have any effects on the active vocabulary knowledge of intermediate English learners.

A Mann-Whitney test confirmed that there existed a significant difference in the test results between the two groups (Sig =0. 017, $p<0.05$).

Table2. The Ranking result of Mann-Whitney test

Ranks				
	student	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
posttest	experimental	20	24.88	497.50
	control	20	16.13	322.50
	Total	40		

Table3. The hypothesis test of Mann-Whitney test

Test Statisticsa

	posttest
Mann-Whitney U	112.500
Wilcoxon W	322.500
Z	-2.377
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.017
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.017b

a. Grouping Variable: student
b. Not corrected for ties.

As indicated in above table the difference between the two groups was measured by a Mann-Whitney test, thereafter remained no significant difference in the vocabulary level of the two groups in pre-test (Sig = 0.289, p>0.05), as was also evidenced by the ILETS test. After the treatment, which lasted a semester, the results of the post-tests revealed that the experimental group did better than the control group.This research tried to prove if smart phone applications have an effect on active vocabulary knowledge of intermediate ESL learners. In vocabulary learning, the ultimate goal of learners is to enable newly acquired vocabulary to be not only kept in long-term memory but also stored in it in terms of effective retrieval of a lexical item for active use. However, newly learned vocabulary items are usually stored in short-term memory and very few words can be transferred into long-term memory directly.

Implications of the Study

Vocabulary learning with smart phone is a new way of transforming language learning with technology. It allows learners to take advantage of emerging technologies to enhance their learning efficiency. We have to consider them in relation to the pedagogical use of such a technology. Mobile phones can be used as a complement of traditional vocabulary learning such as use of vocabulary books and dictionaries, as well as context-based vocabulary learning. There is no denying that learning with mobile phones can bring convenience and that such a technology can allow learning to take place anywhere and anytime.

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MJLTM

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS QUEST (INTERNAL-EXTERNAL) AND DEFENSE MECHANISM ON THE RESILIENCE LEVEL OF THE MOTHERS WITH MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of religious quest (internal- external) and defense mechanisms in predicting the bearing level of mothers with mentally retarded children. The research methodology is descriptive and correlational. The population of the study: all mothers with mentally retarded children living in Khorram Abad from whom 100 people were selected through random sampling. The tools used in this research included items like Connor and Davidson's resilience questionnaire (2003), Alport's religious quest questionnaire (1967), and defense mechanisms questionnaire (DSQ Andrews, 1993). Pearson's correlational coefficient and regression were utilized for data analysis. The results of the study indicated a positive and significant relationship between resilience and internal religious quest ($P<0.001$), while the relationship between resilience and external religious quest was negative and significant ($P<0.05$). There was also a positive and significant relationship between resilience and developed defense mechanism ($P<0.001$), yet the relationship between resilience and undeveloped defense mechanism ($P<0.05$) and neurotic defense mechanism ($P<0.01$) and resilience was negative and significant. The results of the stepwise regression also showed that the internal quest had a positive influence resilience ($P<0.001$). The more the mothers with mentally retarded children utilize internal religious quest, the more will their mental health improve, but this relationship will grow even stronger with the presence of developed defense mechanism. This study revealed that those mothers with mentally retarded children who utilize internal religious quest and developed defense mechanism will have a greater level of resilience and mental health.

Key words: Resilience, religious quest, defense mechanisms, mentally retarded.

Introduction

The child's personality is directly linked to how he is reared by his parents. Due to the special healthcare demands, the presence of a mentally retarded child in families is a source of anxiety and stress for mothers who spent most of their time with him and can have a negative influence on the mental health and compatibility of mothers (Singer et al., 2007; McConky et al., 2008). This stress might be caused by anxiety about dealing with future problems, the behavioral problems and the child's level of disability, changes in family relationships, heavy economical costs, the shattered dreams, others, compassionate behaviors, negative attitude of the society, lack of information, problems in accessing the services, facilities, and the contradictions associated with having another child (Witter, 2003; Buelow et al., 2004). Many families are faced with the problems associated with mentally retarded children (Seyf Naraghi & Naderi, 2010). Based on various international statistics, some 2.5% of all kids and students are mentally retarded, and the 20-million population of the students in Iran renders some 500 thousand such students in our country (Afrooz, 2000).

One of the interesting issues in families who try to take care of their mentally retarded children is the level of parents' resilience. In many cases, taking care of a mentally retarded child may lead to reduction of the resilience level of the family members, especially the one who is particularly responsible for the mentally retarded one (Kroholth et al., 2003). Resilience is the generic term for factors and processes that prevent the development trajectory from deviating to problematic behaviors and psychopathologies and yield adaptive results despite unfavorable conditions (Jokar, 2007). Resilience helps people in dangerous situation utilize their capabilities to gain success and development in their personal life despite dangerous factors and use these challenges as an opportunity for empowering themselves (Newman, 2005). Thus, people with high levels of resilience preserve their psychological health in stressful and unfavorable conditions.

Religion is one of the factors that influence resilience. Religious believes organize parents' thoughts and gives meaning to their efforts. Commitment to religion can influence the experience and reaction of parents to their mentally retarded child. Trenbal & Trenbal (1990) believes that religious resources increase the possibility of accepting mental retardation and parents' resilience in families with mentally retarded child through social support and provoking believes. Researches have shown a relationship between religious resources and the manner of dealing with the adverse conditions of life, and various forms of religious dealing are associated with skills for dealing with problems. It is also proved that people with religious morale have higher levels of resilience against life predicaments (Neenan, 2009; Call, 2003). Rew& Wong (2006) showed in their study that of all 43 researches surveying the relationship between religion and mental health, 84% of them found a positive relationship between them. Koing et al. (2001) also reported that of all 850 studies surveying the relationship between religion and mental health, two-third of them reported a positive and significant relationship between commitments to religious believes, resilience and mental health. Park et al (1996) realized that religious attitude in stressful situation reduces the sense of depression and anxiety. Offering social support and giving sense and purpose to life can create strong positive excitements and purposes and help parents promote their level of resilience.

Another factor which is thought to be tightly related with the resilience level of mothers with mentally retarded children is utilization of defense mechanisms. For example, parents with mentally retarded children may use defense mechanisms like projection, isolation, displacement, depression, suicide motif, anger, fear, etc. (Milanifar, 2007). Vaillant (2000) has defined defense mechanisms as unconscious and internal and regulating processes which enable a person to reduce the cognitive discord towards the internal and external changes of the environment. He considers defense mechanisms as factors that make mental balance and as a tool for dealing with challenges and discords. He also states that defense mechanisms play a more important role in

resilience and shows the cognitive method of events changes is the basic strategy for resilience. Rutter (1987) defines resilience as a defensive and supporting mechanism which moderates the response of a person to predicaments. If the defense mechanisms for reducing the intense contradiction caused by stress are ill-used in people, it will increase the distance between the person and himself in long term due to escaping the reality and creating a world that is unique to him (Heydari, 1385). If a mind that is directly associated with mental health, training and educational issues of mentally retarded children uses destructive defense mechanisms, it will cause problems for both itself and other people associated with it. One of such problems is lower levels of mental health which can influence a large portion of the society. Considering the importance of resilience and the factors that influence it in the mental health of the mothers with mentally retarded children and the lack of a research is this field, the main goal of this research is to survey the role of religious quest (internal and external) in predicting the resilience of the mothers with mentally retarded children. The hypotheses of the research are:

1- Mothers with mentally retarded children have an internal religious quest and higher levels of patience.
2- Mothers with mentally retarded children have an external religious quest and higher levels of patience.
3- Mothers with mentally retarded children have a neurotic defense mechanism and higher levels of patience.
4- Mothers with mentally retarded children have a developed defense mechanism and higher levels of
patience.
5- Mothers with mentally retarded children have an undeveloped defense mechanism and higher levels of patience.

Research tools and methodology

This is a descriptive, correlational study. The study population of this research includes all mothers with mentally retarded children in Khoram Abad. The research sample included 100 mothers with mentally retarded children chosen randomly. Thus, the first step of the study was to identify mothers with mentally retarded children in the age range of 5 to 14 years and an educable mental performance level.

The tools utilized in this research included

Conner-Davidson Resilience scale (CD-RISC): this scale which was proposed by Conner and Davidson includes 25 questions which are evaluated in Likert scale between 0 (completely incorrect) to 4 (always correct). The average score of this scale is 52 and as the score of the subject moves above 52, he will have higher levels of resilience and as the score moves below 52, the resilience level shrinks. Mohammadi (2005) validated it in Iran. Samani et al (2007) calculated a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.87 for the validity of this test. The present research utilizes Cronbach's alpha method to determine the validity of the questionnaire and the resulting validity coefficient was reported to be 0.89.

Religious quest scale (internal-external) of Allport: Allport formed a 20-item scale in which 11 items discussed external religious quest and 9 were about internal religious quest. In 1963, Fegin prepared a 21-item version of T/E scale in which all Allport items were selected in addition to one extra item. There was a great positive correlation (0.61) between this item and E scale and, henceforth, this scale has been used more frequently (Donahu, 1985). To evaluate the validity of this test in Iran, the internal and external religious quest scale of Fegin was translated to Persian and this translation was confirmed through the reviews of other experts and a re-translation of the resulting Persian version of the scale to English. Various revisions attempted to synchronize it with the Iranian cultural and religious context and items were set according to

Likert scale. In this scale, evaluation of external religious quest scale questions was done in this format: totally disagree 5, partially disagree 4, partially agree 2, totally agree 1. Evaluation of external religious quest scale questions was done in this format: totally disagree 5, partially disagree 4, partially agree 2, totally agree 1. The of this scale was tested by John Bozorgi in a sample consisting 235 college students of Tehran with a validity of 0.737 based on Cronbach's alpha. In another study conducted by Mokhtari on a sample consisting of 10 students of Tehran University, the validity of this scale was calculated based on Cronbach's alpha and the resulting alpha coefficient was 0.712 and Cronbach's alpha for the internal and external religious quest were respectively 0.78 and 0.76.

Defense styles questionnaire (DSQ): this questionnaire was investigated and validated by Rahimi Nasab (2006) in Iran. The results associated with the validity showed that the Iranian version of the questionnaire had a desirable level of credibility just like the original version. The validity of this questionnaire was evaluated through retesting and calculation of Cronbach's alpha. The alpha coefficient in the study groups was investigated separately among students and college students and the gender of sampling group and defense mechanisms. The highest total alpha was observed among male students (0.81) and the lowest total alpha was observed among female students (0.69). As for defense mechanisms, the highest level of alpha was for undeveloped style (0.72), while the lowest alpha was associated with neurotic style (Heydari Nasab,

2006). Beshaat et al also reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.75, 0.73 and 0.74 for developed, neurotic, and undeveloped styles respectively and reported a retest validity coefficient of 0.82 with a distance of 4 weeks (Besharat, Sharifi, and Irvani, 2001).

Implementation method

After making the arrangements with the bureau of training and education of Khorram Abad for exceptional children and gaining the agreement of the subjects and identifying mothers with educable retarded children, the purpose of the research was explained to them and they were asked to read the questions carefully and choose the answers that best describe their features and leave no question unanswered. Finally, the data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and stepwise regression analysis. They were also assured that their information will remain secret and they are free to participate in the research.

RESULTS

The following levels of education were observed for mothers who had participated in the research: 71% below diploma, 22% diploma, 4% college diploma, 3% undergraduate. The following figures were also reported about the occupational status of the mothers: 11.36% employees and 88.64% housewives. In this part, we used Pearson's correlation and its corresponding significance test to confirm and reject the hypotheses.

The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between internal religious quest (r=0.68), developed defense mechanism (r=0.66) and resilience. There is a negative relationship between undeveloped defense mechanism and resilience (r=-0.49). No relationship could be concluded between external quest and neurotic defense mechanism with resilience. Thus, the first and the fourth hypotheses are confirmed. Based on table 1, the correlation coefficient between the developed defense mechanism and resilience is significant, thus the hypothesis is confirmed (P=0.001).

First hypothesis: there is a relationship between the internal religious quest and resilience in mothers with mentally retarded children. Based on table 1, the correlation coefficient between internal religious quest and resilience is significant the hypothesis of the research is confirmed (P=0.001).

Fourth hypothesis: there is a relationship between the developed defense mechanism and resilience of mothers with mentally retarded children. Based on table 1, the correlation coefficient between the

developed defense mechanism and resilience is significant, thus the hypothesis is confirmed (P=0.001).

As we can see in table 2, of 5 predicting variables entered the synchronic regression equation, internal religious quest with a beta standard of 0.541 and developed defense mechanism with a standard coefficient of 0.372 are capable of predicting the significance for resilience (P=0.001).

Thus, there is a positive and significant relationship between internal religious quest and tolerance. There is also a positive relationship between developed defense mechanism and resilience of mothers with mentally retarded children. The results of the multi-variable regression analysis showed that the share of such variables in predicting the resilience is 46%. In other words, 46% of resilience variance is determined by internal religious quest and developed defense mechanism.

To determine the influence of each component, external religious quest, internal religious quest, developed defense mechanism, undeveloped defense mechanism, and neurotic defense mechanism as the predicting variables; and resilience as the criterion variable were analyzed with multi-variable regression analysis. As we can see in table 3, the level of F observed is significant. Based on the specification coefficients in the first step of research, the internal religious quest alone specifies 32.5% of the changes in the criterion variable (resilience) (P<0.001), but in the second step of the increased analysis, the developed defense mechanism variable raises the power of prediction to 46.2% and this level of increase is also significant (P<0.001). Thus, mothers of the mentally retarded children will have greater levels of resiliency if the use internal religious quest. Yet, this relationship will even grow stronger with presence of a developed defense mechanism. Thus, mothers of the mentally retarded children who utilize the internal religious quest will have a greater level of tolerance.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study is to survey the role of religious quest (internal-external) and defense mechanisms in predicting the resilience of the mothers with mentally retarded children. The results indicate a positive and significant relationship between internal religious quest and resilience. These results are in line with the results of the studies of Donaho (1985), Netan (2009), Kal (2003), Ru and Veng (2006), McKalo& Larson (2001), Krook (2003), and Jokar et al (2010). In specifying these results, we can say that resilience is one of the influential factors in mental health and life satisfaction of people who are faced with various mental predicaments. The presence of mentally retarded children in a family can be a devastating mental shock for other members and parents with such children experience higher levels of tension and anxiety than others (Ahmad Panah, 2001). Resilient people are more likely to be searching for meaning in the face of unfavorable conditions. Having faith increases the resilience of people against hardships and assists them in overcoming challenges and changes in life. Having belief in spiritual beings (believing in a superb being) acts as a support for greater adaptation. Spirituality is known to be the key factor in developing and educating the resilience. It has been proved by many studies that spirituality can help people reduce their negative emotions, tensions and anxiety and can manage their life problems more easily and utilize an appropriate strategy for reducing their stress and depression while being able to preserve their mental health, because the presence of depression, tension, and anxiety as a dangerous factor can cause many physical problems and mental disorders and reduce resilience. The religious and ethnic context of our country and presence of deep-rooted spirituality and religious believes are important supporting resources which secure the mental health and preserve personal calmness and also promote one's ability in dealing with life predicaments. Allport believes that it is only the internal religious believes which have a positive relationship with mental health (Allport and Ruth, 1967). Koork (2003) claims that believing this fact that it is god who controls situations and observes peoples can greatly reduce the anxiety associated with situations. People who have such believes think that relying on god can help bring uncontrollable situations under control. Finally, we can say that due to the special life style of people with internal religious quests, they show higher levels of resilience in the face of unfavorable events. In other words, mother with higher degree of internal religious quest

behave their mentally retarded children based on the religious teachings and consequentialism and the day of judgement, have a greater degree of resilience and mental health. We can say that possessing internal religious belief enables people to see the life more significant and, as a result, have higher levels of mental health.

What's more, the results of these studies revealed the fact that mothers with mentally retarded children prefer to use neurotic defense style (philanthropy and cancellation) and undeveloped defense style (physicalization and justification), while using them can reduce their resilience and jeopardize their mental health. In other words, the more these mothers use undeveloped and neurotic defense strategies, their mental health, especially anxiety, insomnia, and depression will descend to negative conditions, they will experience more negative emotions, and will have less options for reducing their psychological disorders (Abolghasemi, Mahmoudi, & Salmani; 2009). Although the descriptive information show that mothers with mentally retarded children generally use developed defense mechanisms less frequently, a positive and significant relationship is observed between this mechanism and resilience scale ($P<0.001$) in the very mothers who use developed defense mechanisms. Thus, we may conclude that using the undeveloped defense mechanism and neurotic defense leads to higher levels of stress, insomnia, and depression, while using developed defense mechanism reduces stress, insomnia, depression and promotes the general health and resilience in mothers with mentally retarded children. Defense mechanisms are associated with mental and physical consequence (Abolghasemi, Mahmoudi, & Salimi, 2009; Vaylant, 2000). Thus, when people utilize developed defense mechanisms in the face of bad events, their stress will be much less than those who utilize undeveloped defense strategies (Thompson, 2007) and they will have greater general health and level of resilience (Mohammad Pour Yazdi et al., 2009).

As for the second hypothesis, the results indicated that internal religious quest along entered regression equation (in order to predict the resilience of mothers with mentally retarded children), it managed to specify 32.5% of resilience, but this relationship grew even stronger for 13/7% more with the presence of developed defense mechanism and the predictability power rose to 46.2%. Thus, mothers with mentally retarded children who have an internal religious quest besides developed defense mechanism show greater levels of resilience. This helps them deal with the stress of having a mentally retarded child and also have better general health. Researches also indicate that people with internal religious quest have higher levels of resilience, and using developed defense mechanisms and active and direct ways for dealing with life problems and stress reduces the destructive and harmful aspects of the stressful factors of life (having a mentally retarded child), because using internal religious quest and developed defense mechanism helps people improve their general physical health, mental health, happiness etc. and vice versa (Afzali, 2007; Dadseyan, Pakdaman, & Ali Bakhshi, 2008).

Using external religious quest and undeveloped and neurotic defense mechanisms not only cannot solve problems, but also creates emotional problems and has negative impact upon the personal life (Abolghasemi et al., 2009). In other words, internal religious quest and development of defense mechanisms and, consequently, high resilience have a significant impact on total psychological and social adaptation and the physical- clinical health of the mothers with mentally retarded children (Beygi, 2011).

As the first and the second hypotheses are confirmed, we may draw the conclusion that using positive internal mechanisms (internal religious quest and developed defense mechanism) leads to higher levels of resilience (as a positive external mechanism) which includes supports, positive emotional-social relationships, social and individual cultures and values (which can influence people's correct interaction with problems and thinking style). All of these factors taken together promote the mental and physical health of mothers with mentally retarded children.

Finally, the results of the study showed that using religion (if it is internal) and defense mechanism (if it is developed) can predict the resilience of the parents with mentally retarded children, while external religion and undeveloped and neurotic defense mechanisms cannot predict the resilience of parents. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended to provide the necessary conditions (using psychological treatments, providing various educations for increasing religious believers and resilience and correct ways of dealing with life challenges) to prevent the signs and consequences of having a mentally retarded child or, finally, accepting such a child.

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THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE FROM SHAYKH TUSI'S STANDPOINT WITH RELYING ON TAFSIR AL-TIBYAN

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Abstract

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi (995 AD.) is considered as one of the prominent Shia exegetes. He wrote Al-Tibyan Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an exegesis with a literary and linguistic approach. In an esoteric exegesis to Holy Scripture, thanks to the thematic relation between some of the Qur'anic verses with language phenomenon, he has studied the issue of the origin of language, reflected, and critiqued the various point of views of Islamic scholars about the subject matter. The linguistic standpoints of Islamic scholars, which were introduced by al -Shaykh al -Tusi posit, in a framework of the three theories of "natural or essential", "tawqifi" (obligatory) and "tawqifi – conventional". In different hermeneutic situations, al -Shaykh al -Tusi, critiqued the three mentioned theories, he stated and added his linguistic standpoints. He has clarified the unknown parts of linguistic studies about the origin of language and replied the questions that philosophers and linguistics of ancient times have asked, which remained unanswered to the time of al -Shaykh al -Tusi and was reflected in Islamic civilization with the emergence of Islam religion. The viewpoint of al -Shaykh al -Tusi concerning the origin of language, which has been reflected in Al-Tibyan exegesis, is rational and compelling, and the author in this paper wants to introduce and analyze his linguistic viewpoint, adopting a heuristic and analytic approach.

Keywords: The origin of language, Al -Shaykh al -Tusi, Linguistics, Al-Tibyan exegesis, Language

Introduction

Reflecting and studying about discovering how language has been originated and recognition of its revolutionary stages are considered as one of the most important linguistic topics. Studying the origin of language in ancient times and after that has been raised in philosophy, logic, linguistics, religious studies and its various branches like hermeneutics.

Among the eastern and western thinkers, philosophers and theologians have stated different standpoints regarding the nature of language.

The Domain of Ancient Greek Civilization

In the domain of ancient Greek civilization, a group of intellectuals including, Heraclitus, Democritus, Socrates and Plato have expressed various standpoints concerning the origin of language.

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Their opinions sometimes are based on religious beliefs and sometimes on pure philosophical ideas, and sometimes stating their ideas has resulted in arguments and controversies in the community of intellectuals (Antaki,1969, 47; Rodaini, 2002, 230).

The standpoints of ancient Greek philosophers concerning the nature of language and the stages of its formation in theoretical frameworks of "natural or essential", "idiomatic" and "natural – idiomatic" are categorized as follows:

- **Natural or Essential Theory**

Natural or essential theory was proposed by groups of philosophers especially Heraclitus.Heraclitus believed that words signify their meaning, naturally or essentially and created by God and His will. According to Heraclitus viewpoint also known as "tawqifi" theory, meaning is conceived immediately after using the word by speaker or writer, in every language.

Prominent philosophers like Socrates, Plato and also Sophists, accepted the theory of Heraclitus but, didn't take much long that they realized that practically the essential link between meaning that they had claim are between words and meaning, does not exist and after hearing and reading a word, no matter what language it is, its meaning cannot be perceived essentially. This has led to point that they revised their theory.

They claimed that the signifying relation between words and meanings in its genesis was totally clear and evident but due to lapse of time and evolution of sounds this essential relation has evolved and made human unable to interpret and explain it. (Antaki, 47; Rodaini, 230).

- **Idiomatic Theory**

Rejecting the natural theory of language in the congregations of philosophers, Democritus has proposed a theory known as "idiomatic or conventional". He believed that the signification of words over meanings in language of a nation, takes place only based on the agreement of the community of that language.

Democritus proved that we can impose several meanings for a word or we can form countless words for a single meaning.

Accepting the theory of Democritus, Aristotle emphasized on that significations of the words over meanings are conventional and are made according the convention of society (Antaki,47-48; Rodaini, 231).

- **Natural – Idiomatic Theory**

The third theory, which is a combination of the previous two, was proposed by Socrates. Socrates believed that signification of some of the words over the meanings is essential, and the signification of the other words is conventional.

He added that The responsibility of the creation of the words for meanings is on the people of the society and the linkage between the words and meaning in the human mind takes shape just by repeating [practicing] the word. (Antaki, 48; Rodaini, 231).

The standpoints of some of the Greek philosophers regarding the nature of language were glanced briefly.

The Domain of Ancient Eastern Civilizations

- **Ancient India**

In the domain of ancient eastern civilization, Indian philosophers of ancient times, attempting revival of their scriptures, especially those scriptures belonging to Vedic period, turned to the study of language and its components.

They surpassed Greek philosophers in this field. The linguistic attempts of Indian philosophers have begun in the middle of third century BC. (Robins,1989, 292; Rodaini,74).

However, the studies of Indian philosophers in the domain of the origin of language have resulted in four theories that are introduced partially here under:

1. A division of Indian philosophers, considered words and meanings as same entities and did not believe that the nature of words and meanings are separate. They interpret that the understanding of meaning is the result of the existence of words in the speech. (Rodaini, 231).
2. Some of Indian philosophers considered the signification of meaning over words, essential and natural. (Lbid,231)

3. A group of Indian philosophers which were known as "Vaisesikas" admitted to a compulsory relationship between words and meaning, but the nature and the origination of this relationship remained unknown for them. (Lbid,232)
4. Another division of prominent Indian philosophers, which were known as "Naiyaykes", believed that the manifestation of language is an immediate occurrence by God. They considered evil and irrational, investigating into the study of language and the stages of its genesis. (Lbid,233)

- **Islamic Civilization**

In the realm of newly – established eastern Islamic civilization, during the first centuries of Hijri calendar, Arab nation turned to a comprehensive investigation and rather exact study of language phenomenon, in line with, paying attention to their language as the most important element of their culture and nationality.

The linguistic attempt of Islamic scholars has been investigated with the aim of defending Qur'an and the language of Holy Scripture, because Arabic language is the medium of understanding of the text of Holy Scripture and is considered as the tool for deducing mundane and religious decrees.

Paying attention to the Arabic language during the first centuries of Hijri calendar in the background of various studies became prevalent. A group of Islamic scholars have written and compiled prominent works in the different domains linguistic studies, including syntax, phonetics, morphemic, semantics, and lexicography. (Rodaini, pp. 75-78).

Al-eyn dictionary written by Khalil ibn Ahmad Farahidi (786 AD.), "Al-Ketab" grammar book written by Sibawayh (797 AD.), the book of "Al-Sahebi Fi Fiqh Al-Logha" written by Ibn Faris (1002 AD.), "Alkhasa'es" Book by Ibn Al-Jenni (1004 AD.) "Fiqh'e Al-Logha Va Ser'e Al-Arabyiah" by Abu Mansur Tha'ilibi (1037 AD.) and "Al-Mozher Fi olom Al-Logha Va Anve'ha" by Soyuti (1501 AD.) are considered as the most prominent books in Arabic linguistics.

Parallel to pure linguistics studies, there were also many comprehensive researches done by Islamic scholars in other sections of Islamic Studies about the nature of language. Islamic Scholars have stated significant and valuables discussions in the realms of logic, philosophy, theology, principals and exegesis and related subjects to signification of word and meaning.

Their inquiries about how language originated have resulted into manifestation of triple theories "natural", "tawqifi" and "conventional", which are going to be explained partially, here under: (Abu-Ali Sina,1938, 6; Ghazzali, 2000, 25-26; Razi, 1991,181; Mohasseb, 2008,21-22, Mobarak, 1975, 187).

- **Natural Theory**

During the first centuries of Hijri calendar, there were some linguistic discussions reflected in the works of some of the Islamic linguistics concerning the possibility of the effectiveness of sensory principals, phonetic and vocalic elements and the structure of syntactic principals over the process of formation of signification of word. Stating such ideas formed an attitude and a movement based on the existence of essential signification of Arabic words over meaning. The effect of this movement were republished and remained in the various domains of Islamic Science in the different works of Islamic scholars (Mohasseb, 20; Mobarak, 87).

Islamic – Iranian linguists such as Khalil ibn Ahmad Farahidi and Sibawayh and Ibn Jenni the prominent Islamic linguist are among the Scholars whom in their linguistics works proposed the possibility of essential signification some of Arabic words over meanings.

Relying on the possibility of the effectiveness of sensory principals over the formation of signification of Arabic word based on the different morphemic manners, stated: "the words which are pronounced based on the rhythm of 'Al-Fa'alan'(الفَعَلان) signifies the states of unrest, movement and motion, such as: "Al-Naghazan ,(النقزان)Al-Ghayalan ,(الغليان) Al-Ghayasan ,(الغيثان)Al-Lahaban (اللهبان)and Al-Vahajan"(الوهجان). Ibn Jenni, 1952,152).

In the "Al-Khasaes" book which is specified to knowing and stating the properties of Arabic Language, has stated that, "the rhythm of 'Al-Fo'la' (الفُعلى)is used only for infinitives and adjectives just for signifying the speed and haste, such as: "Al-Boshka ,(البُشكى)Al-Jomza ,(الجُمزى) and Al-Volgha"(الوُلقى). (Lbid, 152-153).

During the fourth and the fifth centuries of Hijri calendar, the linguistics viewpoint, which was proposed by Khalil ibn Ahmad and Sibawayh, has reflected in some of the hermeneutics and linguistics works of Islamic Scholars.

In Al-Tibyan exegesis, in the light of esoteric exegesis of the word of Holy Scripture has referred to some of the realizations of Arabic morphemics rhythms, which essentially signify an entity or a phenomenon.

In the light of interpretation of Honorable Qur'anic Verses, he reminded that the rhythm of "Fo'al (الفُعال)in Arabic language is used for the aim of signifying the morphemes of sounds "pests" and referring to anything which is considered small and atomic and scattered away. (Tusi, 546-548; 468-469).

In the esoteric exegesis of the Ayah of 148 of Al-A'raf Surah, al –Shaykh al -Tusi has attempted to decode the word "Khowar" (الخوار)which is in the context of the Ayah and added: "rhythm of 'Fo'al' (الفُعال)is used for the expression of the sounds of 'pests', such as: Al – Sorakh,(الصُراخ)Al-O'var ,(الغُوار)Al–Sok'at ,(السُكات)Al–Otash ,(العُطاش)and Al- Nobah (النُباح). (Lbid,546-548).

Under the esoteric exegesis of the word of "Rofat" (الرُفات) in Ayah 49 from Bani – Israil Surah, al –Shaykh al -Tusi added that "everything that become scattered and tiny, often stated based on the 'Fo'al" rhythm ,(الفُعال)such as: "Hotam ,(الحُطام)Rozaz (الرُضاض), Doghagh (الدُقاق), Ghobar (الغُبار), and Torab (التُراب)". (Lbid,468-469).

In the early of seventh century Fakhr'e Razi (1209, AD.) is considered as one of the prominent Islamic exegetes and scholars. He has studied and reflected upon the natural signification of a set of rhythms of Arabic morphemic over the meaning, in the realms of principals and exegesis.

In the book of "Al – Mah'sul Fi Elm Osul Al-Fiqh" Fakhr Razi has not accepted and rejected the pretender standpoint of the existence of natural signification between Arabic words and their meanings. He discussed that if the signification of words over the meaning, were a natural or essential signification, the meaning of words didn't change with difference of boarders and nations, and human beings could understand all nations' languages. (Razi,181).

- **Tawqifi (obligatory) Theory**

Having the same religious discourse of ancient times, tawqifi theory was proposed by some of the Islamic scholars. Akh'fash Awsat (908 AD.) is among those scholars who accepted both conventional and tawqifi standpoints toward language. (Mohasseb,21).

For the sake of verification of their religious point of view, towards the origin of language, a group of Islamic scholars, referred to the Ayah 31, from blessed Al –Baqara Surah, an Ayah which recognized God as The Responsible for teaching and evolution of language. (Razi,181; Soyuti,18; Antaki,49; Mohasseb,22 -23).

It should be said that the prominent Imami and Non-Imami exegetes in the light of esoteric exegesis of the mentioned Ayah, have acknowledged that the language is tawqifi, however, they critiqued and rejected it, and did not accept his citation to the mentioned Ayah. (Tusi,66; Zamakhshari,1997, 154; Razi,1981,30)

- **Conventional Theory**

The theory of accepting the existence of convention in creating a signifying relationship between meanings and words became emerged and prevalent among some of the Islamic linguists, exegetes and Usulis.

Akhfash Awsat, Ibn Jenni, al –Shaykh al Tusi, Fakhr Razi, and Soyuti are among those scholars who were inclined towards the standpoint of conventionality of the language phenomenon and the role of human in creating a semantic relationship between words and meanings. (Ibn Jenni, 44; al –Tusi,71; Razi,181; Soyuti,18; Antaki,50; Mohasseb,22-23)

According to the point of view of these Islamic scholars, a group of elites and knowledgeable of the society has the word – creating task, and with the using of created words in the required time and repeating it over time by the members of the community (usage), the different stages of genesis of language became evolved. (Ibn Al-Jenni, 44; Antaki,50).

The variety of prevalent accounts about the essence of language were discussed and introduced among the ancient civilized world scholars and, Islamic scholars, in the above-mentioned introduction.

The Reflection of Theories on Revelation of Language in Al –Tibyan Exegesis

Based on a detailed study which was done in the area of Al –Tibyan exegesis, al –Shaykh al -Tusi outlined, investigated and criticized the subject of origination of language in three different places under the exegesis of Al –Fatiha, Al –Baqarah, and Al –Rum, due to thematic relationship of some of the Qur'anic Verses to the language phenomenon. Reflecting on various accounts of some of the Islamic scholars, he also added his points of views.

The Accounts of those scholars, which were introduced and republished by Tusi, place in a framework of the three theories of "essential", "tawqifi" and "tawqifi – conventional". These theories have been stated and criticized among the ancient philosophers as well as the Islamic scholars especially in the realm of language and linguistics.

The triple stated accounts about the origin of language which were reflected in the Al –Tibyan exegesis are going to be introduced below, and then the critique of al –Shaykh al- Tusi about each of them will be stated and in the followings linguistics viewpoint of the origin of language will be introduced:

The Reflection of the Theory of Natural or Essential Signification in Al –Tibyan Exegesis

Some of the Qur'anic researches dictate the theory of natural or essential signification of words over meaning. AL-Shaykh AL-Tusi, under the exegesis of the first Ayah of Merciful Qur'an"In The name of Allah, The Merciful, the compassionate" (بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم), have stated and critiqued their idea and then rejected it with rational proof.

This group of Qur'anic researchers believed that the word (اسم) "Name" at the beginning of the Ayah of blessed 'Al –Fatiha' Surah essentially signify "Allah" and translated the compound of "Besme Allah" (In the Name of God) to "Be –Allah" (In Allah). (al –Shaykh al –Tusi, 309 -311).

In commenting on the mentioned theory, al –Shaykh al -Tusi did not accept the basis of his discourse, and rejected it. He has emphasized that the essential meaningful relation between word and meaning does not exist, and raised the question that how would be someone that doesn't know the meaning of the word, can specify the signification of that word?

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi has reasoned that "if the signification of meaning over word was essential, the tongue of speaker would burn, pronouncing the word "fire", or the speaker, pronouncing "honey" feel sweetness in his/her mouth". (Lbid,311).

The Reflection of "Tawqifi" Theory in Al – Tibyan Exegesis

The religious "tawqifi" theory in Al –Tibyan exegesis reflected in the light of blessed Ayah 31 from the noble surah, Al-Baqarah, quoting two of the most prominent Abu Ali Jobba'ie (915 AD.) and Rommani (994 AD.).

The mentioned theory outlooks that, God has thought all of the languages to Adam (peace be upon him) and his children learned these languages from him, and when his families became scattered, each of the families selected just one language and they forgot the other languages which they didn't use due to the lapse of time (Lbid,67).

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi proposed a similar theorem regarding the origin of language, citing Jobba'ie and Rommani. He narrated that maybe the family of Adam (peace be upon him) were aware and able to know all of the languages. Until the time of Prophet Nooh (peace be upon him), and when Prophet Nooh and his entourages – who were aware all the languages – scattered after the extinction of all other creatures, each family of them chose a language and speak with that language. Moreover, the other languages of them became instinct and forgotten (Lbid)

The other approach in line with the "tawqifi" theory of language belongs to Ibn Ikhshad (937 AD.) Al -Shaykh al -Tusi citing him, recorded that the for the first time God inspired and taught Ismael with the Arabic language, because he, instead of being in [Hebrew environment] and speaking Hebrew language started to speak Arabic, and his children has learned Arabic language from him. (Lbid,68).

The tawqifi theory of Qur'an in two exegesis situations of Ayah 31 from noble Al –Baqarah Surah, and Ayah 22 from the noble Al –Rum Surah, was criticized and rejected by al -Shaykh al -Tusi.

The first situation: interpreting a part of 31 Ayah of blessed Surah Al- Baqarah which is regarded as an evidence for the proof of being obligatory of the language in front of some Islamic scholars, introducing a different but rather rational.

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi did not recognize the word "Al-Asma" (الأسماء)as the object to the second verb, "Allama" (علم)which has two objects and considered "Al-Asma" (الأسماء)as a part of a genitive construction, which its additive is omitted according to his reading and exegesis insight.

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi considered and interpreted omitted additive of the word "Ma'ani" (معاني) which with the possibility of mentioned additive in the context of the Ayah, the genitive construction phrase of "Ma'ani Al – asma" (معانى الأسماء)is the second object of the verb, (Allama), (علم)which is used in the Ayah. (Lbid,66)

Proving his different exegesis, he argued that teaching words without any signification of meaning is never advantageous and beneficial. He does not considered rationale, that Prophet Adam gained virtue, just for the reason that God taught him all the words.

Considering, the rest of the virtuous Ayah, al -Shaykh al -Tusi recognized that the excellence of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) is that he enjoyed "wisdom", which God promised it to Angels, but Angels didn't aware of its nature and confessed to their ignorance. (Lbid)

The Second situation: in the light of the exegesis of Al- Rum Surah, al -Shaykh al -Tusi referred to some of the exegetes of the virtuous 22nd Ayah of the Surah, and counted it as a proof for rejecting the "tawqifi" point of view of the language. (Lbid,506)

A group of exegetes has stated that the word "Al- senah" (الألسنه)in the context of mentioned Ayah is synonymous to the word "Loghah" (اللغه)and interpreted the phrase of genitive construction "Ekhte'laf Al –Sena'takom" (اختلاف ألسنتكم)to "Ekhte'laf Al –Loghatakom"(اختلاف لغتكم) . Accepting this idea, the mentioned construction, signifies the variety of human language, a phenomenon that, advocates the independent role of human in fabrication of language, and reject that the language is "tawqifi". (Lbid)

The Reflection of Tawqifi – Conventional Theory in Al –Tibyan Exegesis

The tawqifi – conventional theory in Al- Tibyan exegesis, is reflected under the honorable 31st Ayah of Al– Baqarah Surah. The mentioned theory is combination of the tawqifi and conventional theories, which became prevalent and common in the circles of some of the Islamic scholars.

The followers of tawqifi – conventional theory accepted the role of both, God in the origination of language and its improvement and, also human being in innovation of language and its variety.

Abo Al-qasem Balkhi (931 AD.) is among the followers of this theory. Adopting a wise approach to the subject of language origination and interpreting the stages of its revelation and creation, this group of Islamic scholars has tried to propose a rational discourse and a standpoint compatible with their religious standpoint.

While interpreting the noble 31st Ayah of the blessed Al – Baqara, al -Shaykh al -Tusi quoted the viewpoint of Abo Al-Qasem Balkhi, one of the advocates of tawqifi – conventional theory, concerning the way of teaching language and the nature of language usage between God and Adam (peace be upon him).

Quoting Balkhi, he narrated two hypotheses, regarding the way that God taught Adam (peace be upon him) with words: the first hypothesis is that, the Almighty God through the creation of the powers of understanding and memory in him taught Adam all of the word in language. And the second hypothesis considers that God guided Adam and made him able in the cognition of all of the languages him, then eliminated his awareness entirely, and Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), created a word similar to what was eliminated (Lbid,70 – 71).

In the linguistics standpoint of Balkhi the two dimensions of language is obvious that are "tawqifi" and "conventional". The two principals of previous knowledge of the meaning of the words for the sake of understanding the language and, convention and, using created words in the language environment have reflected the conventional dimension of language and the guidance and enablement of Adam (peace be upon him) by God in the previous knowledge of the word reflects the tawqifi side of language.

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi neither accepted nor authoritatively rejected the Balkhi's standpoint towards language. Accepting the rejection of Balkhi's theory by Abu Ali Jobbai and other followers of him in E'tezal school, satisfied al -Shaykh al -Tusi (Lbid,71).

Except the three mentioned theories, al -Shaykh al -Tusi has narrated another account regarding the origination of language. He has added, that "[it is possible that] the language of all of the people

was same till the end of midnight, and when they woke up at the morning, their language varied, and each group of them, spoke just with the language that they have known before." (Lbid,67)

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi considered the above-mentioned account weak and believe that it lacks rationale credibility, and rejected it. He argued that, wise man with the sound of mind, have forgotten the crucial and vital events of a day before. (Lbid)

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi's Linguistics Standpoint about the Origination of Language

Intellectual themes of al -Shaykh al -Tusi in Al-Tibyan exegesis about the origination of language, has found consistency in the light of esoteric exegesis of the 31st Ayah from Al –Baqarah Surah and the 22nd Ayah from Al –Rum Surah.

Explaining the role of God in creation of language phenomenon and its teaching to the human kind al -Shaykh al -Tusi, which was one of the disputed linguistics subjects among the Islamic and ancient world scholars, has introduced a modern and rational approach at least till the present time.

Under the different exegesis of 31st Ayah of Al –Baqarah Surah, al -Shaykh al -Tusi referred to the teaching of all of the meanings to Adam (peace be upon him) by God, (Lbid) a matter which prepare the settings for human in creating the words which emphasize on the language as a conventional phenomenon.

He also accepted the standpoint of some of the exegetes, which interpreted the additive construction of "Ekhtelaf Al –Senatakom" (اختلاف ألسنتكم)as "Ekhtelaf Al –Logha"(اختلاف اللغه) . And stated that it considers the language as a conventional phenomenon. (Lbid,506).

Interpreting the remained part of the Ayah, referring to the origin of language and the role of God in teaching language and its propagation, al -Shaykh al -Tusi states: "but everyone who says: language is conventional and the realization of convention is emerged from the will of human and God has no role [interference] in it, however, when tools and instruments by which such [phenomenon] become ascertained, and no one expect God can provide it, it is allowable to recognize God as the creator [originator] of language". (Lbid).

From the standpoint of al -Shaykh al -Tusi, it can be deduced that, however, the process of the convention of the language is performed by members of the community, but, the creation of the power of speech and understanding in human and setting up the speech apparatus and make him able in cognition of voices and the relation of them between each other, are considered as a potential capability which only God can provide it in human. Accepting such a divine process, God can be regarded as creator of language.

This linguistics idea of al -Shaykh al -Tusi which is revolved around the axes of wisdom and rationality is considered as a modern token which attempts to investigate into the unknown part of researches and questions of ancient and contemporary linguists and make it clear and explicit. His linguistics insight is a proof for language as a conventional phenomenon and wisely explains the role of God in creation of language.

However, regarding the nature of the idea of the al -Shaykh al -Tusi that he added as an exegete about the nature of language, it should be acknowledged that his standpoint was more mature in comparison to the other ideas contemporary to his times.

Conclusion

Al -Shaykh al -Tusi's linguistics insight made rational relationship between the role of God in creation of language and the interference of human in completion of language.

He considered the creation of the power of perception in human for speaking by God as a divine process and recognized the cognition of sounds and the form of the words as a pure humane process.

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INVESTIGATION INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP IN AN EFL CONTEXT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Affective aspects of efl classrooms play a pivotal role in performance of students and in the meanwhile, may trigger inconsistencies when applied improperly. A positive relationship between teacher and students may render increased levels of efficiency in educational settings while any disruption in such a relationship can cause severe outcomes not only for students but also for whomever in touch with them. The present study was conducted in order to evaluate the effect of student-teacher relationship on students' academic achievement. Data collection was performed by the multidimensional student life satisfaction scale (mslss) which determines five discrete domains of life satisfaction and the student satisfaction survey questionnaire. Validity and reliability of the tools were confirmed by the supervisor's viewpoint and cronbach's alpha, respectively. The results obtained from the present study revealed that a positive teacher-student relationship positively impacts student achievement. It is concluded that teachers' attitudes about students should be reconsidered and reformed so as to specify the requirements of all students. Also, student engagement in learning should be enhanced and teacher education programs should be reformed to include the development of relational abilities and shape significant student relationships within the classroom. Additional investigation is suggested in order to evaluate the long-term influence of positive teacher-student relationships and the procedures to prepare a framework in which student-teacher relationships can be best increased.

Keywords: academic achievement, classroom, teacher's attitude, teacher-student relationship

1. Introduction

Education in present-day societies is the most important basis in order to achieve development. A well-developed education can guarantee growth and improvement of society in variety of dimensions. In this regard, schools are considered to have the highest share because they might help a teacher attain such a goal. One of these factors is construction of a proper and fruitful relationship between a teacher and students.

The necessity of providing more operative teaching practices emphasizing teacher-student relationship content is well recognized. Founding positive relationship between the teacher and the student is pivotal in maintaining a caring and empathetic learning environment. The actions of teachers as role models should exhibit positive attitudes, beliefs, and expectations of learning that students can easily grasp. The school environment seeks to foster students' social, ethical, and intellectual development with caring and supportive relationships and collaboration between

students, staff, and parents. One conclusion recommended that the awareness of the relationships with teachers can expressively affect student commitment, attainment, and prospects (Davila, 2003).

The present study focused on the effects building a constructive teacher-students relationship might have on students' academic performance. Nowadays, academic performance has a very special place. Developed and developing countries have put special emphasis on performance, competition, and win. Academic performance refers to entire challenges faced by a student in school such as self-efficacy, emotional influence, planning, consequence control, and motivation. Therefore, academic achievement is an important issue for students and it seems very necessary to explore various factors affecting it. The present investigation was formulated in order to evaluate how much effect such factors as the relationship between the teacher and student, student's perception of respect and care, the teacher's cultural connectedness to students, and the teacher's expectation have on students' academic achievement. Two research questions were formulated for the current research:

RQ1: To what degree does the relationship between the teacher and student impact student academic achievement?

RQ2: To what degree does the student's perception of respect and care impact student academic achievement?

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1 Teacher-Student Relationship

Learning a foreign language is a complex task which its effectiveness may associate with different factors such as teachers' own language proficiency, self-efficacy, and experience (Fahim, Hamidi, & Sarem, 2013). An experienced teacher knows when to mediate and when to ask peers to help their classmates (Khatib, Sarem, & Hamidi, 2012). The relationship between teaching and learning, as two absolutely different processes, cannot be neglected. Educational performance requires the teacher and the learner to have some kind of connection which is the key to successful teaching and learning. The interaction between teacher and student is fundamentally the vital basis for teaching (Christiansen, 2002). Lipman (1995) believes that within an EFL setting, it is sometimes cumbersome to deliver the content of materials from a completely foreign culture in an understandable and efficient way and the challenge will be even more pronounced when there are inconsistencies in the relationships between teacher and students. Ijaduola (2007) stated that the sort of relationship between teachers and students should be sincere and approachable in order to have a more reliable and effective transfer of learning to grasp higher academic achievement. Purnawarman (2011) perceived that classroom relationship is largely dependent on the relationship between the teacher and the students in the classroom and consequently, the kind of relationship in the classroom is determined by the kind of teacher in the classroom (Ijaduola, 2007).

As it can be seen, Ijaduola (2007) points to the importance of teacher in building a practical relationship with students; in this regards, he considers two types of teachers, namely autocratic teachers who create a stormy and passive emotional climate within and outside the classroom and laissez-faire teachers who do nothing more than paying lip-services to the principle of teaching. Knoell (2012) claims that teacher's knowledge of subject, pedagogical competence, instructional effectiveness, and/or classroom management skills are among most important factors in order for a teacher to construct an effective relationship with students. However, Banner and Cannon (1997) believe that it is not as easy to define an efficient teacher by saying we think we know great teaching when we encounter it, yet we find it impossible to say precisely what has gone into making it great.

On the other hand, Britt (2013) proclaimed that having an effective teacher-student relationship is dependent on not only the teachers themselves but also all school staff. In other words, every member of the school staff affects the teacher-student relationships. Britt (2013) also stated that as with any relationship, gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural differences are important factors in teacher-student relationship. Csikszentmihalyi (2000) stated that students do not spend

enough time with adult role models as they spend 26% of the day alone, 34% with friends, and 19% with classmates and only less than five minutes a day with the father figure. Therefore, since teachers often spend more time in the presence of student, than do the parents, it looks quite necessary to devote a great amount of attention to the relationship between teachers and students. In the case of middle school, Silver et al. (2005) draws scholars' attention to the fact that students of middle and high school meet different teachers every hour or so which makes building an effective teacher-student relationship even more difficult; instead, middle schools that employed the same homeroom teachers for the whole time (years) of the life of a student's stay in middle school, created environments where students developed strong teacher-student relationships that sustained over time.

Many teachers believe that a positive relationship must occur between the student and teacher if significant academic achievement is to be achieved. This statement is made on the rational foundation that if the teacher and student have a relationship based on trust, veneration, and admiration, it offers a way for students to achieve academically and socially (Casteel, 2000). Trusting relationships can make an important influence on students' academic achievements (Lee, 1998).

2.2 Student's Perception of Respect and Care from Their Teacher

To be successful as a teacher, he must attend to what students do, what they say and how they perform. Teachers should observe children's reactions in class to find out whether they are 'getting across' to them. Thus, teaching is not a matter of reading from a textbook, or dictating notes, but a participatory process. Teachers rely on a variety of 'signals' from their students. 'Eyes on' behavior means students are paying attention. Squirming behavior means they are tired or bored. Affirmative nods of the head mean they follow and understand; puzzled looks mean they are confused. The major decision that teachers make on the basis of their observations of children is when it is appropriate to move on to the next topic, problem or issue. Some teachers though are 'clock or calendar watchers' more than 'student watchers' and feel compelled to cover a certain amount of material within a certain time (Masemann, 1990).

A teacher's classroom behavior is constantly under scrutiny by students. As a result students learn a great deal from a teacher's nonverbal behavior as well as their verbal behavior. A teacher's facial expression, gaze, posture, and other body movements provide the student with valuable information about her or his emotional state, attitude toward the students, and familiarity or ease with the lecture format. Ramsey (1979) suggests that "in addition to presenting a lecture by the way she [sic] moves, stands, gestures, uses eye contact and vocal inflection, a teacher also tells her class about herself, how she feels toward the subject matter and the very act of lecturing, and how she feels about them" (p. 110). In sum, students determine how a teacher feels about them by observing the teacher's communication behaviors (Teven & McCroskey, 1997).

Teachers need to reflect on their assumptions and expectations by asking children for feedback on the teaching-learning process and on what happens in the classroom in general. Teachers can learn from students. It is important for teachers to know what makes a good teacher in the eyes of his students. Such characteristics of quality teachers almost always have to do with a teacher's ability to relate to students as individuals in a positive way, treating them with respect, making lessons interesting and varied, providing encouragement and telling them to believe in themselves and their own abilities. This means that positive teacher-student relations and classroom climate must be important factors influencing how children experience school (Masemann, 1990).

For teachers who care, the student as a person is as important as the student as a learner. Caring teachers know their students in both ways. Such teachers model understanding and fairness. These are qualities most often mentioned by students in their assessments of good teachers, in addition to qualities displayed in everyday social interactions like listening to and taking into account what students say, having a good sense of humor, encouraging students to learn in different ways, relating learning to earlier experience, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning, being knowledgeable about their subject, creating learning environments that actively involve students and stimulate in them an excitement to learn. In that regard, checking that homework is done, that the curriculum is covered, and testing and grading may be minor aspects of real education (Masemann, 1990).

2.3 Empirical Studies

ZahedBabelan (2012) studied the degree of correspondence between teachers' nonverbal and verbal communication during teaching and its relationship with students' academic achievement in primary schools. A sample of 400 teachers was selected from among 1600 primary school teachers Ardabil through a random multistage cluster sampling procedure. The students of these teachers, 10831 in number constituted the later sample. Data were gathered using official documents, Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS), and French and Galloway's table of non-verbal and verbal communication through classroom observation. Observers sat at the back of the classroom in a position which allowed them to hear and see all participants (teacher and pupils). Inter-observer agreement was computed based on Scott's formula. The least of Scott's coefficient obtained from pairs of observers equal to 0.84 showed that observations had adequate reliability. A survey research method was utilized. All data obtained were analyzed using simultaneous regression analysis. Findings revealed that teachers' nonverbal and verbal communication during teaching were appropriate and encouraging for the students. The degree of correspondence between components of nonverbal and verbal communication emerged as significant predictors of academic achievement.

Through qualitative analyses of narratives of what students and faculty wanted in their relationships, Anderson and Carta-Falsa (2002) identified three themes. The Teaching/Learning Environment theme illustrated needs for nurturing, open, nonthreatening, and respectful attitudes in student-faculty relationships. Exchange of Information students reported a desire to learn and interact with each other, but not with the instructor. With regard to Mentor/Peer Association theme, students wanted to develop networks of friends to help with course work, whereas teachers wanted to find principles of effective teaching to help students learn. Applications of this data for improving student- faculty interactions and instructional processes were discussed. The results showed that students and instructors can learn to perceive each other as contributing, mentoring, and resourceful individuals who empower each other. This was particularly true when instructional strategies encouraged work and dialogue within and across the three groups. In effect, student become empowered to achieve at a higher lever and become confident learners. Teaching then has a more personal focus.

Lee (2007) explored how Korean college students developed their English composition abilities based on their teacher's written comments on their class assignments. Participants included one non-native teacher of English and 14 students enrolled in a six-week summer English academic writing class in a Korean university in which the teacher employed the process writing approach to help students learn to write in English and the students were encouraged to revise their drafts from her written comments. Data were collected from formal, informal, and text-based interviews, class observations, and students' writing samples commented on by the teacher. In this study, the feedback and revision process was not portrayed as an intellectual activity involving only the teacher and each student, but as a social activity that involved a highly complex, dynamic, and interpersonal process. Despite various constraints and conditions, when the teacher committed herself to helping her students learn to write in English, the students generally responded to her with respect and appreciation. Particularly, her written comments allowed her and her students to be divided into the caring and the cared, respectively. Nonetheless, to develop caring group and also to sustain them, building trust in each other was a necessary condition, one that was problematic for some students.

Purnawarman (2011) investigated the impacts of different strategies of providing teacher written corrective feedback on first semester ESL/EFL students' writing accuracy and writing quality. Four feedback strategies (indirect feedback, direct feedback, indirect feedback followed by direct feedback with explicit corrective comments, and no feedback) were employed in this study. One hundred twenty-one EFL freshman university students were randomly assigned into four feedback groups (IF, DF, IDECC, NF). Students in each group produced two narrative essays. Teacher feedback was provided in two segments for the first essay and students made two revisions based on the feedback. The errors on each stage of students' writing were marked and counted to be compared among each stage of the writing and between groups. The results of data analysis showed that the mean number of errors in all three treatment groups decreased in each

writing stage. All three treatment groups outperformed the no-feedback control group in each stage of writing in terms of grammatical accuracy and writing quality. There was no difference in the mean number of errors among three treatment groups in the first and second revisions. However, the IDECC group, who received indirect feedback followed by direct feedback with explicit corrective comments, outperformed all other groups in the second revision and in the new essay. The results also showed that the mean number of errors of all three treatment groups decreased in the new essay indicating that there was a long-term effect of teacher corrective feedback on the new essay. The results of the study suggest that providing teacher corrective feedback was effective in reducing students' grammatical errors on their essays. All three treatment groups also gained in writing quality scores in the new essay indicating that, to a certain extent, there was an effect of teacher corrective feedback on writing quality.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Participants of this study were Iranian middle school students. Two groups of available students were chosen as the participants of the study from first, second, and third grades of middle schools in Azadshahr. All of the participants in this investigation acquired parental agreement to take part and were given the chance to withdraw at any desired time. Seventy third, fourth, and fifth grade students from a public elementary school in Azadshahr City – Golestan Province - Iran decided to join this investigation. The performance level bands for this study involved 8 advanced students, 13 proficient students, 21 basic students, 17 below basic students, and 11 far below basic student. All 70 participants in the present study answered the questions provided in self-report questionnaires.

3.2 Instruments

Two student survey instruments (i.e. Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS; Huebner, 1994) and the Teacher-Student Relationship Survey were administered to 70 first, second, and third graders in middle schools in Azadshahr. The Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) is a 40-item Likert-type scale. The scale was at a 1.5 grade level for readability. Its four responses are: never = 1; sometimes = 2; often = 3; and almost always = 4. A 6-point agreement format has been used with middle and high school students (Huebner, Wehling, & Hutkins 2007). There were five subscales in this scale, namely family, friends, school, living environment, and self. The second tool was used to determine the teacher-student relationship. The first questionnaire (the Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale) focused on four parts while the second survey (the teacher-student relationship) concentrated on eight parts.

3.3 Procedure

The researcher administered the questionnaires to students in small groups. The questionnaires were administered so that both positive and negative relationship factors were read aloud to control for reading differences between the students. Student identities were preserved confidential as data were coded inside transcribed sentences and saved in an electronic database. The original questionnaires were nameless and only recognizable by grade level, gender, and age. The original questionnaires were preserved in a locked filing cabinet but the answers on the questionnaires were coded, skimmed, and counted in an electronic database for easy clarification.

4. Result

4.1 Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale

4.1.1 Self-Perception

Survey statements in this study included:

- *I am fun to be around,*
- *There are lots of things I can do well,*
- *I think I am good looking,*
- *I like myself, I am a nice person,*
- *I like to try new things,*
- *I had enough friends last year.*

The MSLSS descriptive data are reported in Figure 4.1 in relationship to the first survey statement in the theme, *I am fun to be around.* As it can be seen, evident likenesses between the lower and

higher band students exist in association with their self-perception. In answer to the statement, I am fun to be around, over 60 percent of the respondents in the advanced, basic, below basic, and far below basic performance level bands agreed with this statement while less than 50 percent of the students in the proficient band agreed with this statement. This trend was rather continuous all through the combined comparative analysis for the other questions within the self-perception theme on the MSLSS.

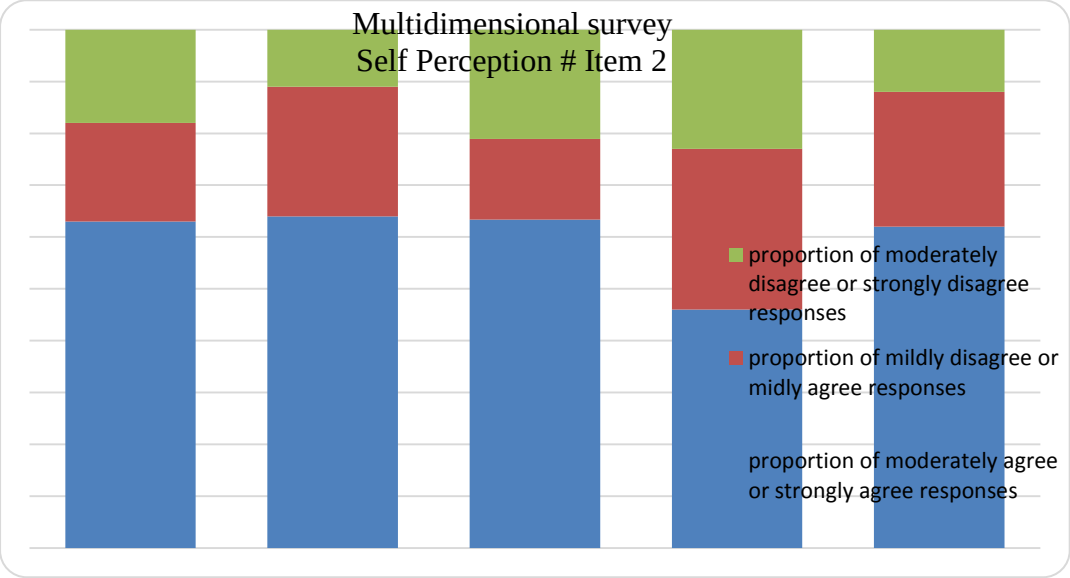

Figure 4.1. Descriptive statistics for Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale data by performance level according to Self-Perception – Item # 2

4.1.2 Getting Along Well with Others

The statements in the "Getting along well with others" theme included:

- *My friends are nice to me,*
- *I had a bad time with my friends last year,*
- *My friends are great,*
- *My friends will help me if I need it,*
- *My friends treated me well last year,*
- *Most people liked me last year,*
- *My friends were mean to me last year,*
- *I wish I had different friends last year,*
- *I had a lot of fun with my friends last year.*

In answer to the sentence, *most people liked me last year*, over 70 percent of the respondents in the advanced performance band agreed with this statement; however, just less than 20 percent of them agreed. Other performance groups majorly agreed with this statement. Consistent all over this theme, students answered with agreement that others liked them and they maintained positive relationships with friends. It is noteworthy that around 75 percent of advanced respondents agreed that most people liked them last year.

Also, no strong disagreement was detected on this statement in far below basic and advanced groups. The same level of moderate or strong disagreement was detected in the other three performance groups, i.e. below basic, basic, and proficient.

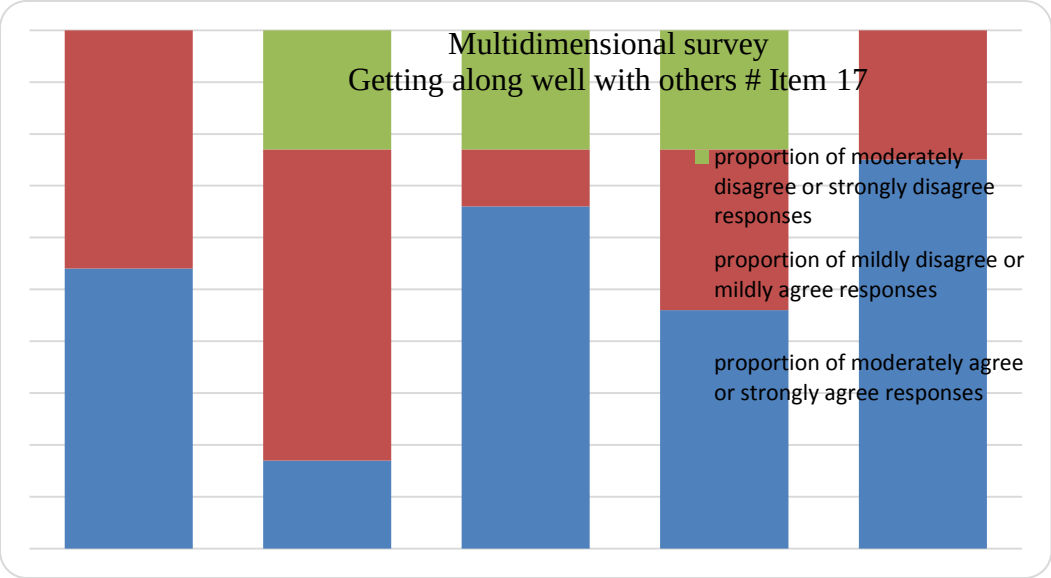

Figure 4.2. Descriptive statistics for Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale data by performance level according to Getting along Well with Others – Item # 17

4.1.3 Perceptions about School

The survey statements regarding students' perception about school included:

- *I felt bad at school last year,*
- *I learned a lot at school last year,*
- *There are many things about school I didn't like last year,*
- *I wish I didn't have to go to school last year,*
- *I looked forward to going to school last year,*
- *School was interesting to me last year,*
- *I enjoyed school activities last year.*

As it can be seen in Figure 4.3, all performance groups mostly agreed with the statement, *I enjoyed school activities last year*. Roughly fifteen percent of the respondents in far below basic, below basic, and proficient performance groups agreed with the statement and over sixty percent of the respondents in advanced performance group agreed with the statement. It can be claimed that a rather same trend can be detected in all performance groups.

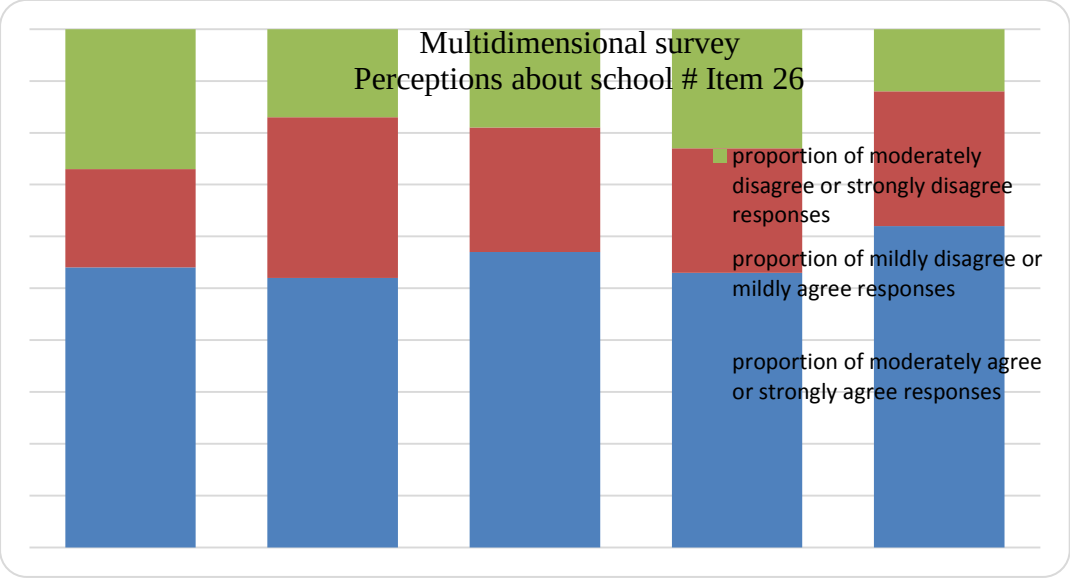

Figure 4.3. Descriptive statistics for Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale data by performance level according to Perceptions about School – Item # 26

4.1.4 Family Factors

The survey statements regarding family factors included:

- *I like spending time with my parents,*
- *My family is better than most,*
- *I enjoy being at home with my family,*
- *My family gets along well together,*
- *My parents treat me fairly,*
- *I wish I lived in a different house,*
- *Members of my family talk nicely to one another,*
- *My parents and I do fun things together,*
- *My family's house is nice.*

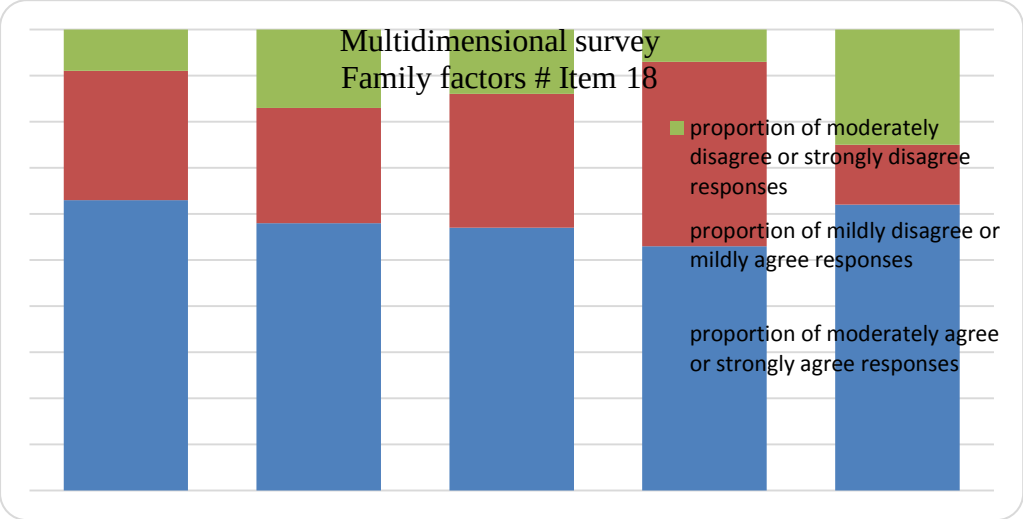

Figure 4.4. Descriptive statistics for Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale data by performance level according to Family Factors – Item # 18

As it can be seen in Figure 4.4, in response to the statement, *I enjoy being at home with my family*, a rather same trend is detected in all performance groups with minor differences. Over 60 percent of the respondents in far below basic and advanced performance groups agreed with the statement. In other performance groups, over 50 percent of the students agreed with the statement. It is noteworthy that the lowest disagreement rate was detected in the proficient performance groups.

4.2 Teacher-Student Relationship Survey

4.2.1 Teacher Support

The survey statements regarding teacher support included:

- *My teacher provides support for all students,*
- *My teacher takes time to get to know the background experiences of the students,*
- *I am able to ask for assistance without fear of rejection or embarrassment,*
- *My teacher is patient with students when directing them to learn appropriate behaviors.*

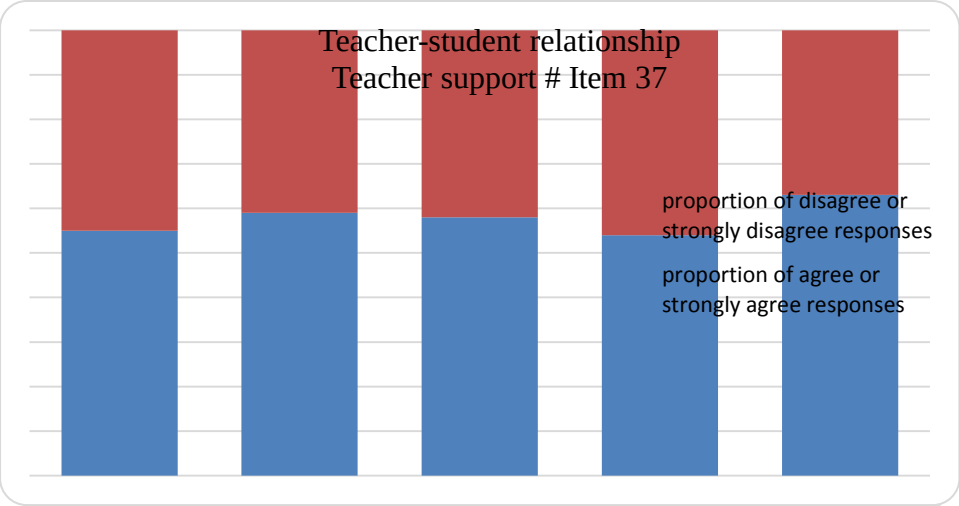

Figure 4.5. Descriptive statistics for Teacher-Student Relationship Survey data by performance level according to Teacher Support – Item # 37

A rather similar trend is detected in the responses of the students of all performance groups to the statement "*my teacher is patient with students when directing them to learn appropriate behaviors*". Over 50 percent of all the respondents in all performance groups agreed with the statement. The most agreement rate is seen in the responses of students from advanced performance group. However, no considerable difference is seen between the responses given to the statement by the students of five performance groups.

4.2.2 Teacher Attitudes

In relationship to teacher attitudes, student participants responded to the following statements:

- *My teacher has a positive attitude on a daily basis,*
- *My teacher's expectations are high, clear, and fair for all students,*
- *My teacher expects me to succeed,*
- *My teacher has low expectations for my success,*
- *My teacher has a good attitude.*

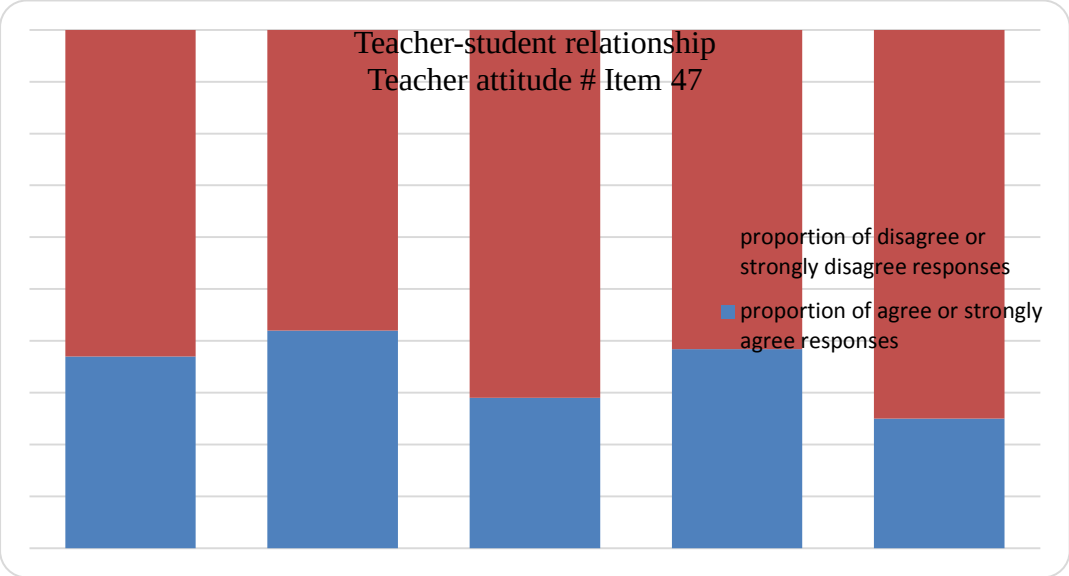

Figure 4.6. Descriptive statistics for Teacher-Student Relationship Survey data by performance level according to Teacher Attitudes – Item # 47

In response to the statement "*my teacher has low expectations for my success*", a similar trend was detected in all performance groups. In all performance groups, except for below basic group, less than 40 percent of the students disagreed with the statement. The highest disagreement rate is seen in the respondents of the advanced performance group.

4.2.3 Teacher's Instructional Delivery

With regard to teacher instructions, students responded to statements which included:

- *My teacher presents the information in a way that is easy to understand,*
- *My teacher's lessons and activities are filled with multicultural activities,*
- *My teacher uses examples of student background experiences, beliefs, and knowledge,*
- *My teacher lets students take risks in classroom learning experiences,*
- *My teacher motivates students through inspiring teaching,*
- *My teacher consistently engages students in meaningful classroom activities that are connected to real-world experiences.*

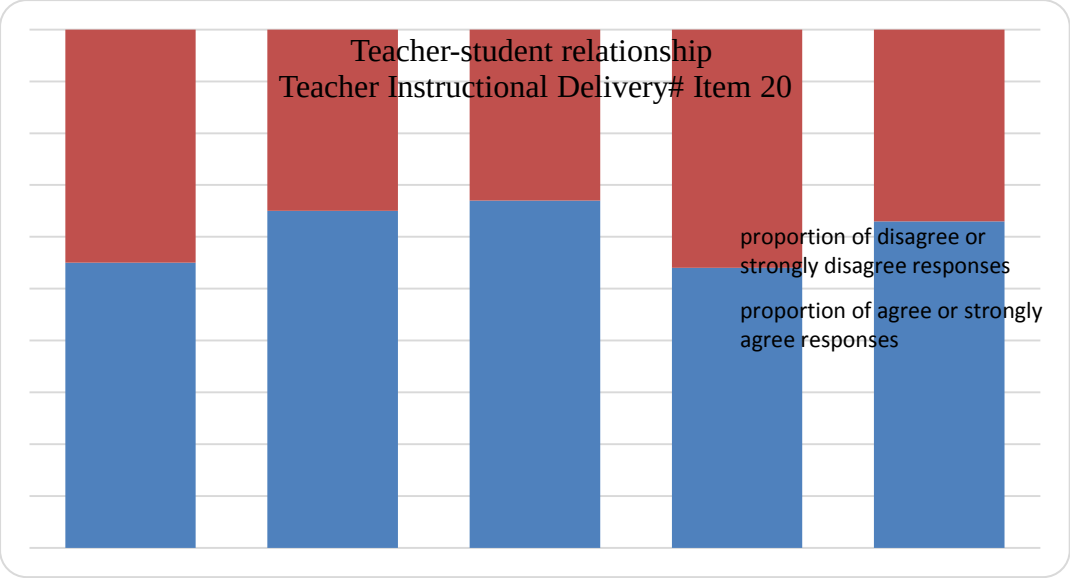

Figure 4.7. Descriptive statistics for Teacher-Student Relationship Survey data by performance level according to Teacher's Instructional Delivery – Item # 20

In response to the statement "*my teacher lets students take risks in classroom learning activities*", over 50 percent of the respondents in all performance groups agreed with the statement. A nearly same trend is detected in all the performance groups. The highest agreement rate is detected in basic performance group.

4.2.4 Treatment from Teacher

Students responded to the following statements regarding treatment from their teacher:

- *My teacher is sensitive to all students,*
- *My teacher guides students in a positive direction,*
- *My teacher calls upon students in the decision-making process,*
- *My teacher views students as valuable members of the decision-making process in how the classroom is organized and run.*

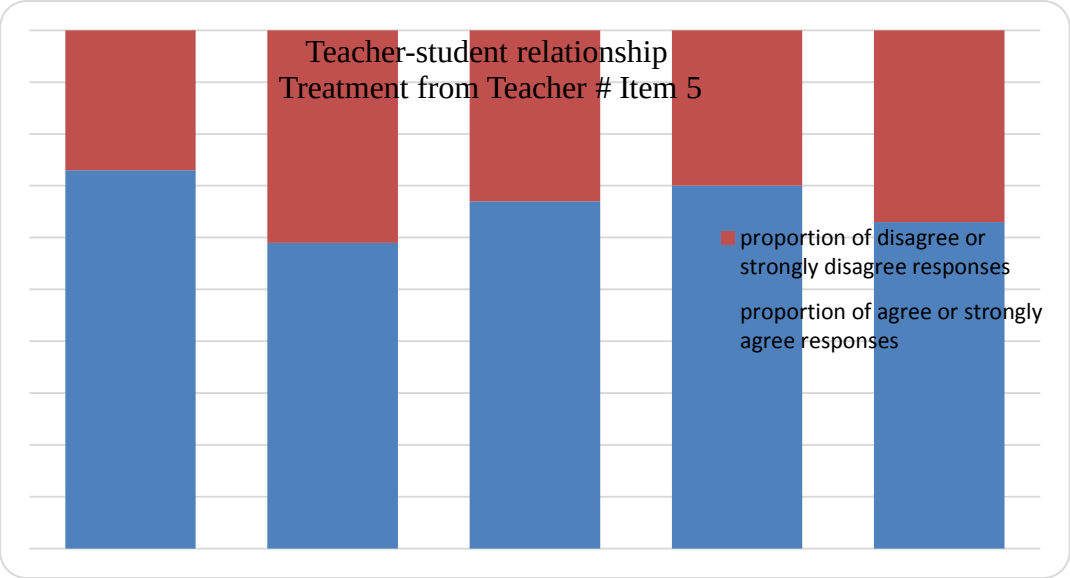

Figure 4.8. Descriptive statistics for Teacher-Student Relationship Survey data by performance level according to Treatment from Teacher – Item # 5

In response to the statement "*my teacher is sensitive to all students*", over 60 percent of students in all performance groups, except below basic group, agreed with the statement. It should be noted that the number students in below basic performance group who agreed with the statement was very close to sixty percent. It is noteworthy that over 70 percent of the respondents in far below basic performance group agreed with the statement.

4.2.5 Teacher's Cultural Proficiency

Students responded to the following statements regarding their teacher's cultural proficiency:

- *My teacher uses various cultural activities in the lessons, such as folk talesor cultural board games,*
- *My teacher promotes everyone's culture in the classroom by asking about our cultural backgrounds and experiences,*
- *My teacher interacts with allcultural groups within the classroom,*
- *My teacher believes everyone's culture is an important part of the classroom environment,*
- *My teacher is accepting to all student's cultures,*
- *My teacher routinely interacts with students of all races,*
- *My teacher is excited to learn about each student's culture and background,*
- *My teacher recognizes cultural diversity in the classroom.*

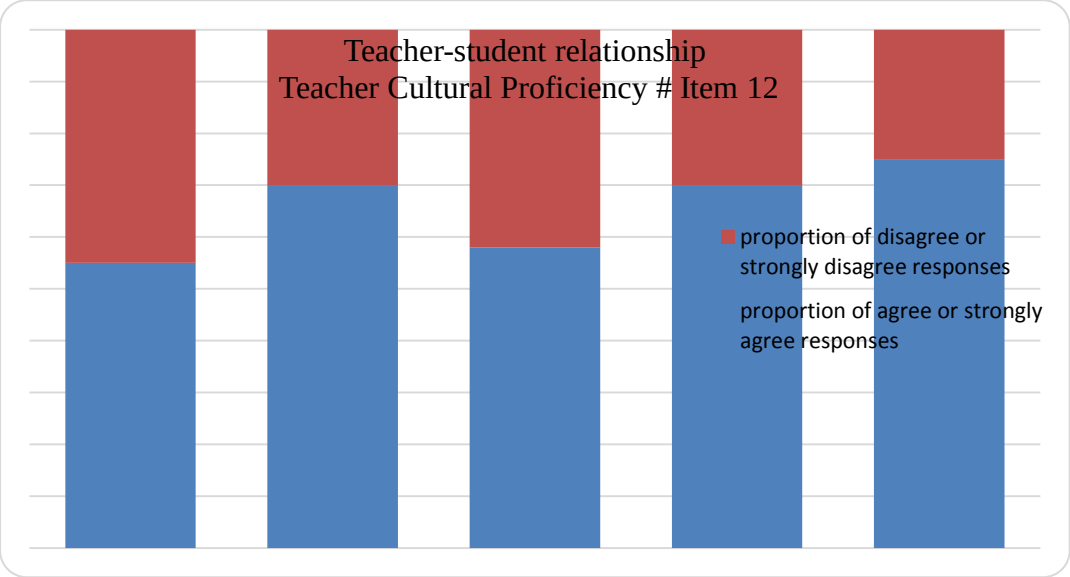

Figure 4.9. Descriptive statistics for Teacher-Student Relationship Survey data by performance level according to Teacher's Cultural Proficiency – Item # 12

According to Fig. 4.9, over 70 percent of the respondents from advanced performance group agreed with the statement "*my teacher promotes everyone's culture in the classroom by asking about our cultural backgrounds and experiences*". Also, exactly 70 percent of the respondents in below basic and proficient performance groups agreed with the statement. The lowest agreement rate with the statement is seen in far below basic performance group which is around 55 percent.

4.2.6 Teacher's Classroom Learning Environment

Students responded to statements regarding "the teacher's classroom learning environment" which included:

- *My teacher cares about my academic and social wellbeing,*
- *My teacher views me as an important part of the classroom,*
- *My teacher motivates me to give my best effort,*
- *My teacher creates a place where everyone feels safe,*
- *My teacher encourages student feedback.*

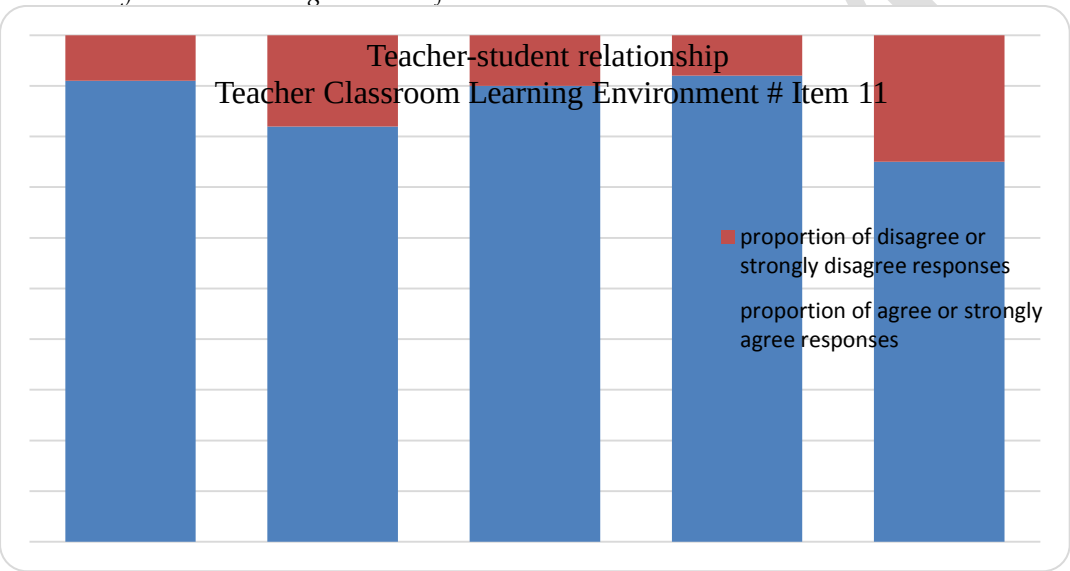

Figure 4.10. Descriptive statistics for Teacher-Student Relationship Survey data by performance level according to Teacher's Classroom Learning Environment – Item # 11

The classroom environment on the basis of student answers was fundamental in connection to student learning within this theme. For instance, in answer to the statement, *my teacher promotes honesty, respect, trust, and the need to be safe in the classroom,* 90 percent of the students in far below basic, basic, and proficient performance groups agreed with the statement. The lowest rate is seen for the advanced group where around 75 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement. Generally, a same trend is seen in the answers of the respondents to the statement.

4.2.7 Perception of Teacher

With regard to the perception of the teacher, students responded to the following statements:

- *I have a positive view of my teacher,*
- *I view my teacher as a good person,*
- *I feel that my teacher is a coach, mentor, or partner,*
- *My teacher is caring to my needs.*

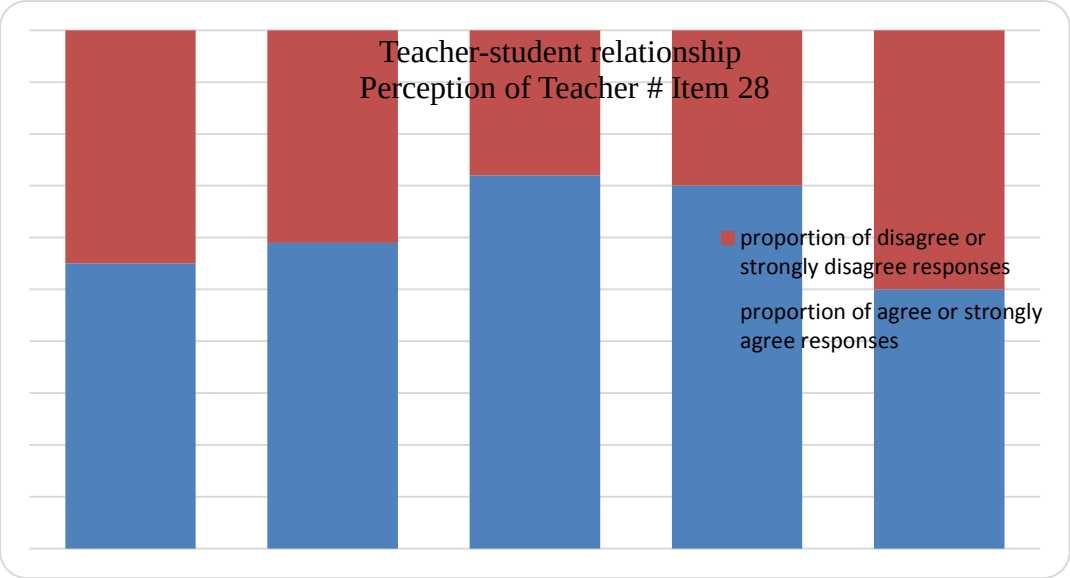

Figure 4.11. Descriptive statistics for Teacher-Student Relationship Survey data by performance level according to Perception of Teacher – Item # 28

As it is seen in Figure 4.11, in response to the statement "*my teacher is caring to my needs*", 70 percent of the respondents in basic and proficient performance groups agreed with the statement. Also, over 50 percent of the respondents from far below basic and below basic performance groups agreed with the statement. Also, exactly 50 percent of the students in advanced performance group agreed with statement.

Answering the First Research Question

The first research question was related to the relationship between the teacher and student impact student academic achievement. An examination of student answers specified a few significant conclusions about the perceptions of students' relations with their classroom teachers. First, the answers of the elementary students in the present investigation displayed a relationship to the important issue of teachers concerning the students' connection to school. These conclusions are in agreement with the exploration since learner answers confirmed the prominence of educators about inspiring learners to prosper, and similarly specified that learners prefer kind educators they can have conversation with.

Likewise, Cushman (2005) claims that learners answer finest to well-informed, stimulating, creative, and kind educators. Furthermore, Rath and clifton (2005) realize that teacher support by listening to, inspiring, and respecting learners is associated with the academic commitment of learners. On the basis of the learner answers, a stress on educators who are lovely, supportive, compassionate, humorous, and are self-assured in the topic they are teaching were valued as being significant to the teacher-student relationship. Higher level of students specified that their educator had an encouraging assertiveness and promising opinion about them. Learners can best answer and enlarge their involvement when educators display honest attention in all features of their education. The classroom learning setting can be completely educated when learners touch possession and an unobstructed capability to have all fundamentals of their learning. The capability to stimulate learners' understanding can best happen when learners feel safe and associated to an expressive association with their classroom educator. Students feel self-assured to ask questions and discover parts of new information when an intimate association occurs with their classroom educators. The investigation results support the point that the teacher-student relationship can be a channel to amplified learner educational accomplishment.

Answering the Second Research Question

The second research question was related to the student's perception of respect and care impact student academic achievement.One unqualified discovery in the present investigation was that learners in the higher levels answered unalterably that their own decision making procedures

were the most significant in their capabilities to be efficacious and involved in school. Majority of the respondents in the present investigation specified that their teacher incorporated them when making decisions. Tharp (2008) states that when students who have conventionally been ignored in schools are provided a chance to analytically inspect their information and styles of examination, learning becomes expressive. Likewise, by sustaining learners and giving them chances to express themselves in their own education choices, learners can be reskilled to be careful intellectuals and are authorized in the learning process (Ogbu, 1995). The admiration classroom educators give to their learners produces abundant wealth to learner education. A classroom education setting rich in admiration and attention can have a straight association to learner accomplishment as reinforced by the answers of this investigation. Learners can accept the role of involved learners when they feel that the classroom teacher values their achievements and takes into account their attitudes about all characteristics of the classroom setting. As shown by the conclusions of this investigation, learners not feeling that they are appreciated by their classroom educator have undesirable outlooks about knowledge and the significance of their learning. It is obligatory upon teachers to regularly measure the admiration assumed to their learners in addition to activities which demonstrate a considerate character. A classroom full of admiration and attention is beneficial for educators and learners. Growing educational accomplishment needs a capability to articulate admiration for education in addition to an admiration for students.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results obtained from the present study revealed that all performance groups mostly agreed with the statement, *I enjoyed school activities last year*. Joselowsky (2007) asserted that in a traditional sense, students feel a sense of belonging in school when they are involved in the activities around them. These displays of belonging indicated a dimension of behavioral and social engagement which can be linked to student academic achievement (Ogbu, 1995). A teacher's classroom behavior is constantly under scrutiny by students. As a result students learn a great deal from a teacher's nonverbal behavior as well as their verbal behavior. A teacher's facial expression, gaze, posture, and other body movements provide the student with valuable information about her or his emotional state, attitude toward the students, and familiarity or ease with the lecture format (Teven and McCroskey, 1997).

Yazzie-Mintz (2007) emphasized in his study that students engage most positively in school when they are engaged in positive relationships with their teachers. These relationships may be fostered through adaptations in the curriculum or an increase in teacher-student one-on-one time, but either way, when students feel that their teachers care about them, they tend to do better in school (Semchison, 2001). It is essential for teachers to help students experience a feeling of belonging in their classrooms. When students feel they belong, they are more helping, more considerate of others, and more accepting of others, including those not in the friendship group. Jensen (as cited in Knoell, 2012) author of Teaching with Poverty in Mind stated, "What you want to emphasize at school is moderate social status and group acceptance" (p. 90). Contrary to the positive relationships students can have with their teachers, they are also affected by negative experiences which can cause students to disengage from the school setting. Some signs of disengagement may include: failing in school work, classroom withdrawal, feeling inferior to other students, being isolated from teachers and/or peers, and feeling a dislike toward school-related activities (Kelly, 1993; Lan&Lanthier, 2003). In terms of self-efficacy, Walker and Green (2009) indicate that at times students' engagement is influenced by the extent to which a student perceives that he or she is capable of being successful.

Teachers have a significant role in the performance of students during the official school time (Baker, Grant, &Morlock, 2008). While most investigation concerning teacher-student relationships explore the elementary years of school, teachers ensure the exclusive chance to upkeep students' educational and social progress at all stages of school (Baker et al., 2008; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner& Morris, 1998; McCormick, Cappella, O'Connor, &McClowry, in press). On the basis of theory of attachment (Ainsworth, 1982; Bowlby, 1969), positive teacher-student relationships permit students to touch a feeling of safety and security in

their education situations and deliver support for vital social and educational abilities (Baker et al., 2008; O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011; Silver, Measelle, Armstron, & Essex, 2005). Teachers who keep back of their students in the educational environment can completely influence on their societal and educational results, which is essential for the long-term course of school and finally engagement in occupation (Baker et al., 2008; O'Connor et al., 2011; Silver et al., 2005).

When teachers build positive connections with pupils, schools become helpful environments where students can engross in intellectually and publically creative manners (Hamre&Pianta, 2001). Positive teacher-student relationships are categorized as having the attendance of intimacy, friendliness, and positive attitudes (Hamre&Pianta, 2001). Students who have constructive associations with their educators use them as a safe base to discover the classroom scholastically and informally (Hamre&Pianta, 2001). This comprises interactions with peers, and increasing confidence (Hamre&Pianta, 2001). By this safe association, students acquire socially-suitable manners in addition to educational anticipations and obtaining these outlooks (Hamre&Pianta, 2001). The results obtained from the present study are in agreement with the exploration since learner answers confirmed the prominence of educators about inspiring learners to prosper, and similarly specified that learners prefer kind educators they can have conversation with. Likewise, Cushman (2005) claimed that learners answer finest to well-informed, stimulating, creative, and kind educators. Furthermore, Rath and clifton (2005) realized that teacher support by listening to, inspiring, and respecting learners is associated with the academic commitment of learners. On the basis of the learner answers, a stress on educators who are lovely, supportive, compassionate, humorous, and are self-assured in the topic they are teaching were valued as being significant to the teacher-student relationship. Higher level of students specified that their educator had an encouraging assertiveness and promising opinion about them.

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THEEFFECT OF RISK TAKING STRATEGY ON EFL LEARNERS' ORAL PROFICIENCY

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Abstract
This research investigated the effect of risk taking strategy on english learners' oral performance at the pre-intermediate level. The participants were 50 students who were selected after taking the oxford quick placement test (oqpt). They were non-randomly divided in two equal high and low risk taker groups. The rate of their rist taking was measured by eysenck's ive questionnaire (2006). Both groups took a teacher-made interview as a pre-test of oral performance. They received the same treatment in learning speaking skills. After 10 sessions of treatment, they participated in the oral performance of the post-test which was as the same as the pre-test interview. The scoring of the both oral interviews was done through hughes' (2003) checklist. Data were analyzed through independent and paired samples t-test and results revealed that the high risk takers outperformed their counterparts. Implications of the study suggest that the language teachers should recognize the learners' level of risk taking and try to give them appropriate oral activities based on their risk taking abilities.

Key words: risk taking, oral performance, high and low risk takers

1. Introduction

The effects of classroom interaction on language learning have long been a focus of research for second and foreign language teachers and researchers (e.g., Allwright, 1984). They argue that language learning comes about as a consequence of the interplay of the factors created by the learners, the teacher, and the interaction among them (teacher-student, student-student). Allwright (1984) sees classroom interaction as "the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy because everything that happens in the classroom happens through a process of lives person-to-person interaction"(p. 156).

Classroom interaction is indeed a complicated phenomenon. Teachers' perceptions of the nature of language learning, of classroom activities, and of norms for classroom participation often differ from those of their students, who have a wide variety of proficiency levels, linguistic background, culturally predisposed ways of learning, and individual motivations and objectives in studying the language (Mostafavi & Vahdany, 2016). If ignored, these differences can cause misunderstandings and create a barrier to effective language learning and teaching during face to-face interaction within the classrooms (Rivers, 1987).

Several theorists have attempted to elucidate the human capability to acquire a second language and all the factors that may expedite or deter this learning (Dewaele, 2012). Definitely, the process of learning a second language has to be understood as both a process of learning rules and one in which several individual differences come into play. The environmental circumstances, age, attitude towards the target language and learning itself, neuroticism, motivation as well as extroversion are common examples of individual differences worth studying when assisting students learn a second language.

Apart from the ones mentioned, learners' ability to take risks appears as a significant individual difference, which has been considered a predictor variable of success in second language learning (Gass & Selinker, 2000, 2008). Essentially, risk-taking behavior refers to a "developmental trait that consists of moving toward something without thinking of the consequences" (Alshalabi, 2003, p. 22). Language learners may engage in the act of risk taking through learning a second language since they are establishing linguistic patterns for unfamiliar situations (Gledhill & Morgan, 2000). Similarly, to communicate using the new language, either orally or in writing, the EFL learners may face the risk of making a mistake. These challenges make the students familiar with the level of risk-taking. Risk taking may entail impulsiveness and keep a correlation with extroversion, introversion, and self-confidence among others.

Risk taking has concentrated on speaking rather on the other macro skills (i.e., writing, listening, and reading). Oral production has received specific attention since second language teachers may face problems when the students are not willing to take the risk of speaking activity in the second language class. Furthermore, the level of motivation can be related to risk-taking behaviors among EFL learners. For instance, the levels of anxiety can be the other factor in learners' risk taking when talking in class (Dewaele, 2012). Risk taking behavior is a condition in which the learners are ready to participate in any activity for the second language acquisition. Nakamura (1993) notes that testing oral proficiency could be a risk-taking activity since it are an important issue in language teaching. Speaking skill is one of the main risk-taking activities which play an outstanding role. Concerning speaking skill, Madsen (1983) declared that "the testing of speaking is widely regarded as the most challenging of all language tests to prepare, administer and score" (p. 147).

Previous investigations on risk taking have demonstrated that in EFL learning, risk taking plays a major role, since it enhances proficiency in the target language, giving experience to students to partake actively in English classes. That can be noted in studies such as Beebe's (1983) observation; learners take risk when they take opportunities to communicate in class. Samimy and Tabuse (1991) all concluded that risk taking is fundamental in language learning. That is to say, risk taking is a key factor in language learning, due to the fact that it has revealed that in a language classroom setting, taking risks in using the target language is related to greater language skills. They asserted that risk-taking is a great opportunity that gives students more background and heighten their proficiency in L2. In short, the researchers mentioned above propose that risk-taking in foreign language learning results in greater foreign language capacities.

Several researchers (e.g., Samimy, 1994) assert that the successful language learner is one who is willing to take risks.In a spoken language classroom, risk taking is best manifested in active oral participation; it involves responding to teacher's or other students' questions, raising questions, and making comments. When language learners take risks in oral participation, they actively engage themselves in the negotiation of comprehensible input and the formulation of compressible output (Swain, 1985), both of which are essential in the language learning process. Swain (1985) stated that, while comprehensible input may be sufficient for acquiring semantic competence in the target language, comprehensive output is needed in order to gain grammatical competence. In other words, language learners must make efforts to produce the output that is comprehensible to their interlocutors if they are to master the grammatical knowledge of the language.

Nevertheless, many previous studies have argued that getting students to speak up is a problem that most teachers face (Tsui, 1996). The studies reported that the students' verbal reticence in the classrooms is especially acute with Asian students. Sato (1981), for example, investigated the learner's turn-getting behavior among Asian and non-Asian students in two university ESL classes. In classes containing more Asians than non-Asians, she found that Asian students did take fewer self-selected turns than non-Asian students.

Considering what can be concluded from what has been observed by the previous researchers, it is evident that risk taking is a key element of learning a foreign language. Young (1991) points out that risk-taking is the ability students develop in class which enables them to play an active role in English language learning and it is related to the improvement in the speaking skill. Hence,

risk-taking is crucial for learners to develop oral abilities and to master oral communication in the target language. Despite a large body of research characterizing how risk taking affects learner performance (e.g., Ashouri & Fotovatnia, 2010), further research is required to delve into the impact of risk taking behavior on the oral performance of the learners. Consequently, the current study seeks to shed light on the nature and extent of the effect of risk taking behavior on the oral performance of the English language learners. Thus the following research question is: Does EFL learners' risk taking behavior facilitate their oral performance at the pre intermediate high school level?

Although studies pertinent to risk taking behavior have produced sufficient evidence to inform language teaching and learning practices, reports directly addressing Iranian EFL students' risk taking behavior are insufficient. Promoting risk-taking helped participants to overcome their weaknesses in their English class. Students receive feedback from their classmates and from the teacher who worked together to provide effective advice to improve students' limitations in the language. Risk-taking is vital in English learning process. It helps learners to acquire the ability to express their ideas and thoughts to the whole group orally without fear. It does not matter if they make mistakes. The key is to demonstrate that learners can speak in class without fear of criticisms or smirks. Research (e.g., Zeng, 2010) on risk-taking has been on the rise in the EFL context. The link between learners' variable (e.g. gender) and oral performance has been of interest to the researchers in the field. The problem with studies on personality factors in the area of EFL learning is that there is often no theoretical basis for predicting which personality variable will be positively or negatively related to which aspect of L2 proficiency. This research extracts its significance from the increasing importance of the variable of risk taking in foreign language learning. This research, therefore, seeks to fill some of the gaps which still remain in regard to the studies conducted on learners' willingness to take risks in the language classroom.

This study centers on Iranian high school students' risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in spoken English classrooms. As such, the study has two different yet closely related areas terms of what it analyzes, how the analysis is conducted, and what the analysis finally reveals. The study may provide a body of significant data with which the EFL teachers and researchers of significance in in Iran might be better informed of more appropriate and productive teaching strategies for spoken English classes.

2. Literature review

In recent decades, individual differences in language learners influencing learning outcomes can be one of the main factors in second and foreign language learning. Learners' affective variables are anxiety, attitude and motivation (Ellis, 1994). Personal variables influence language learning at the individual level. According to Schumann and Schumann (1977), personal variables or factors interact with cognitive, affective, and socio cultural variables in patterns that are idiosyncratic for each individual. Personal variables represent learner's gender, personality, and attitudes towards learning (Kabrizadeh Najafabadi, 2014).

Affective factors, according to Ellis (1985), are ones concerning feelings or emotional response aroused by the attempts to learn the target language. According to Stevick (1980), language learning is a total human experience. She stresses that language teaching should carry out "the ways in which language learning depends on the deeper reaches on the learners' emotions and symbolic lives. The 'holistic' or 'humanistic' approach thus requires a reconceptualization of language learning and teaching. Language learning according to such a perspective can be conceived as an activity that involves learners as complex human beings and not just as language learners. Rardin, Tranel, and Green (1988) stated that "the person is seen as striving for an integrated unity of intellect and emotions functioning within an interpersonal environment of both freedom and determination" (p. 1). In this context, theories of language learning and teaching that fail to take the affective variables into account are both incomplete and inhuman. Therefore, learner's personal and affective factors can bring learners out of mere passivity toward full and active participation and eventually transform the language learning process from mechanical accumulation information into a series of more positive and meaningful experiences.

Risk-taking behavior emerged in the literature of psychology in the 1960s (Kogan & Wallach, 1967, cited in Beebe, 1983) Risk taking is defined as a condition where a language leaner has to make a decision between the choices of different options. The outcome of the option is uncertain since there is a possibility of failure (Beebe, 1983). Risk-taking is an act of dealing with new information intelligently regardless of shyness. Risk-taking is not only an affective factor but also one of the important factors in learning the second language.

It is important to recognize that gain and loss are subjectively determined, not necessarily objective. Kahnemann, Slovic and Tversky (1982) noted that a risk taker should undertake relatively risky activities in any situation, but this personality trait is not limited to language learning. It can be used in any situation. Two learners may face the same situation but the act differently. This could be important if one of them loses and the other one gains the success (Kabrizadeh Najafabadi, 2014).

2.1. Language Learners as Risk Takers

Definitely, the definitions of risk taking have also led to research to account for the particular feature that a risk taker should possess. Concerning the requirements that learners have to fulfill so as to be considered risk takers, one of the most influential reports corresponds to Ely's (1984) dimensions. According to Ely's first dimension, risk takers are not hesitant about utilizing a newly encountered linguistic constituent. The second dimension has to do with risk takers' willingness to employ linguistic elements supposed to be intricate or difficult. This dimension explains why risk takers develop levels of tolerance towards vagueness and ambiguity to the extent in which a difficult or new situation does not really represent an issue of concern for them. The third and fourth dimensions describe respectively how risk takers become tolerant toward probable incorrectness or inexactitude in using the language and how they are inclined to rehearse a new element silently before attempting to use it aloud. This rehearsal issue, nonetheless, is further discussed by other researchers who maintain that prior preparation before producing utterances may deter risk taking (Hongwei, 1996). Indeed, mental preparation is said to be a characteristic of more cautious learners who on certain occasions spend so much time preparing to talk that they decide not to take the risk of speaking in front of others.

The literature in the field of second language acquisition has also brought to light other theories to characterize risk takers. A clear example is Krashen's (1985) Monitor Hypothesis. Even though Krashen does not refer specifically to the notion of risk taking in his studies, the risk-taking construct and its features are implied in many of them. In simple terms, risk takers and risk-averse students can be compared respectively to Krashen's "underusers" and "overusers" (Ortega, 2009, p.198) of the monitor device. As Mitchell and Florence (2004) explain, the overusers are highly concerned with editing their language performance and carefully think their utterances; consequently, they usually exhibit deficient oral fluency. Monitor overusers have the characteristic of "cautiousness" shared by risk-averse students in the language classroom. On the other hand, underusers are believed to be more reckless in their use of the language. Their utterances are not the product of mental correctness. Additionally, underusers exhibit high levels of risk taking since they prefer to say what they want without worrying about the details like risk takers usually do. Beebe (1983) clearly summarizes the relationship between Krashen's (1985) Monitor Hypothesis and the concept of risk taking: "It is possible that Krashen's cautious overuser is a low risk taker. His monitor underuser is a high risk-taker. The optimal user suggested by Krashen (1985), then would match the moderate risk taking student who is capable of taking accurate risks when appropriate.

2.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of High and Low Risk Takers

The recognition that taking risks contributes to learning has led authors to query whether an overuse or low use of risk taking is more valuable for both learning a second language and maximizing L2 speaking ability. On one hand, high risk takers enjoy several advantages when they venture into oral discourse. For instance, researchers have acknowledged that fossilized structures tend to be less common in the speech of high risk takers. Since they are willing to try out new linguistic items and constantly look for opportunities to learn the language, they become "more resistant to

fossilization" (Ashouri & Fotovatnia, 2010, p.231). On the contrary, Hongwei (1996) asserts that the timidity and inhibition which characterize low risk-taking speakers can lead to the development of erroneous patterns, i.e. fossilized structures in the inter-language of such speaker. Another benefit of high levels of risk taking conforms to the quantity and quality of the linguistic input that learners receive. Students who exhibit risk-taking behaviors in the second language classroom may show a substantial increase of the linguistic input obtained in comparison to low risk-taking students. This may be proven by risk takers' readiness to deal with discourse; they make constant attempts to use new linguistic structures in the target language although they may not know the correct use of such forms. Therefore, high risk takers are more able to transform oral input into practical intake (Beebe, 1983). In Krashen's terms (as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008), the availability of useful intake certainly benefits high risk takers since they probably have more access to comprehensible input, which is a key element for the successful acquisition of a second language. Moreover, high risk takers' willingness to communicate in almost any type of social setting increases their opportunities to hear and obtain a sufficient number of linguistic structures which sharply contrast with the input that low risk takers receive due to their reluctance to interact. Generally, such acquisition of input on the part of high risk takers improves their language proficiency, especially for speaking purposes.

With regard to the topic of fluency, it has also been suggested that high risk takers are able to effectively tolerate ambiguity in the language classroom. Dewaele (2012) place special emphasis on high risk takers' tolerance to ambiguity because they focus their attention on meaning rather than on form. Thus, high risk takers become active speakers who reduce their anxiety to communicate more efficiently and fluently.

One of the most significant arguments against the overuse of risk taking in the language classroom is related to fear. The affective role of fear when students speak a second language may undoubtedly represent a disadvantage for high risk takers in the sense that the construct of risk itself necessitates fear, and this becomes a barrier to learning (Gledhill & Morgan, 2000). It is irrefutable, then, that the fear of speaking a new language which the students do not fully master can intensify the feelings of nervousness and apprehension. Some of the most common fears that students may experience when venturing into speaking a second language involve social fears including peer reactions, derision, humiliations, disapproval and personal fears. Furthermore, students may even be afraid because of the context, i.e. the English classroom. There, the fear of obtaining a bad grade, failing an exam, being punished or embarrassed may translate into major drawbacks for high risk-taking students. Similarly, when students are outside the English classroom and practice the language orally, they are afraid of looking ridiculous, feeling frustrated, having a blank look, not being understood, and feeling alienated among others (Gledhill & Morgan, 2000). In this respect, low risk takers gain an advantage in comparison to high risk-taking students since they are expected to experience lower levels of fear that could hinder their speaking abilities.

Ashouri and Fotovatnia (2010) discovered that high risk takers had a negative belief about utilizing translation in the second language class. Even though the authors do not consider this idea as a benefit of high risk taking, they admit the fact that high risk takers are eager to learn and prefer to use the target language irrespective of embarrassment or failure instead of translating input into their mother tongue. Unlike high risk takers, low risk takers hold a very positive opinion about translation. Since they do not like uncertainty and are more vigilant about their speech, it is not surprising that they find in translation an opportunity to check what they are going to say in their native language before actually saying it in the target language.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants were selected from the original pool of 90 Iranian students from two public high schools in Ahvaz. Participants were native speakers of Persian. The participants were 2rd grade high school students and their ages ranged from 14 to 16. They took OQPT to determine the level of proficiency at a homogeneous level. Thus 50 learners who gained scores between 30 and 39 were considered as the pre-intermediate students. Then they took the risk taking questionnaire

adapted in this study was the Persian version of Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire, developed by Kiany and Pournia (2006). The highest and lowest scores for this questionnaire are 54 and 0, respectively. Accordingly, the participants who get the scores ranged between 40 and 54 were categorized as high risk takers (HRT), and those who get the scores below 20 were categorized as low risk takers (LRT).

3.2. Instrumentation

In order to homogenize the participants, the researcher choseto useOQPT which includes 60 multiple-choice items asthe language proficiency test. At the beginning of the experiment the participants completed OQPT. It included 60 multiple choice items and the learners who gained scores between 30 and 39 were selected as the participants of the study. In order to get the participants' personal and language background information, the researcher administered a background questionnaire at the very beginning of the experiment.

The risk taking questionnaire adapted in this study was the Persian version of Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire, developed by Kiany and Pournia (2006). Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire is a 54-item questionnaire with three subscales: Impulsiveness (19 items), Venturesomeness (16 items), and Empathy (19 items). Given the purpose of this study, only the items related to the Venturesomeness subscale are included in the risk taking questionnaire. Kiany and Pournia (2006) calculated the reliability of their Persian version of the Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire through employing Cronbach's alpha and Brown's equal-length split-half reliability measures, the results for which were 0.83 and 0.85, respectively. Therefore, the questionnaire could be safely used to determine the level of risk taking of the participants in the present study. The risk taking questionnaire was employed in this study consisted of 16items withfive-point Likert scale which encompass risk-taking behaviors such as, being willing to do adventurous activities such as scuba diving, water skiing, mountain climbing, etc.

After completing the risk taking questionnaire before the treatment course, the pre-test designed for measuring participants' oral proficiency was administered. The pre-test employed in this study was an interview on the topics related to the learners' English textbooks. The participants were interviewed individually for about 2 to 3 minutes. In order to safely measure the participants' oral proficiency, their interviews were tape recorded and scored based on Hughes' (2003) checklist. To validate the data, the interview scores were checked through inter-rater reliability. The researcher asked an expert to score the pre-test interviews. The inter-rater reliability index calculated through Pearson Correlation was (r=0.94). The index of obtained reliability was significant at the 0.05 level, therefore, it can be claimed that the scoring of the interview used as the pre-test was reliable.

In the present experiment, the participants' oral proficiency was assessed once more at the end of the treatment course which lasted 15 weeks, each two sessions. They took the oral proficiency with the same interview again. The participants were interviewed individually for about 2 to 3 minutes and their interviews were tape recorded. The procedure for validation and checking the reliability of the oral proficiency post-test was the same as that of the oral proficiency pre-test in that to validate the data and to check the inter-rater reliability of the post-test. The inter-rater reliability index was calculated through Pearson Correlation was (r=0.78). The index of obtained reliability was significant at the 0.05 level; therefore, it can be claimed that the scoring of the interview used as the post-test was reliable.

3.3. Materials

The materials used in this study were the textbooks regularly instructed in public schools in Iran, i.e., the English textbooks used in 2rd grades in a high school. Eight units were covered in the 15 weeks and each unit took time about two weeks. In fact, the teachers in intact classes were instructed to follow the ordinary teaching procedures in their class with a special focus on dealing with students' oral proficiency.

3.4. Procedure

The researcher asked the participants to complete the OQPT at the beginning of the study in order to ensure the homogeneity of the participants, and to determine the participants' language proficiency. Sixty participants out 90 learners were homogenized regarding their language proficiency through OQPT. The selected participants were pre-intermediate since the gained scores between 30 and 39. Then they filled in the Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire. When they were divided to high and low risk takers, they participated in the classrooms for 15 weeks, 30 sessions. They studied their textbook units and do the routine class activities.

One week prior to the experiment, participants took an oral proficiency pre-test and filled in the risk taking questionnaire. This interview was designed to ensure the comparability of the 50 selected participants in terms of their oral proficiency prior to the experiment. Based on the participants' scores obtained from the risk taking questionnaire, the researcher divided the participants into two equal in number groups: high risk-takers and low risk takers.

The present experiment composed of two phases. First, the participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire. Then they were interviewed 2 or 3 minutes on the text book topics to ensure that the participants' oral proficiency. Second, 30 sessions each about 60 minutes, the teachers' in both groups followed their regular and ordinary teaching procedures. In other words, the strategy used in the classroom was in the way that participants of the study in the normal traditional way. One week after the final session of the treatment, the participants took the oral proficiency post-test though an interview individually which lasted 2 to 3 minutes. A parallel interview of the one conducted in oral proficiency pre-test was administered to find any potential improvement in the groups in terms of their oral proficiency after the treatment. The scores of the oral proficiency post-test were evaluated by the second rater to arrive at the inter-rater reliability index. Pre and post-test scores were the average of two raters' scores given to a participant based on the Hughes' (2003) speaking checklist. The total points students could get on the pre-test and post-test were 20. Risk taking behavior was the independent variable and oral proficiency was the dependent variable. To check the homogeneity of the participants at the outset of the experiment, an Independent Samples *t*-test was run for checking the difference between the group's pre and post-tests of the participants' oral proficiency.

4. Results

The test of normality was taken to be sure that the Independent Samples *t*-test could be used in analyzing the data. Thus *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Pre-test HRT	Pre-test LRT	Post-test HRT	Post-test LRT
N		25	25	25	25
Normal Parameters[a,,b]	Mean	11.2400	9.3200	17.4000	10.6000
	Std. Deviation	6.02965	5.82895	6.52559	5.77350
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.094	.131	.123	.116
	Positive	.090	.131	.123	.114
	Negative	-.094	-.105	-.085	-.116
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.468	.653	.616	.579
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.981	.787	.843	.891

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.

Table 1 shows that the test score distribution is normal. Thus the parametric statistical analysis such as Independent Samples *t*-test can be used. The results of descriptive statistics of the high and low risk takers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 .Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
High risk takers	25	11.2400	6.02965	1.20593
Low risk takers	25	9.3200	5.82895	1.16579

Table 1 shows that the mean scores for the high risk takers and low risk takers are 11.2400 and 9.3200 respectively. Since the descriptive statistics cannot show the significant difference between the two groups, Independent Samples *t*-test was run in Table 3.

Table 3.Independent Samples t-test (pre-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Pre-test of high and low risk takers	F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.229	.634	1.145	48	.258	1.920	1.677	-1.452	5.292
Equal variances not assumed			1.145	47.9	.258	1.920	1.677	-1.452	5.292

Table 3 shows the *t*-observed value is 1.145 which is less than the *t*-critical (1.670) with df= 58. Thus the difference between the two groups is not significant. Thus it can be safely claimed that the two groups were homogeneous regarding their oral proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment. In order to see if there is a difference between the oral performances of high and low risk takers, descriptive statistics of the group's post-test was calculated inn Table 4.

Table 4 .Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
High risk takers	25	17.4000	6.52559	1.30512
Low risk takers	25	10.6000	5.77350	1.15470

Table 4 shows that the post-test mean scores for the high risk takers and low risk takers are 17.4000 and 10.6000 respectively. Since the descriptive statistics cannot show the significant difference between the two groups, Independent Samples *t*-test was run in Table 5.

Table 5.Independent Samples t-test (Post-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Post-test of high and low risk takers	F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.231	.633	3.902	48	.000	6.800	1.742	3.296	10.303
Equal variances not assumed			3.902	47.2	.000	6.800	1.742	3.294	10.305

Table 5 shows the *t*-observed value is 3.902 which is greater than the *t*-critical (1.670) with df= 58. Thus the difference between the two groups is significant. Thus it can be safely claimed that the high risk takers group outperformed the other group regarding their oral proficiency after the administration of the treatment.

5. Discussion

The first research question addressed in the current study along with the results is discussed thoroughly in the following section follows: Does EFL learners' risk taking behavior facilitate their oral performance at the pre intermediate high school level?

The results showed that risk-taking affected the students' oral performance significantly in the way that high risk takers have oral performance with higher quality than lower risk-takers. Thus, allowing the students to take risks in English classes can help them use more appropriate strategies in their performance and have better oral performance. The findings of this study suggest that teachers need to be concerned about lowering students' affective filter in risk-taking and about how they can encourage their students to take risks actively in classroom. Meanwhile, risk-taking ability has a significant role in L2 acquisition and it is associated with success in second language teaching (Emerson, 2005).

The findings of this study corroborate the findings revealed by several studies (e.g., Beebe, 1983; Ely, 1986; Johannessen,2003; Kelly, 2004; Gass & Selinker,2000) that note risk-taking ability can impact EFL learners' oral proficiency. Teachers should provide an encouraging class atmosphere for their learners to partake in class discussions. Oxford (1992) asserted that "risk-taking ability, though sometimes considered inherent character traits, can be developed through a non-threatening classroom climate, class discussion of fears, individual counseling with inhibited students, and training in strategies that facilitate taking risks (e.g., compensation strategies like guessing or using synonyms)" (p. 38). English language teachers should be conscious of who their students are and what the individual differences among their students are. If the teachers establish this atmosphere in their classroom settings, learners are ready to take risks and they can take risks in various situations when they talk and share their ideas, they will take part in the class willingly and do well on L2 acquisition unconsciously. Researchers (e.g., Oxford, 1992) believe that the learners should take risks in order to learn L2 since without risky activities, they cannot follow the trial and error situation.

Therefore, as far as the results showed, it can be inferred that the risk-taking capability revealed significant results. Generally, the results of *t*-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the high and low risk taker groups of Iranian high school EFL students in terms of their oral performance. That is to say, high risk-takers performed significantly better than low risk-takers in terms of their improvement from pre-test to post-test, i.e., their gained scores for their oral performance. In order to test the second research question, an Independent t-test was run to compare the gained scores of male and female high risk-takers. The male high risk-taker participants in the experimental group gained more scores than females in that group. But the difference is not significant. However, the hypothesis that there is no difference between males and females in using risk-taking behavior to develop their oral performance was proved in this study.

6. Conclusion

Risk-taking behavior in relation to oral proficiency is a complex concept in classroom interaction. Although risk taking is not equivalent to learning, it is a personality factor strongly connected to ultimate second language acquisition success. If risk takers look for more chances to use the target language, it can be stated that they will learn more and develop considerably their language proficiency. When learners speak, they test out their hypotheses about the language. They attempt to make themselves understood and are in a continuous process of negotiation and reformulation of output. Language teachers should instruct students in this trial-and-error process by encouraging them to take risks, by providing them with contexts in which learners can take risks, and by helping learners develop a positive attitude towards mistakes. These three teaching behaviors will certainly increase the learners' language learning process. If learning is the outcome of taking risks, then risk taking is worth trying.

The findings of this study show that high risk-takers performed significantly better than low risk-takers in terms of their improvement from pretest to posttest. Moreover, there was not a significant difference between the male and female high risk-taker participants' gained scores of oral performance. In other words, even though the findings of the study demonstrated the significant main effects found for the factor risk-taking behavior, they did not indicate significant main effect for the factor gender (Wen & Clément, 2003). Therefore, learners should learn to think of such tasks as possible opportunities to try out the language in various ways, and they should learn to accept the ambiguity that oral tasks usually bring with them.Thus the English teachers need to generate opportunities for the students to experience the sense of improvement or success in communicating in English. For that purpose, the instructor needs to help to increase students' preparedness by careful guidance on the assignments. Positive attitude in error correction would serve the purpose, too. Encouraging comments rather than a simple correction can assist the students to learn from their errors and obtain a sense of improvement without losing their self-esteem.

Various research methodologies (e.g., interviews, large scale of surveys, and long term observations) could be valuable in triangulating the present study's findings. This study included only pre-intermediate level students as participants. Similar studies may be conducted to investigate **6**the similarities and differences for different course-levels (e.g., intermediate and higher levels) of students and for various age-levels (e.g., junior and senior high school students) of participants. An in-depth study of the teachers' perceptions toward learners'' risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in EFL classrooms could complement the current study. Some external factors that could not be controlled in the present study including children uneasiness which affected the learners' performance in the pre and post-test. Thus, these circumstances complicated the participants' recruitment in general.

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MJLTM

THE EFFECT OF LEXICAL INPUT VIA ELECTRONIC DICTIONARY ON ELIMINATING IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' VERB COLLOCATIONAL ERRORS

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of enhancing lexical input via electronic dictionary on eliminating iranian intermediate efl learners' verb collocational errors. The main question of this study tried to answer were wether using electronic dictionary might enhance knowledge of collocational patterns in iranian learners of english at intermediate level. To answer this question, 40 students in both genders participated in the experiment of the study. They were randomly selected from among a population of students via a qpt test score of at least one standard deviation below the mean. They were then devided into two groups of 20 and were randomly assigened to an experimental and a control group. Apretest of english verb collocational patterns was administeredto both groups, then, they were taught collocational patterns for 8 sessions but with different methodologies: the experimental group received a treatment of collocational pattern while the control group recievrd no treatment.a posttest of english collocational patterns was then administeredto both groups.the data of the study were analyzed using the t-test to indicate the groups mean difference, and the degree of progress from the pretest to posttest of the study in the experimental group was indicated by calculating the paired sample t-test.the results indicated that the iranian efl learners in the experimental group received higher scores in collocational patterns after being treated with 8 sessions of collocational pattern.

Keywords: lexical input, electronic dictionary, verb collocational errors,iranian efl learners',qpt

1. Introduction

'Collocations' are usually described as "sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur [i.e. occur together]" (Cruse, 1986, p.40). Examples of English collocations are: 'thick eyebrows', 'sour milk', 'to collect stamps', 'to commit suicide', 'to reject a proposal'.

The term collocation was first introduced by Firth, who considered that meaning by collocation is lexical meaning "at the syntagmatic level" (Firth 1957, p.196). The syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations of lexical items can be schematically represented by two axes: a horizontal and a vertical one. The paradigmatic axis is the vertical axis and comprises sets of words that belong to the same class and can be substituted for one another in a specific grammatical and lexical context. The horizontal axis of language is the syntagmatic axis and refers to a word's ability to combine with other words. Thus, in the sentence 'John ate the apple' the word 'apple' stands in paradigmatic relation with 'orange', 'sandwich', 'steak', 'chocolate', 'cake', etc., and in syntagmatic

relation with the word 'ate' and 'John'. Collocations represent lexical relations along the syntagmatic axis.

Vocabulary undoubtedly has a central role for a language learner who would like to communicate competently. It has been widely recognized that much of our vocabulary consists of different kinds of prefabricated chunks (Lewis, 2000), among which the single most important kind is collocation. Emphasizing the importance of collocations in language use, Lewis (2000, p.177) pointed out that both native speakers of a language and successful advanced learners of a foreign language have a high level of "collocational competence" which he defines as "a sufficiently large and sufficient phrasal mental lexicon" that is readily available to them when they use the language. This competence plays a significant role in helping them use a language efficiently, precisely, and appropriately. However, most foreign language learners of English with an intermediate level of language proficiency lack this collocational competence because of insufficient input when compared to native speakers. One may speculate that some of the features found for the development of individual lexical items in L2 could also be applied to acquisition of larger lexical chunks; for example, the acquisition process is accumulative in nature and is dependent on repeated exposure, which leads to the consolidation of knowledge as well as ability for use.

However, there has been increasing evidence that L2 incidental learning of individual lexical items may not be effective given that it is not combined with explicit teaching and learning, not to mention lexical chunks (Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Min, 2008; Peters, Hulstijn, Sercu, & Lutjeharms, 2009; Pulido, 2009). Due to the above concerns, increasingly research has indicated the concept of noticing and attention being integrated into a language course for collocational knowledge development (Boers, Demecheleer, Coxhead, & Webb, 2014; Hill, Lewis, & Lewis, 2000; Laufer & Waldman, 2011; Lewis, 2000; Peters, 2009; Schmitt, 2010; Sonbul & Schmitt, 2013; Webb & Kagimoto, 2009; Woolard, 2000), followed by post-reading activities to strengthen the form-meaning connections (Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Laufer & Waldman, 2011). The present study aimed to investigate the extent to which drawing learners' attention to the role of lexical input via electronic dictionary on eliminating Iranian intermediate EFL learners' verb collocational errors.

Collocation is one of the darlings of those who follow a philosophy called the lexical approach – a school of thought that says 'language consists of grammatical lexis, not lexicalized grammar' (Lewis, 1997). But it is now widely accepted that making students aware of the way words combine with others in predictable ways is a vital element in the struggle to produce accurate and natural sounding English. For, students at the intermediate and advanced levels often know the words, but frequently use them inaccurately. Lewis provides further explanation for the importance of collocations. He argues that collocations provide a more practical and less general approach to language teaching and syllabus design than grammar, because grammar provides only the most general rules of the language.

All learners, even advanced ones, have at least some problems with their vocabulary, particularly in their production. One reason for this may be that learners usually try to learn the meaning of words individually without paying much attention to the relations that words form with each other. This itself maybe a consequence of their teachers' way of teaching. Lewis (1993, p89) suggests that teachers concentrate on lexis more than grammar and teach lexis rather than individual words. By this Lewis means that there has been a tendency for teachers to teach single words and grammar at the expense of poly-word and fixed expressions. He sees this as misguided in the sense that language is made up of chunks of language in the main, dotted with many fixed phrases and collocations, and concentrating on single words denies the learner to see the essential patterns of the language that are in lexis.

In reaction to the shortcomings of such teaching practices, Lewis(1993) described an approach to language teaching , 'The Lexical Approach', which moved vocabulary to the forefront of language teaching in two books :'The Lexical Approach' (Lewis, 1993), and 'Implementing the Lexical Approach' (Lewis, 1997). The latter book continues the development of the lexical approach by focusing on a key element in the approach, collocations.

Collocations might be described as the words that are placed or found together in a predictable pattern.There are situations in which a teacher finds herself saying to a learner that what he said is not wrong exactly, but doesn't sound English.

2. Theoretical framework

This study classifies collocation into two categories following Benson etal's classification method, lexical and grammatical collocation. In addition, the study further subdivided lexical collocations into six categories. This theoretical framework guides the study in examining whether lexical input via electronic dictionary can reduce verb collocational errors.

Collocations are defined as structured word phrases which bond together and appear recurrently in the usage of English. They have characteristics in know: why we say a stiff breeze but not a stiff wind while a strong breeze and a strong wind are acceptable.

Among the early studies of lexical combinations, Firth (1957) is known as the first scholar to introduce the term "collocation." According to Firth (1968,p.181), "collocations of a given word are statements of habitual or customary places of that word". He proposes that words obtain their meaning from their co-occurrence in texts. The subsequent research attempts to define and explain collocations more clearly and specifically. Cruse (1986,p.40) proposes that collocations are a "sequence of lexical items which habitually co-occur". Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992,p.36) point out that a collocation unit includes a "node" that co-occurs with a "span" of words on either side. They define collocations as "strings of specific lexical items, such as rancid butter and curry favor that co-occur with a mutual expectancy greater than chance". They regard lexical phrases, such as how are you, as collocations with pragmatic functions.

3. Statement of the Problem

Collocation has become one of the primary concerns in EFL teaching and learning for decades. Several researchers have perceived the significance of collocations and the requisite of collocation teaching in EFL courses (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Channell, 1981; Howarth, 1998; Nattinger, 1980, 1988). They also pointed out the benefits of learning collocations such as increasing learners' language competence, enhancing learners' communicative competence, and being toward native-like fluency. Hence, collocational knowledge is essential for EFL learners and collocation instruction in EFL courses is required.

However, previous studies (Aghbar, 1990; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993;Channell, 1981; Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Gitsaki, 1997; Lien, 2003; Liu, 1999a) indicated that EFL learners made many collocational errors in their writing and speaking for lack of collocational competence in English. For example, many Chinese EFL learners refer to "take medicine" as "eat medicine" since the noun "medicine" in Chinese regularly collocates with the verb "eat" rather than "take." Thus, several researchers proposed that teacher would increase EFL learners' collocational knowledge through raising EFL learners' awareness of collocations. For instance, Woolard (2000) claimed an effective way to raise awareness of collocations is to help EFL learners pay more attention to their miscollocations in their production of the language. In that way, learners gradually realize that learning more vocabulary is not just learning new words, but being familiar with word combinations. Lewis (2000) also proposed that EFL learners need to know not only what is right but also what is wrong. If teachers can find out learners' collocational errors and point out these errors to learners, they can raise learners' awareness of collocations. Thus, studying learners' miscollocations will be important because it can help teachers understand difficult collocations for EFL learners and realize what should be emphasized in classes for teachers to raise EFL learners' awareness of collocations.

Numerous studies on collocation in foreign language learning have been conducted by utilizing various methodologies of investigation, different types of collocation and learner groups with different language backgrounds. The result of most studies have indicated that second language learners have problems in the production of collocation (Bahns&Eldaw,1993; Burgschmidt& Perkins,1985 as cited in Howarth(1998) ; Nation,2001).In addition, the foreign language learners' first language influence is considered a critical factor which poses difficulties for learner in the use of collocations. It cannot be denied those finding are valuable and beneficial for researchers and teachers. However, besides learners'l1 influence detailed discussion for identifying the source of errors has not been made. That is, as Nesselhauf (2005) pointed out, more practical

issues such as types of collocations which pose most difficulties for specific groups of learners, pattern of errors, and the sources of errors have not been dealt within collocation research. Iranian teachers have difficulties in understanding why their students who have considerable vocabulary knowledge, still have problems in the use of collocations.

4. Research Question:

The present study is an attempt at answering the following research question:

RQ: Does enhancing lexical input via electronic dictionary have any statistically significant effect on eliminating Iranian intermediate EFL learners' verb collocation errors?

5. Research Hypothesis:

The above mentioned question can be expressed in terms of the following research null hypothesis:

H_O: Enhancing lexical input via electronic dictionary does not have any effect on eliminating Iranian intermediate EFL learners 'verb collocation errors.

6. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Collocation has become one of the main concerns in recent L2 language research for its significance in the development of learner competence. Nesselhauf (2005) identified frequency-based and phraseological approaches as the two main traits of collocation studies. As the name suggests, the former is concerned with the frequency of co- occurrence of lexical items by means of corpus-based methodologies for the analysis of language phenomenon, with Halliday (through work published in 1966, cited in Nesselhauf, 2005) and Sinclair (through publications in 1966 and 1968, cited in Nesselhauf, 2005) as the main contributors.

On the other hand, researchers conducting phraseological studies are apparently more involved with phraseology and its application in lexicography and language pedagogy (Benson, 1990; Cowie, 1988, 1992). In the second approach, the term collocation is used for a group of words with fixed combinations in which the core word cannot be replaced by other words (e.g., "perform a task" instead of "make a task"). Recently, the corpus-based approach has been dominant in the research of collocations due to the easy accessibility of advanced computer technology. However; as noted by Sonbul and Schmitt (2013) and, Webb and Kagimoto (2009), the majority of corpus-based research has been descriptive in nature and concerned primarily with measuring learners' collocational knowledge. Very few empirical studies address the pedagogical issues of how collocations can be most effectively taught and learned in language learning settings.

Nation (2001) claims that there are three processes leading to effective learning, which consists of noticing, retrieval, and generative (productive) use. Noticing is the preliminary step that needs to be complemented by the other two. Nation claims: Some recent studies examined the effect of explicit learning on collocation in classroom contexts (Laufer & Waldman, 2011; Peters, 2012; Sonbul & Schmitt, 2013; Webb & Kagimoto, 2009). The way that explicit learning was operationalized included drawing learners' attention to target items via textual enhancements or engaging the learners into different types of tasks, and results of these studies showed that collocation learning can be enhanced in association with explicit learning conditions. For example, both Peters (2012) and Sonbul and Schmitt (2013) found that typographic salience had a positive effect on participants' recall and encouraged its salient use in context. Participants in Laufer and Waldman's (2011) study tended to under-produce verb-noun collocations, regardless of their proficiency levels. There was only a difference between the group of advanced learners and groups of intermediate and elementary learners, suggesting the development of collocational knowledge is slow. The researchers attributed the failure of collocation use to the lack of explicit instruction. Semantic transparency could be another factor causing the under production of collocations.

As seen in the aforementioned studies, collocational knowledge is actually a language phenomenon that is acquired late and often not mastered very well by L2 language learners despite the fact that it is considered a significant factor contributing to language competence. It is difficult to raise learners' awareness of collocations, especially those with semantic transparency, but Laufer and Waldman (2011) suggest that extra language input will lead to additional attention. For example, learners can be asked to do pre-emptive focus-on-form activities in which

attention is drawn to preselected structure or lexis, and these activities could facilitate the teaching and learning of collocations (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, cited in Laufer & Waldman, 2011). However, Boers and his colleagues (Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, & Demecheleer, 2006) argue that just raising learners' awareness is insufficient to cause learners to actively process the collocations in their mental representations. They concluded that "noticing may be a prerequisite for learning, but it does not necessarily guarantee the acquisition of every single element that gets noticed" (p. 257).

Heydarpour Meymeh.M,(2014) investigated the Impact of Collocational Instructions on Iranian EFL Learners "Vocabulary Learning and Reading Comprehension .Analysis showed that the knowledge of collocations is directly correlated with reading comprehension, And also the collocational instruction enhance the students' ability of reading comprehension to a great deal.

Heydarpour Meymeh.M ,(2015) investigated the effect of adjectival collocations on Iranian EFL students' academic writing. This study would try to determine whether or not using adjectival collocation in writing might enhance Iranian EFL students' academic writing. As the result of the study indicated that there existed a relationship between learning adjectival collocations and improvement of academic writing ability.

Webb and Kagimoto (2009) further argued that noticing may be sufficient for learners in an ESL context, but not adequate for those in the EFL context due to the smaller changes of incidental learning gains. Focusing on production and cross-linguistic comparison, teaching efforts should consist of activities such as matching the appropriate verbs to nouns, selecting the missing part of a collocation from semantically similar options, and completing parts of collocations without given options. However, it is important that teachers remember "that all activities and exercises should be designed to support the central activity of encouraging the learners to notice language in ways which maximize the chance of input being retained as long-term intake" (Hill et al., 2000, p. 117).

7. METHODOLOGY

The participants were 60 learners learning English at intermediate level in International language center (a private language institute) in Guilan, Iran. Out of this population, 30 learners were randomly selected based on an oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT) (Appendix A).This test was conducted to homogenize the participants based on their level of proficiency. The Mean and SD were calculated and eventually learners with the score of 1 SD above and below the mean were selected to participate in the research.

8. MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

The materials of the study were of four sorts; 1) material for the proficiency test; 2) material for the pretest of the study; 3) material for the treatment of the study; and 4) material for the posttest of the study. The material for the proficiency test comprised 20 questions of the QPT including verb collocational questions .The materials for the pretest and posttest were taken from the Oxford Dictionary of Collocations (2009). The test was administered to both experimental and control group. The reliability of the pre-test and post-test scores was estimated through KR-21formula.

8.1. Scoring

The QPT that was used in this study was scored on the basis of the standard criteria introduced by the test itself. The criterion for scoring the pretest and the posttest of the study was the maximum of 20.

8.2. Data Analysis

The data obtained from testing the hypothesis of the study were analyzed via calculating a t-test between the posttest sentence word order scores of the experimental and the control groups of the study and the paired sample t-test between the pretest and the posttests of the experimental and the control group of the study.

Several steps were taken to collect the data for the present study. First of all a QPT test was administered to 80 EFL learners and 40 learners above and below the mean were chosen based on QPT results. Then the learners were divided into two experimental and control groups.

After QPT test, pre-test was administered before starting the treatment to measure verb collocational knowledge in each group. After presenting the treatment, posttest (which was the same as the pre-test) was administered to determine the extent of the progress in two groups and to test the effectiveness of the treatment in experimental group. To compare the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups, an Independent-Sample T-test was used.

The numerical data were analyzed through SPSS, using independent sample T-test between post-test scores of the study and pre-test.

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

9.1. The Descriptive Analysis of the Data

9.1.1. Analysis of pretest scores Experimental and Control Group

Table 4.1. Statistics of control and experimental group in pre-test

	Groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest EX	14.5000	20	1.14708	0.25649
	pretest CON	12.5500	20	1.70062	0.38027

As is shown in table 4.1 the number of students participated in each treatment was 20. It means that all selected participants took part in the tests. The mean for the experimental group is 14.5000, and the mean for control group is12.5500 .The standard deviation for the experimental and control groups equals to1.14708 and 1.70062 respectively.

9.1.2. Analysis of the Result of Post-test of Experimental and ControlGroup

In this part the statistical of post-test scores which are obtained from control and experimental group are presented in order to compare and contrast the overall achievement of participants in experimental group with the participants of control group to check if the treatment has been effective. In order to do this comparison which is actually the answer to the question of the study another around of t-test has been applied between the post-test scores of experimental and control group. It means 20 scores obtained from experimental group have been compared with 20 scores of control group. The result are presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Statistics of the posttest scores of experimental and control group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	posttest EX	16.6500	20	1. 22582	0.27440
	Posttest CON	12.7000	20	1.17429	0.26258

As it can be seen in the table above, he mean score obtained from the experimental group which received efficient amount of the treatment is highly more than the mean of control group. The mean score of the experimental group is almost “16” whereas the mean score of the control group is “12”.

9.2. Inferential analysis of the data

9.2.1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Experimental Group

After administration of pretest and after receiving the treatment, the participants both in the experimental and control group were given their test of collocation as post-test. The analysis of the data was done via using SPSS software. So, table 4.3, shows the inferential statistics which includes the calculation of an Independent Sample T-test.

Table 4.3. Independent Samples T-test results of the study

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	Observed t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)

collocation	Equal variances assumed	10.406	38	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed	10.406 Critical t = 2.021	37.930	0.000

Table 4.3 indicates the independent samples t-test result of the result of the study. According to this table, the observed t was calculated as to be 10.406, while according to Best (2006, p.483) critical t was 2.021 .It means that, t observed>t critical which has been used interpreting the data for rejection or support of the hypothesis of the study in the next section. The degree of freedom is 38(df = 38), it was calculated from the common formula of df=N-1 for sum of population in both groups. Moreover, the standard two-tailed test level of significance was considered as 0,005 (ibid, 2006), while the level of significant in this table was calculated as 0.000. In other words, the significance is lower than the standard. Thus, it shows that the difference was not by chance.

9.2.2. Analysis of Paired Sample T-test

In this section, a systematic comparison is done between the results of posttest the experimental group with their scores in pre-test and a systematic comparison is done between the results of posttest of the control group with their scores in pre-test. The aim of this analysis is to make sure that the experimental group has outperformed the control group. In order to do so, the scores obtained from pre-test and posttest of the participants in the experimental group and control group were analyzed through calculation of a paired sample t-test. The reason to use paired sample t-test is having two sets of scores from one group. The results of the test are presented in table 4.4 as follows:

Table 4.4. Paired Sample results of the study

		Observed t	Critical t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest EX – Posttest EX	19.648	2.093	19	0.000
Pair 2	Pretest Con – Posttest Con	0.529	2.093	19	0.049

10. Result of hypothesis testing

The results of testing hypothesis of the study have been presented and illustrated in this of section. In order to give a detailed hypothesis, attempts were made to take advantage of the results of the study (section 4.1) as evidence to determine the support or rejection of the hypothesis. Thus the main purpose of the present study is to achieve a better understanding of using collocation. Based on the literature review and the proposed methodology elaborated in pervious chapter, one research question has been considered:

RQ: Does enhancing lexical input via electronic dictionary have any statistically significant effect on removing Iranian intermediate EFL learners' verb collocation errors?

So, the rejection or support of the hypothesis was justified in order to explaining the consequences in research question .In other words, this question can be expressed in terms of the following null hypothesis:

H_O: Enhancing lexical input via electronic dictionary does not have any statistically significant effect on removing Iranian intermediate EFL learners 'verb collocation errors.

Two sets of pre-test and post-test were administered to answer this research question. First, a pre-test was administered and all the participants of the study take part in this test. Then, the data used for analyzing the descriptive statistics of pre-test. The mean and standard deviation for all participants were generated by SPSS software. After five sessions of treatment and randomly dividing the participants into experimental and control group (20participants for each one), a post test was administered to see whether this treatment was effective or not .Both groups were

answered the same question in the field of collocation. The result of these procedures were analyzed by SPSS.

Therefore, according to the rejection or support the hypothesis table 4.4 shows an inferential statistics in terms of Independent Sample T-test of the post –test scores for the experimental and control group .Based on data analysis report summarized in this table there is level of significance equals to 0.000 that is less than 0.05(0.000<0.05).Also, in order to degree of freedom equals to 19 for all post-tests, the observed- T(19.648)exceeds the critical-T (2.093).IT means that Observed-T>Critical-T. Moreover, the data analysis shows that the null hypothesis (H_O) is rejected.

11. DISCUSSION

11.1. General Discussion

In terms of having difficulty with recurring groups of words, Iranian learners of English are no exception. Even after years of foreign language study at universities or language learning institutes, the majority of Iranian EFL learners still make collocational errors and this is in spite of the fact that they seem to have sufficient lexical or grammatical knowledge. The important role that collocations play in the successful and native-like performance of EFL learners on the one hand and the problems that Iranian EFL learners have with collocations of various types on the other, highlight the significance of the present study. The majority of Iranian EFL learners have some knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary; however, they seem to have serious problems with the use of collocation. This problem may stem from their habit of learning English vocabulary as isolated words rather than in combination with other words. Thus, the teaching of collocations inevitably needs to be integrated with the teaching of vocabulary, and the foreign language learners need to know that not every word combination that is easily understood can be as easily produced in English, nor in any other language. In addition, given the empirical evidence that first language transfer is a real phenomenon that also affects production of collocations in the second language, the selection of collocations for teaching as well as the way a language teacher teaches them should be with reference to L1.

However, despite the fact that collocations are an important part of a native speakers' competence, and the need for their inclusion in foreign and second language teaching is widely acknowledged today. A considerable amount of efforts in applied linguistics research are still being concentrated on the grammatical and phonological levels, while the lexical level does not arouse the same degree of interest and very little attention is paid to an amazing property of lexis, a tendency on the part of some lexical items to co-occur, otherwise known as collocation.

Teachers and translators may benefit from the findings of the present study. Teachers can get their students to learn vocabulary more efficiently by presenting words in collocations. If students already know the most frequent collocate(s) of a certain word, they will be less likely to combine words freely and produce odd or erroneous word combinations. In fact, the finding of a study by Gitsaki (1999) suggests that language teachers introduce lexical items with their most frequent collocations. Lewis (2000) even believes that the whole language can be taught through collocations. The present study will give teachers some cues as to where problems with collocations lie so that they can focus their attention on the problem areas. Also, the knowledge of the sources of collocational problems will certainly be of help to teachers in enabling their students to overcome such problems. In addition, since collocational problems are the source of many problems in translation, translators can also use the results of this study to improve their translation.

The present study was about the effect of enhancing lexical input via electronic dictionary for eliminating verb collocational errors. It was concluded that the treatment had a positive transfer. The present study confirmed the Siyanova and Schmitt (2008) research conducted a study investigating processing of adjective-noun collocations among advanced learners of English. The present study supports the idea that there was a negative transfer among Iranian language learners that would create collocation errors. These subjects could be observed in Goudarzi (2011), Hanafi etal, (2012), Heydarpour(2015), Jabbari (2014), Ganji (2012) researches. The null hypothesis of this study has been rejected based on the aforementioned analysis and statistical

procedures. The result of the present study indicates that there exist a relationship between lexical input via electronic dictionary and the improvement of collocational knowledge.

11.2. Suggestions for Future Research

Further research in the field of collocation could continue the study using the following ideas:

1. This study only looked for errors in v+n collocations. Further types beyond these two kinds of collocation need to be identified, such as the v+ pre collocation (e.g. prepare for), the v+adv/adv+v collocation (e.g. cry aloud), and the adj+pre collocation (e.g. familiar with).
2. This study focused on students‟ lexical collocational competence; further studies might wish to consider the students‟ ability with grammatical collocations. Thus, we can have a clearer and complete picture of EFL students‟ collocational knowledge.
3. Future study could also investigate the relationship between EFL students' collocational competence and their academic success. It would be of great value to understand whether or not collocational knowledge helps students to increase their academic achievement. The result of such a study would shed some light on the development of college students‟ collocational competence. It is also suggested to look into the impacts of certain teaching methods. For example, it is worthy to study the merit of a deductive approach to different types of collocation learning and production.

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MJLTM

THE ROLE OF MIND MAPPING SOFTWARE TECHNIQUES IN DEVELOPING LEARNERS' VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT AT THE PRE-UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of mind mapping on english language learners' vocabulary achievement at the pre-university level. Seventy learners were selected in two intact classes and assingned in two experimental and control groups. Then they took a teacher-made pre-test of vocabulary. Throughout the treatment, the experimental group received mind mapping techniques extracted from mind mapping software in learning vocabulary on the web site. The control group received vocabulary instruction through definitions, explanations and translation in a traditional method. The treatment lasted 14 sessions-90 minutes each. The participants covered 12 units of their text book focusing on learning vocabulary. Finally, a vocabulary post-test which was the modified pre-test was given to both groups. Data were analyzed trough paired and independent samples t-test. Results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group at the significant level ($p<0.05$). The implications of the study suggest that various types of mind mapping software may be helpful in learning vocabularies since the learners' visual memory could be reinforced through the mind mapping charts.

Key words: mind mapping, vocabulary, english language learners

1. Introduction

The use of technology in pedagogical settings, especially in reading comprehension and teaching vocabulary may be effective and motivating for both EFL teachers alike. Teachers can be free from boring explanatory classes and traditional uses of whiteboard and lectures and students can use and try new technology in learning new vocabulary. Recent works (e.g., Akbarnejad, Gorjian, Nasiri, 2014, Bahadori & Gorjian, 2016; Lin & Chen, 2006; Liu, Chen & Chang, 2010) on the use of technology in the pedagogical settings and vocabulary acquisition have shown that EFL practitioners could use of technology in terms of using multimedia glossed and hyper texts, electronic and the Internet dictionaries, as well as various vocabulary-building boxes of fruit in a passage can be completed by the software (e.g., www.mindtools.com). Mind mapping software is a graphic organizer which provides the learners with some options to complete the boxes in the chart. For instance, the learners can name different types of fruit mentioned in the passage and fill in the boxes on the chart to show the relationships between the names and concepts clearly. This can trigger the learners comprehensible input since they can have a complete picture of the main vocabularies within the text and improve their vocabulary recall and retention (Buzan, 2000; Hawk, 1986; Meyer, 1995).

Tomlinson (1999) explains that teachers can use three aspects of teaching including Contents, Processes, and Products. By using graphic organizers, teachers modify the product. It is a

universal fact that students in a class are not likely to learn to read at the same rate. Some will learn faster than others, and some will be able to demonstrate their understanding in more complex ways sooner than others. For all children to learn at an optimal pace, teachers may match learners with a reinforcing task that allows each child to be successful in vocabulary learning at a cognitively appropriate level. According to Rawson and Kintsch (2005), mind mapping as a kind of graphic organizes can help the EFL learners to comprehend their vocabulary and reading abilities. Therefore, the use of mind mapping software for learning new vocabulary may trigger learners' cognitive processes.

Learning through visuals aids like mind maps helps students in comprehending the texts more effectively since they can be used than with other reading strategies like skimming, scanning, summarizing, note making, etc. According to Slavin (2011), research in educational settings has proved the fact that visual learning is an effective method for teaching lexical collocations and reading comprehension skill. Mind mapping can teach the EFL learners how to organize the contents of the passages and shape the learners' schemata to comprehend the key words in the texts for eliciting the intended meanings of the words in the passages.

According to Keene and Zimmerman (1997), students must be encouraged to make connections with the text they read to increase the effectiveness of reading. Mind mapping can play a vital role establishing the connections. It also makes the text clear and it shows the main structures of the passage such as the collocated words in terms of meaning and grammar (Barron, 1969). Studies in the literature have highlighted the link between drawing students' attention to discourse structures in texts and facilitating vocabulary learning (Bernhardt, 1998; Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 1996; Grabe, 2010). The structures of the texts can affect the vocabulary choices of the passage which is done by the writer. The kind of the text type and vocabulary selection is interrelated issues which affect the various types of visual representations of the vocabularies in the texts (Carrell, 1984, 1985; Martinez, 2002; Wang & Cao, 2009). The visual representation of the mind maps could be flow charts, tree diagrams, concept maps, and hierarchical summaries (Suzuki, Sato & Awazu, 2008; Tang, 1992). However, the possible effects of the use of discourse structure-based graphic organizers on L2 learners' vocabulary learning are in need of exploration. With the exception of Tang (1992), there are a few empirical studies which have been conducted in this area.

Some students may have difficulties in actively engaging with the text as they read. Identifying the key concepts in the text and recognizing the inter-relatedness of major and minor ideas is problematic at times because they do not know what parts of the text to look at to form relevant connections. They might waste time focusing on unimportant details and might fail to come up with a global picture of the text in hand. They are not aware of the fact that there are different but repeating discourse patterns in the texts they are exposed to so they cannot develop an understanding of how to approach text structures. It is clear that they need some guidance in this respect. Discourse structure-based mind mapping software might scaffold the students in their approaches to reading tasks (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). This study investigated the following research question. Does the use mind mapping software affect students' vocabulary development at the pre-university level?

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Mind Mapping

A mind map is a visual and graphic representation that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and ideas within a learning task (Strangman, Vue , Hall & Meyer, 2003). Graphic organizers have different types for different instructional purposes. "Two commonly used graphic organizers are semantic maps and concept diagrams"(Vaughn & Edmonds, 2004, p.135). Semantic mapping strategy falls under the broad category of graphic organizers. *Baleghizadeh* and *Yousefpoori-Naeim* (*2011*)notes that semantic mapping is a graphic or visual picture of the writers' thoughts, ideas, and attitudes which are represented in the vocabularies in the texts. They have different forms, e.g., the vocabularies of a text in hierarchical or cyclical structures. The shapes may be different and organized based on the relationships between the vocabularies in the text (i.e., subordinate or superordinate vocabularies). Technology can help the teachers to design the variety of visual or graphic mind maps including semantic map, structured

overview, web, concept map, semantic organizer, story map, and graphic organizer (Bahadori & Gorjian, 2016; Lee & Schallert, 1997). They may have different styles in the software which is available on the Internet. There are five major structural categories: tree map, chain, sketch, star web, and chart matrix. They are also classified, for instance: KWL chart (i.e., teacher-led chart which introduces a new topic), history frame (i.e., look at historical events), word map (i.e., analyze a new or complex vocabulary), zooming in and zooming out – concepts (i.e., branches that show the objects' relations) , zooming in and zooming out –people (i.e., branches that show the peoples'), Inquiry chart (i.e., or I-chart is a way to organize information obtained during research), Venn diagram (i.e., comparing charts), column notes (i.e., two sections, each with its own heading) (Akbarnejad, Gorjian, Nasiri, 2014; Jiang, 2007; Moore & Readence, 1984;

Mind mapping software provides teachers with tools to help students on the road to higher achievement in their vocabulary learning (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001). Although reading in a first language shares numerous important basic elements with reading in a second language, the processes also display significant differences (Aebersold & Field, 2003). It might make sense to claim that "the real nature of reading is unobservable" (Aebersold & Field, 2003, p. 23). However, research on the process of reading in an L2 provides us with an insight into the factors that might influence L2 reading (Grabe, 1991). Grabe and Stoller (2002) explore the differences between L1 and L2 reading under three different headings: linguistic and processing differences, individual and experiential differences, and socio-cultural and institutional differences.

On the other hand, the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, which is considered as the opposing view to the Language Threshold Hypothesis, argues that L1 linguistic knowledge and skills play an instrumental role in the development of corresponding abilities in L2. Simply put, in reading comprehension, L1 reading skills can be transferred to the L2 reading process (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995). Bernhardt and Kamil (1995) indicate that first language reading ability is a very important variable in second language reading achievement. An elaboration on discourse structure awareness seems necessary if the function that discourse structure-oriented graphic organizers like mind mapping software might carry out in reading comprehension for example for learning new vocabulary is to be highlighted. Thus, the next section will focus on the concept of discourse structure awareness.

When the aim is to choose a format of organizer that best matches the features of the text structure in hand, teachers have different alternatives at their disposal. Figures 1 through 10 below show examples of mind mapping software developed by Strangman et al. (2003). For example, a *Descriptive* or *Thematic Map* (Figure 1) is effective in presenting generic information and lends itself to highlighting hierarchical relationships. While reflecting a hierarchical set of information, a teacher might want to draw students' attention to superordinate and subordinate elements in the text. In this situation, the most appropriate format to construct would be a *Network Tree* (Figure 2). When the information that is linked to a main idea or theme cannot be integrated into a hierarchical structure, a *Spider Map* (Figure 3) could be useful to organize information (Strangman et al., 2003).

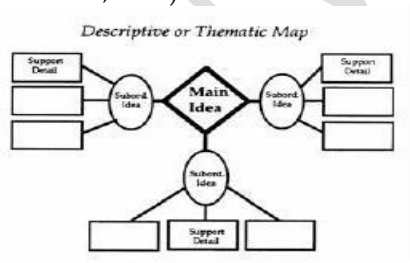

Figure 1. Descriptive map

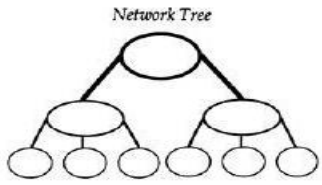

Figure 2. Network Tree

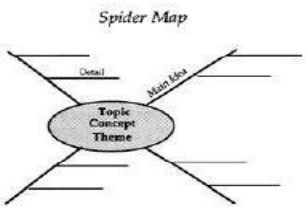

Figure 3. Spider Map

In order to display *cause and effect* relationships or to make students focus on possible problems and solutions that emerge out of a text, teachers are equipped with three options: a *Problem and Solution Map*, a *Problem-Solution Outline*, or a *Sequential Episodic Map* (Strangman et al., 2003). A *Comparative and Contrastive Map* or a *Compare-Contrast Matrix* allows students to compare and

contrast two concepts, approaches, opinions or things by taking their distinguishing features and attributes as major criteria (Strangman et al., 2003).If text structure is organized on the basis of various steps and stages, exploiting a *Series of Events Chain* might be a good idea. On the other hand, a *Cycle Map* is likely to produce positive results while reflecting information that is circular or cyclical, with no clear beginning or ending (Strangman et al., 2003).

2.2. Constructing Mind Mapping Software

Constructing mind mapping software as graphic organizers is a matter of creativity and all text structures can be represented effectively through these visual language tools. Grabe (2009) claims that basic graphic organizer formats are available to teachers for commonly used text structures including *definitions, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, process/sequence, problem-solution, description/classification, argument, for-against* and *timeline.* However, it is crucial for teachers to meet certain demands while undertaking the task of developing discourse or text structure-based mind mapping software as graphic organizers. Grabe and Jiang (2010) propose a list of guidelines that teachers should take into consideration during the development and evaluation process of discourse structure-based mind mapping software. They suggest that mind mapping software should present both the main ideas and the macro level structure of the text effectively. Since the ideas in a given text are ideally logically developed in a sequential manner, the same pattern should be simulated in the organization of mind mapping software as graphic organizers. Local structures are as important as macro level ideas and they should be able to find a place for themselves. However, it is the teacher's responsibility to pay utmost attention to picking out the most salient information to reflect through mind mapping software as graphic organizers. Ideal mind mapping software aims at enabling students to recognize the interrelationships and patterns of organization in a text. Apart from these, it is necessary to present the content of the text in a way that is closest to the original. If the mind mapping software as graphic organizers in question are partially completed, then teachers should make sure that they have effective clues for the blanks. Last but not least, mind mapping software should be simple and easy to follow (Grabe & Jiang, 2010).

Teachers can make use of mind mapping software in different periods of their reading instruction as pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading tasks. The teacher can use a mind mapping software as an adjunct aid to brainstorming in advance of students' exposure to the reading material. With the help of mind mapping software, the teacher can help students retrieve their background knowledge about a particular topic and facilitate discussion of ideas. Students could be asked to focus on both the semantic relationships among the words they produce and the inter-relationships of their statements (Carrell, Pharis & Liberto, 1989).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The study was conducted in a pre-university center in Masjedsoleyman. The participants of the study were 70 learners studying English in two intact classes. They were ranging in age from 15 to 18 years and were selected through non-random convenience sampling method. They were assigned into experimental (i.e., learning vocabulary through mind mapping software) and the control group (i.e., dealing with usual vocabulary learning procedures such as definition, explanation, and using context clues). Each group included 35 participants.

3.2. Instrumentation

In this study two tests were used including the teacher made pre-test which determined the learners' level of vocabulary achievement at the beginning of research. It included 50 multiple–choice items which were designed based on 12 units of *Select Readings: Pre-inteermediate* (Lee & Gundersen, 2000). The pilot study was run on a small sample of pre-university of students to calculate the reliability of the test through KR-21 formula as (r=.821). The time allotted to this test was 60 minutes. The post-test was the modified format of the pre-test with the same content but different format to avoid the learners' reminding. The reliability of the post-test was calculated through a pilot study and it was met as (r=.723). The content validity of both tests was assured by two experts in field of teaching EFL.

3.3. Materials

The materials used in this study were 12 reading texts (i.e., descriptive, narrative, cause and effect, process, explanation, etc.) of *Select Readings: Pre-intermediate* was to generate good English language skills with the main focus on reading skills. The authors selected the new vocabularies in 12 units and taught them in each session. Since various mind mapping software can reflect the discourse structures of these texts, various formats of mind maps could be visualized through the software (i.e., www.mindtools.com).

3.4. Procedure

The participants included 50 learners at the pre-university level. They were selected in two intact classes through non-random convenience sampling method. Then they were assigned into two experimental and control groups. They took a teacher-made pre-test on 12 sessions of the *Select Readings: Pre-intermediate* were ready to start 12 sessions of treatment in 12 sessions, each lasted 90 minutes. Both groups read text structures of the 12 reading passages that were used in the study included *description, definition, sequence, procedure, cause-effect, classification, comparison-contrast,* and *for & against.* In each text, two or three of these structures were nested within one another. The researchers developed mind mapping software that directly reflected the discourse structures of the selected texts by means of the available software on the Internet (e.g., www.mindtools.com). In order to understand whether this software was designed to put the new vocabularies in the maps and charts provided by the researchers. The mind mapping software was used based on the guidelines in the web site and developed by the researchers. The maps were discussed by the researchers and their practicality was assured. Then 12 mind maps were designed based on the reading passages. However, the aim of teaching the units was dealing with the new vocabularies.

Before the experiment, the participants took a teacher-made pre-test teacher to assess the learners' vocabulary knowledge at the beginning of the course. The in an introductory session, the teachers make the students familiar with the class procedures of the study by using several mind map samples visualizing the text structures. The students were asked to fill them in. Both the selection of the texts and the development of the related mind mapping software were done by the researcher. The participants in both groups started the units of the book, *Select Readings: Pre-intermediate*, through reading the passages and then doing the exercises. Regarding vocabulary learning, the experimental group deals with the mind mapping software which are the designs and charts on the laptops or tablets and the participants had to complete the charts based on the use of new vocabularies in the texts. They have different mind maps which are appropriate for each unit. Then the charts were checked by the peers or the teacher in the classroom.

The control group read the passages and does the regular exercises at the end of each unit. The new vocabularies were taught through definitions, explanations and context clues in the texts. The vocabularies were mainly used to design the tests and exercises in the classroom. The new terms were discussed in both groups and the learners' comprehension was checked to receive feedback for remedial activities. The units were normally made up of 12 passages and each unit was reviewed regarding its reading questions, identifying the main idea, finding the supporting details, understanding vocabulary and making inferences. Out of these items, there were discussions on the content of passages in each session and some problematic vocabularies were even explained in Persian.

The post-test was designed based on the modified pre-test and included 50 multiple-choice items which were extracted from the 12 units covered in the treatment s participants took the post-test in the final session (i.e., 14 the session) in 50 minutes. Data were collected and the papers were ready to be scored.

3.5. Data Analysis

In this study, data were collected through the administration of the pre and post-tests. In the analysis of this quantitative data, SPSS, version 17 was used. In order to examine the effects of the mind mapping software on students' vocabulary, the parametric statistical method was run to analyze the data. Independent and Paired Samples *t*-test were calculated to discover the difference between the experimental and control groups.

4. Results

The experimental and control groups' pre-test and post-tests are shown through descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics(Pre-test & Post-test, Experimental and Control groups)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Experimental	35	22.7143	12.81215	2.16565
	Control	35	23.9429	11.03189	1.86473
Post-test	Experimental	35	33.6286	11.18057	1.88986
	Control	35	25.7714	10.89275	1.84121

Table 1 shows the mean differences between the pre-test and post-tests of the control and experimental groups. Since the means cannot show the significance of differences, independent samples *t*-test was calculated to find any significant difference between the groups. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-test (Pre-test & Post-test, Experimental and Control groups)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Groups		F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pre-test Exp. Vs. Cont.	Equal variances assumed	.995	.322	-.430	68	.669	-1.22	2.85	-6.93	4.47
	Equal variances not assumed			-.430	66.5	.669	-1.22	2.85	-6.93	4.47
Post-test Exp. Vs. Cont.	Equal variances assumed	.363	.549	2.978	68	.004	7.85	2.63	2.59	13.12
	Equal variances not assumed			2.978	67.9	.004	7.85	2.63	2.59	13.12

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Table 2 shows that both groups are homogeneous at the beginning of the treatment in the pre-tests since the difference between the pre-tests of both groups is not significant. Thus there is not any significant difference between the pre-tests of the control and experimental groups ($p<0.05$). However, the difference between the post-tests of both groups at the end of the treatment is significant ($p<.05$). The descriptive statistics of each group's pre and post-test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (Pre and Post-test of each group, Experimental and Control)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test Experimental	22.71	35	12.81215	2.16565
	Post-test Experimental	33.62	35	11.18057	1.88986
Pair 2	Pre-test Control	23.94	35	11.03189	1.86473
	Post-test Control	25.77	35	10.89275	1.84121

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics in the experimental and control groups' pre and post-tests. The means of the groups were compared through paired samples *t*-test to examine any significant difference between each group's pre and post-test in Table 4.

Table 4. Paired Samples t-test (Pre-test, Experimental and Control groups)

		Paired Differences					*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre and post-test Experimental	-10.91	17.90	3.02	-17.06	-4.76	-3.606	34	.001
Pair 2	Pre and post-test Control	-1.82	10.86	1.83	-5.56	1.90	-.996	34	.327

Table 4 reveals that, there is a significant difference between the pre and post-test of the experimental group while the difference between the pre and post-test in the control group is not significant ($p<0.05$). In other words, the experimental group outperformed the control groups.

5. Discussion

The statistical findings of the study are discussed in this section concerning the following research question: Does the use of discourse structure-based mind mapping software affect EFL students' vocabulary development?

The results of this study may fill a gap in the literature and provide empirical evidence for the effectiveness of mind mapping software on students' vocabulary learning of selected texts. The results of the study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group since

there was a significant difference between the two groups' post-tests. At the local level, this study has set out with the aim at discovering whether the use of mental maps may affect the students' learning new vocabularies. The mental maps can clearly make the link between drawing students' attention to discourse structures in texts through visualization and facilitate reading comprehension. Martinez's (2002) ideas are in line with the results of this research that the use of text structures as mental maps can facilitate and improve EFL students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension of the written texts in English. In the current study, the completion of the mind mapping software caused the learners to be more actively involved with the texts and to take charge of their own learning.

Classroom teachers should make sure that the tasks they have devised are engaging enough and necessitate active participation of their learners. Discourse structure-based mind mapping software might be utilized in a preparation session for a summary task by classroom teachers and learners because mind mapping software has the attribute of organizing textual information and giving it additional coherence. The findings of the study may help the teachers to restructure their reading activities. The results of the study are likely to be significant for the teachers in institutions, as well as text-book developers. They might or might not decide to incorporate mind mapping software into the designs of the text-books they develop on the basis of the findings of this study (Jiang & Grabe, 2007).

The findings indicated that after the intervention in the experimental group, vocabulary knowledge was developed learners who were exposed to mind mapping activities. It shows that, mind mapping tasks as pedagogical tools are significant instructional means that may effectively improve learners' vocabulary domain in a reading comprehension course. The results highlighted the importance of multimedia and technology in language acquisition which may raise the level of motivation among EFL learners to strengthen their cognitive abilities. Moreover, this helps to strengthen the imaging systems which are an indispensable part of learners' lives.

Computer is considered to facilitate vocabulary development through multimedia which refers to computer-based instruction and using various types of contents and genres in the format of texts, audios, videos, graphics, animations, etc. Multimedia is thus 'computer-based' and 'interactive'-oriented approaches that the teachers should pay more attention to the existence of these teaching tools. They can help the learners in vocabulary development in technology-based or Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)-based approaches to teaching vocabulary. In this case, EFL teachers may be free from long and boring processes of teaching vocabularies through traditional approaches like pen and paper activities or white board exercises and they are also allowed to focus more on vital needs of the language learners such as communicative activities. However, being a skilled L1 reader is not enough to be an active and successful participant of society if he does not know vocabulary. If one is to pursue a career and achieve advancement, L2 reading skills constitute a significant challenge. Therefore, a very large percentage of people around the world are encouraged to learn to read a second language as students in formal academic settings. These ideas are in line with Grabe (2009) who suggest that mind mapping software can present both the main ideas and the macro level structures of the text effectively. It can also be used as a testing device to discriminate better between weak and strong EFL learners in assessing any skills or sub-skills.

6. Conclusion

The present study confirms that the mind mapping software can enhance vocabulary development among pre-university student. The participants showed no significant difference in the pre-test while after the treatment sessions of using mind mapping software the findings revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group significantly. There are several studies (e.g., Carrell, 1984, 1985; Martinez, 2002; Wang & Cao, 2009) that support the findings of this study. This may enhance the learners' cognitive processes which is an advantage of the mind mapping software. The other advantage of the mind mapping software is that the words in the learners' mental structures could be the comprehension of the content in the texts through vocabularies in charts. These vocabularies activate the associations among the semantic or grammatical relationships that could ling the learners' background knowledge and the unknown knowledge.

The teachers may use mind mapping software to facilitate the students' comprehension of the reading passages in the classroom environment and this technique worked efficiently. This could be taken one step further and mind mapping software can be utilized as an assessment tool in actual testing situations. Since filling in mind mapping software requires seeing the inter-relationships between ideas, understanding main ideas, focusing on key vocabulary and making some inferences, they might be used to test a number of reading constructs. The graphic organizer treatment should be extended over a period of time much longer than three weeks. Teachers should ensure that students are consistently and continuously exposed to mind mapping software tasks. In this way, students can be given an opportunity to observe the full impact of visual facilitation on their language performance and they might develop more positive attitudes towards graphic organizer activities.

Further studies are needed to address the effects of mind mapping software on the other language skills and sub-skills. There is also a need to assess the various strategies that the learners use to deal with mind mapping activities in different text types or genres. The future researchers may work on the links between discourse structure awareness and vocabulary learning. The relationships between using visual representations of textual information and reading performance need to be explored in future research.

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THE USE OF REFERRING AND PREDICTING ACTIVITIES ON LEARNING LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract
This study investigated the uses of the referring and predicting language learning activities in learning language functions among senior high school students. Fifty laerners were selected through the use of oxford quich placement test (oqpt). Then they were divided in two equal experimetal groups of referring and predicting. They took a teacher-made pre-test of language functions at the beginning of the study to assess their prior knowledge on language functions of their text book. Then they participated in the 10 treatment sessions. Both groups covered ten-dialogs in the text book and learned the language functions through both activities. The referring group received instructions on how to point to the people and objects directly or indirectly. The predicting group learned how to guess the possible future events and opprtunities based on the available data. Finally, the post-test was administered to both groups. Data were analyzead through independent and paired samples t-test and results revealed that the referring group outperformed the predicting one. Implications suggest that language teachers may teach language functions through referring activities rather than the predicting ones since the learners can learn language functions in the real contexts.

Key words: referring, predicting, language functions

1. Introduction

The present study focused on two main activities including prediction and referential in teaching language functions to pre-intermediate learners. A prediction is what the individual thinks may happen based upon the linguistic structures of the text, the author, and the background knowledge. A prediction is a kind of guess as to think on the future. Use clues from events along with what the individuals know from their own experiences to feel what is happening next. It is the act of reasoning about the future based on past experience (Akmajian, 2010). For example, the people can confidently predict that day will follow night. With prediction they can guess what is happening before and during the stories. They do not really need any evidence to foretell what they think of what will happen.

According to Akmajian (2010), a prediction or forecast is a statement about the things will be happened in the future, but it is not always based on personal experiences or knowledge. Although predicting accurate information about the future in many cases is impossible, prediction can be useful to apply in making mappings about the next developments; Stevenson (1998) writes that prediction in business "... is at least two things: Important and hard." The term "prediction" is mostly used to refer to an informed opinion or idea. A prediction of this kind might be valid if the predictor is an educated person in the field and is employing reliable data.

Large predictions or guessing in this kind of activity bring focus attention on possible events, and opportunities. Such guessing brings available past and current data, as a basis to develop expectations in the future.

Using referring and predicting activities as an integral part of language ability has become highly important in language teaching and learning process. It is believed that if EFL learners do not know how to employ referring and predicting activities in a foreign/ second language, they will use their own language strategies and, consequently, misunderstandings occur and learning faces some obstacles (Bayat, 2013). Students also think that learning a new language is only memorizing some vocabularies and structural elements; they are not able to manipulate language in the real context; they do not know how to use clues to establish successful communication and read a text successfully. They do not know how to use predicting and referring to understand what is going to happen next; they use language inappropriately in the context and suffer from pragmatic failures although they are grammatically advanced learners. These are some problems that the researcher tries to solve. In addition, since there are few studies which reveal effects of using referring and predicting activities in learning language functions among senior high school students, the present study is conducted to cover this issue (Bayat, 2013). Regarding the difficulties that EFL learners encounter, more research in the field of language functions should be carried out so that the researcher will get a better insight into instruction of referring and predicting activities. Referring and predicting activities instruction develop senior high school students' language functions. This study focuses on the following research question: Does referring or predicting activities develop senior high school students' language functions?

This study will follow one main objective; it will explore if referring and predicting activities instruction develops senior high school students' language functions. .Many researches have been conducted on the different types of speech acts (e.g., pragmatic and meta-pragmatic awareness) inspected from various angles in Iran, but little attention has been paid to referring and predicting. Therefore, this study will investigate the probable effects of instruction of the less-attended speech act - referring and predicting- in learning language functions (Alcón & Martínez-Flor, 2008).

Since a good knowledge of speech acts has a great effect on the learners' linguistic knowledge, the learners need to pay attention to select appropriate learning strategies. This study would guide Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners who are trying to develop their speech act knowledge in general and the use of referring and predicting strategies in language functions in particular. Therefore, it would prove language functions of using referring and predicting strategies and lead English teachers to help and guide their students in the choice of the appropriate strategy to improve language functions.

2. Background

2.1. Referring and Predicting Activities

In referring and predicting, there are three factors which are very important to distinguish what a speaker means from what a sentence means. We have to distinguish what a speaker means from what a sentence means. Speakers can mean what they say, not mean what they say, or mean more than they say. However, when speakers mean, say, or implicate something by an utterance, it determines what is meant, said, or implicated (Akmajian, 2010). In referring and predicting, speakers can mean to communicate more than they say. A special and interesting type of communication has been noted by Hudson (1996) under the label of *conversationalimplicature*, so called because what is implied is implicated by virtue of the fact that the speaker and hearer are cooperatively contributing to a conversation. Prediction also crucially guides learning through the updating of future estimations about the state of the world (Schultz & Dickinson, 2000).

Referring is a relation that gets out between certain kinds of representational tokens (e.g., names, mental states, pictures) and objects. For instance, when it is said that "George W. Bush is a president," a special kind of representational token is used, i.e. the name 'George W. Bush', referring to a particular individual-named, George W. Bush. While names and other referential tokens are the only type of representational tokens capable of referring, linguistic tokens like these types have been into the nature of reference. Accordingly, this type of token will focus

completely on linguistic reference. However, we can get the meaning of such things. For instance, shall I manage to talk about George W. Bush and meanwhile saying meaningful and true things about him? In one word: how shall *refer* to George W. Bush by the name of 'George. W. Bush metaphorically, we should be able to use language to talk about the world because words somehow mean differently. Proper names, like 'George W. Bush' and 'Tony Blair', are considered as paradigmatic referring expressions. Although it seems implausible to believe that *all* words refer, several different types of words are referring sorts. These include: proper names, natural terms, indexical, and definite descriptions (Soozandehfar & Sahragard, 2011).

The main reason behind learning a second language in general and speech act strategies in specific to achieve the ultimate goal, which is to know and understand information similar to that of native speakers of a language. As a consequence, that would lead to the need to know the referring and predicting strategies of native speakers. Furthermore, Nation (2006) claims that second language learners need to know around 98% of the written or spoken words in discourse in order to understand it very well. In order to reach this percentage in written texts, learners need to know pragmatics as well. On the other hand, learners need to know pragmatic competence in order to understand speech act strategies and vice-versa. The concept of an activity or strategy is rather difficult to explain and there are several different views concerning what a strategy or activity really is (Schultz & Dickinson, 2000).

2.2. Speech Acts

The theory of speech acts aims to the fact that even though words encode information, people do more things through words to give information. Thus they often convey more than their words encode (Austin, 1962). Although the focus of speech act theory has been on utterances like face-to-face interaction, the speech acts should be taken as intended utterances which are intentionally motivated (Searl, 1969).

The people who act a pertinent feature are that when they act intentionally, generally they have a set of nested intentions. For instance, having arrived home without their keys, one might push a door button with the intention not just of pushing the button but of ringing a bell. Thus ultimately, getting into a house needs having the keys. The single bodily movement involved in pushing the button and ringing the bell. Similarly, speech acts are not just single acts of producing certain sounds; they carry intentions (Bach & Harnish, 1979).

There is an indirect connection of an utterance (e.g., Outside is very cold) and its intended meaning which may be a request (e.g., Please close the door) or it is just a suggestion (e.g., Shall we go into the house?) that means to change the place for having a conversation (Austin, 1962). Whether this utterance is intended to express a request or a proposal depends on the contextual information that the speaker and hearer relies on. This can be possible if the connection between the word and deed is more direct than in the above examples, for the forms of the sentences uttered may fail to determine just what kind of illocutionary act is performed. For instance, shaking hands can depend on the circumstances and the context in which this performance is done would be different. It may mean do several different things: (e.g., introduce someone, greeting, do a deal, farewell, etc.). Similarly, a given sentence can be used for different ways, so that, for example, "I will see your father." may be used as a prediction, a promise, or a warning. The problem is that how one can determine its intention that the sort of act it is (Austin, 1962). Guessing, expectation, inference, understanding, foresight, and forecasting are all terms that are used to refer to different types of predictive processes that happen in the social situations. Predictive processing may refer to any psychological processes that an individual uses to estimate about the future (Friston & Kiebel, 2009). Thus are three main predictive concepts that are related to different aspects of the predictive social situations. They are inferencing, predicting, and simulating. Inferencing may refer to determining a short-term process that is situated in the current behavior. Therefore, it is probabilistic estimations about the state of the world (Friston & Kiebel, 2009).

In opposite, the term "prediction" refers to generally more related to long-term expectations which are made about the potential and actual events for future events which occur. Simulation can be the happenings that could be imagined by the individuals in their minds as a constructed

internal representation of imagination (Gilbert & Wilson, 2007) regarding the individuals' episodic memory (Williams, Ellis, Tyers, Healy, Rose & Macleod, 1996). This may include the processes such as scene constructions which are recalled and integrated the individuals' previous experiences to form the coherent events or mental images. These images could be real or unreal in nature but all may be shaped based on the realities outside the individuals mind.

Kronfeld and Roberts (1998) note that definite referring expressions that have been understood as exclusively the ability to uniquely identify objects such as the examples of noun phrases with the linguistic nature occurring in the texts. In the present research, referring activity refers to the expressions serve other discourse functions since they show an action with a referent, the referent's status as a role function (e.g., a waiter is the referent of hospitality and use the speech differently from a boss in the company). They also refer to the viewpoints from which the referents are presented. All of this information contributes to the role of discourse referents which is therefore a part of the speech acts of referring activity. In other words, interlocutors do not talk about the mere objects in a neutral fashion, but they refer to the functions of the speech plays in a conversation. Thus, the notion of a reference cannot be restricted to objects. It can refer to cases to show the function of an expression.

Referring and predicting activities in learning language functions among the learners could follow the framework of the predictive and referring brain from Barsalou (2009) who describes the activities based on the individual brain's re-enactment of perception, motor, and introspective states of mind (e.g., motivation, intentions, cognition, metacognition, etc.). For the sake of integration, the use of the terms "referring and predictive" in this article does not only refer to higher-level long-time expectations about the future, but are also including the more fundamental low-level short-time predictive or referring processes of mind. Communicative actions are expressed from the motor skills in the individuals' mind and then the commands observed by the brain in action which finally causes changes in the observer's behaviors, and start communicative actions from the persons in contact. This model of social interaction may be supposed to allow us to make referring or predicting and learn about the behaviors of another people in conversations in response to our own communicative actions (Bach, 1994).

Searle (1976) explains that various types of speech acts are frequently used in every day communication and believes that different types of happenings in the contexts enable the interlocutors to use various types of speech acts in order to follow the basic relationships between the speakers and hearers in their social lives. Thus the speakers of a language need to be competently pragmatic and functional in all the aspects of functional activities. Learners of that language also need to obtain knowledge of all types of speech act activities or strategies which enable them to use appropriate speech acts in different communicative situations.

Regarding the English language learners, English books include various types of Searle's (1976) speech acts which is a demanding task for the EFL teachers to be aware of theses forms and functions on the one hand and try to teach the language learners how to perform various forms conveying different functions on the other. It means that if the existing speech acts are not completely distributed throughout English textbooks in schools, the teachers need to deal with them in extra materials or provide the learners with enough chances to perform them in the real contexts (Batjargal, 2010).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

In the present research, the population was 70 male students who studied English as a foreign language in Anzan senior high school in Izeh. Fifty students were selected based on their scores of the band score from 18 to 39. Thus their level of proficiency was determined through OQPT as the pre-intermediate. Then they were divided into two experimental groups through non-random convenience sampling method, one experimental and one control. Each group included twenty-five participants. One experimental group received instruction about referring and the other received predicting activities on learning language functions.

3.2. Instrumentations

In order to conduct the aim of this study, the following instruments were applied:

1. OQPT was used to determine the participants' homogeneity and the level of proficiency to divide the research sample into two experimental groups. This test included 60 items and five band scores. Time allotted to this test was 60 minutes. The reliability and validity of this test were reported in some works.
2. Pre-test: The second instrument was a teacher-made test and it was designed based on the participants' sixth grade of high school. It included 20 multiple-choice items. The items included a stem and three functional responses with one correct choice and two distractors. The participants were supposed to select the correct choice which was closer to the stem response. It was similar to a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) which was one of the most frequently used means for collecting data in Inter-language pragmatics (ILP). Its content validity was confirmed by two experts and it was given to a small sample of students other than the participants to estimate the reliability of the test in a pilot study. It reliability was calculated as (r=.697) through Kuder-Richardson formula (KR-21) formula.
3. Post-test: To determine the effect of referring and predicting strategies on learning language functions among senior high school students, the pre-test was modified in terms of format to avoid the learners' reminding of the items. The items and the content of the post-test were similar to the pre-test. Since there were these changes, the reliability of the test was estimated through KR-21 as (r= .804).

3.3. Procedure

Accomplishing the aim of the current study, first 70 male students were selected from Anzan high school in Izeh. Then they took OQPT as a homogeneity test which was administered to the participants under instruction to determine their homogeneity level. The learners who got the scores between 18 and 39 out of 60 were selected as the pre-intermediate learners as well as the participants of the study. They were non-randomly were divided into two equal groups. The two experimental groups took a teacher-made referring and predicting pre-test randomly at the beginning of the study. The pre-test calculated their level of proficiency in using the appropriate referring and predicting functions. Then they participated in 14 treatment sessions.

In each session of the course, the participants were taught language functions in two different activities to teach the actual functioning of language. The first hour was specified to language function instruction in the text book and the rest to teaching referring and predicting activities in two classes. The research took place in classroom situations completely. Motivating and encouraging the participants to pay more attention and playing an active role in the research program, they were told that the aim of the extra instruction was to improve their knowledge about language functions in the course book and to enable them to use referring and predicting activities on learning language functions.

The entire research project was held in 14 sessions. Ten completing texts or dialogues were chosen and a variety of blank spaces that make the students learn how the words fill the spaces and predict or refer to the missed functional expression. They could guess the missed words. During the sessions of instruction, 90 minutes each, the functional words and their related dialogues or texts were worked on. Both group received instructions about referring and predicting strategies, for example; how they can guess the missed words in terms of language functions.

In order to teach referring and predicting activities in the classes, the following steps were presented:

Step 1: In the first session, referring and predicting strategies were presented and explained explicitly. Also, they were described to students why, when, and how these strategies were applied.

Step 2: Each session, before teaching language function part, the teacher presented the students with the challenging of how we can predict the answers or refer to some words that can be applied as answers extracted from key words printed on a piece of paper. The focus of the study was based on the usage of referring and predicting activities on learning language functions among senior high school students and the predetermined categories of speech act strategies were specified.

Step 3: The learners were gathered in groups of three or four round the class, and after explaining key words for language function, they were directed to classify the predicted or

referred words or concepts about language functions generally, based on the topic, their background knowledge and their previous experiences.

Step 4: The learners were given incomplete dialogues in language function asking from which the words had been placed.

Step 5: After each session, the learners rested about ten minutes and right after the break time there was a ten-matching question test asking predicted or referred words learnt in that session.

The groups received instructions about referring and predicting activities on learning language functions as treatment. The learners were seated in groups of three or four round the class as in the experimental group and were easily given the language function samples and required to do exercises and asked the instructor in any case of facing problems. Finally, at the end of the course, the post-test was given to the two groups to evaluate the usage of referring and predicting activities after the treatment.

3.4. Data Analysis

The collected data were collected, analyzed and interpreted according to the objectives of the study. Finally, independent and paired samples *t*-test were employed to find out the effects of referring and predicting activities instruction on learning the language functions of English language among senior high school students.

4. Results

Descriptive statistics of the two groups' scores were compared their knowledge on language functions. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Referring	25	10.7200	3.54166	.70833
	Predicting	25	10.8400	3.54354	.70871

Table 1 shows that the means at the two groups are very close to each other. In order to find out whether the difference between the two groups was significant, Independent samples t-test were applied in Table 2.

Table 2.Independent Samples t-Test (Pre-test, Referring vs. Predicting)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pre-te	Equal variances	.129	.721	-.	48	.905	-.1200	1.00	-2.13	1.89

st	assumed	120						
	Equal variances not assumed	-.120	48.0	.905	-.1200	1.00	-2.13	1.895

Table 2 shows that the observed *t* (.120) is less than the critical *t* (1.684) with df=48. Thus the difference between the two groups' pre-test is not significant at (p<0.05). This showed that the groups were homogeneous before the research period at the pre-test level.

Table 3.Descriptive Statistics (Post-test, Referring vs. Predicting)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	Referring	25	16.4000	3.40343	.68069
	Predicting	25	12.5600	2.43379	.48676

Table 3 shows that the mean in the referring group differs significantly from the other group, and also the mean for referring group shows difference to some degree from predicting group. To describe the statistical significance of the two groups' means, An independent samples *t*-test was applied to compare the significant level of difference between the two groups. Results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.*Independent Samples t-Test (Post-test, Referring vs. Predicting)*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	1.642	.206	4.589	48	.000	3.840	.836	2.157	5.522

Table 4 shows that the observed *t* (4.589) is greater than the critical *t* (1.684) with df=48. Thus the difference between the groups is significant at (p<0.05). In other words, the referring group outperformed the predicting group significantly. Paired Samples *t*-test was also run out indicate

the difference between the participants' pre-test and post-test. The descriptive statistics is shown in Table 5.

Table 5.Descriptive Statistics (Pre vs. Post-tests)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Referring-Pre-test	10.7200	25	3.54166	.70833
	Referring-Post-test	16.4000	25	3.40343	.68069
Pair 2	Predicting-pre-test	10.8400	25	3.54354	.70871
	Predicting-post-test	12.5600	25	2.43379	.48676

Table 5 shows that the means between the pre and post- tests in both groups are different. In other words, the post-test mean scores are higher than the pre-test mean scores. However, to find the significance level of differences, paired samples *t*-test was run. Results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.Descriptive Statistics (Pre vs. Post-tests)

		Paired Differences					*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Referring-Pre-test vs. Post-test	-5.68	3.79	.758	-7.246	-4.113	-7.486	24	.000
Pair 2	Predicting-Pre-test vs. Post-test	-1.72	4.26	.853	-3.481	.041	-2.015	24	.055

Table 6 indicates that the observed *t* (7.486) is greater than the critical *t* (1.711) with df=24. Thus the difference between the pre and post-tests is significant at ($p<0.05$) in the referring group. Since the observed *t* (2.015) is less than the critical *t* (1.711) with df=24, the difference between the pre and post-tests is not significant at ($p<0.05$) in the predicting group.

5. Discussion

To discuss the results of the study, the research question raised earlier in the current study will be discussed as follows:Does referring or predicting activities improve senior high school students' language functions?

The results of data analysis showed that there was not a significant difference between students' performance in the pre-tests of the two groups. It has also been observed that the students who received referring strategies on learning language functions got better scores and their performance was better than the predicting group. The reasons toward this result could be argued in terms of the effectiveness in usage of the speech act activities on learning language functions among senior high school students. This research question sought to investigate the effect of referring strategy to EFL learners. Based on the findings, it can be argued that instruction has a significantly affected participants‟ use of referring activity on learning language functions among senior high school students. This study seems to be supported by Schmidt's (1990) idea which regarded noticing as an important condition for acquisition. According to Schmidt, awareness is required for learning to take place and noticing is needed to input to intake. Regarding the present research, explicit teaching of propositional acts during different stages of the treatment leads learners notice the functions of language. The reason could be the use of

referring strategies which helped the referring group's participants. The referring group outperformed the predicting group since they did some exercises such as: dual coding activities, distinctive encoding, decreasing in interference, processing of supporting, enhancing motivation, focusing on attention, depth of processing, clarification in text content. However, the predictive group worked on guessing the meaning of the context, clues, formal structures and vocabulary meaning. The fact that referring group outperformed the other group indicates that this group not only learned referring and predicting activities, but also learned the use of these activities on learning language functions.

Takahashi (1996) supports the findings of this study and notes that teachers of English may gain insights into the role of speech act method toward the learners' learning processes and ways to complete this method in teaching communicative method. Speech act method may serve to help (1) establishing the setting, (2) defining and developing the characters and subjects, (3) extending and developing the plans, (4) providing several viewpoints, (5) contributing the text's coherence and cohesion, and (6) reinforcing the text. The results showed that the referring group's scores were higher than the second group's score which shows the positive effect of referring instruction on learning language function (Chen, 1996).

6. Conclusion

This research started with the assumption that applying speech act including referring and predicting strategies could improve the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL senior high school learners' language functions. The teacher explored to see if the application of these activities has any usage on the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL senior high school learners' language functions. However, the referring group received explanations of the use of form and function, turn taking strategies and the contexts in which the form and functions are used. These results are in line with Koosha and Vahid Dastjerdi (2012) who note that Learners' autonomy is the final goal of English language learning. Learners' autonomy can be applied in the absence of language teachers and classes. So, language learners can continue their learning.

The findings of the current research are in line with Kasper and Rose (2002) who suggest that the learners require adopting more responsibility in their learning and relying less on instructors and adopt cooperative learning. If the learners are solely and completely dependent on their instructors, as soon as they are left alone, they might have loss in learning. Strategy training in language function is a useful path to eliminate or decrease this problem. Language learning by strategy training is the way through which learner's autonomy can correctly be taken**.** As a result, the learners are also suggested to get familiar with innovative speech act strategies, especially referring and predicting strategies and their principles in order to get profit from their advantages

A future research can be conducted to assess immediate and delayed post-tests at various time intervals to present the effectiveness of speech act strategies on learning language functions in shorter and longer periods. The current research lasted for five weeks. Successful studies need much more time to the instruction of language function through speech act strategies.

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USING CLIL METHOD IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract
The present research examined the effect of content and language integrated learning (clil) on second language (l2) learners at the intermediate level. Seventy learners were selected as the participants of the study through oxford quick placement test (oqpt). Then they were divided in two equal experimental and control groups through non-random sampling method. A teacher-made pre-test was given to the participants to assess their vocabulary at the beginning of the study. Both groups studied the text book "select readings: intermediate" (lee, 2011). The experimental group followed clil method including vocabulary functions, contextual clues, and vocabulary structures. The control group received instruction on learning vocabulary throgh definitions, synonyms, antonyms and explanations. After 14 sessions of treatment in both classes, the post-test which was the modified version of the pre-test was given to the participants at the end of the treatment. Data were analyzed through independent samples t-test and results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group significantly. Implications suggest that second language (l2) teachers should teach both forms and functions of the vocabularies in the reading passages.

Key words: clil, vocabulary, intermediate level, form, function

1. Introduction

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) was initiated in Europe in 1994 (Mehisto (2012). Ortiz (2014) stated that this method is against the outcomes of grammar or form-focused language teaching. It also gained the strength by theories about natural language learning, an alternative method for language teaching which was created in the 1960s (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989).

According to Mearns (2012), the forces of global change, converging technologies and adaptability to the subsequent knowledge to achieve new educational methods for the teaching and learning of foreign languages. This is true for the learning of English globally, and for the learning of regional, minority and heritage languages in different parts of the world. First, the change brought about by the new technologies and lifestyle change concerns the learners' mindset. Second, exposure to new technology at a very young age in the form of game tools and devices like mobiles, tablets, personal computers and the Internet can make an atmosphere in which the young people find new teaching sources. Thus new generation may be harder for older generations to adapt, having been brought up with different thinking conventions. The acceleration of new technology is having an impact on the lives and aspirations of many people, therefore, better access to language learning, and learning methods for accelerating performance, are now crucial in many communities.

Following Ortiz's (2014) research, this empirical study aims to investigate the effect of CLIL programs on students' reading improvement and finds out if there is a difference between the improvement of learners who are involved in CLIL programs through their learning process and those who are not involved in CLIL programs. This study tries to present a new method to teach a foreign language more effectively. Therefore, the result can be applied by teachers, administrators, researchers, curriculum developers and test makers.

1.1. Using CLIL in Teaching Vocabulary

CLIL can be used in different areas of teaching including vocabulary comprehension since vocabulary is the common core of dealing with other language teaching skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. Thus CLIL means teaching through visuals and activities, presenting stories and teaching through fun and games. The tasks include information gap activity (Prabhu, 1987), reasoning-gap activity (Prabhu, 1987) and opinion-gap activity (Ellis, 2003). Accordingly, assessment should incorporate the assessment of language competencies and assessment of content knowledge. Thus it accounts for the goals and objectives of two different matters such as background knowledge of the learners for dealing with both language and content. Therefore, the assessment task should be devised to help learners and to show both the content and language they have learned.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Vocabulary learning functions as a cornerstone without which no language could exist. Learning a language would be meaningless and perhaps impossible through having structures without vocabulary. Thus the learners' knowledge of lexicon is important in any learning processes. The main reason is that the lexicon is an element of any language skills that carry meanings. In other words, the language learners need to understand and express the language meanings of the content. For several reasons, they help students remember the words better and they help the teacher to make the lesson more interesting and beneficial.

The need for vocabulary learning on the part of the students is something upon which both students and teachers agree. The problem is not with the importance of vocabulary but the ways or techniques through which students can better learn, retain and retrieve vocabularies. Students know what to learn, but they imply do not know how to learn it. Consequently; it is essential for language learners to have a variety of vocabulary learning strategies at their disposed to choose the ones which are more effective for them. This study would guide English as foreign language (EFL) learners, trying to develop their vocabulary recall in general and use the pictorial based method on vocabulary learning in particular, to arrive at the importance of using the memory strategies on improving vocabulary recall. Therefore, it would prove the pedagogical value of using CLIL method and lead EFL instructors to help and guide their students in selection of the right vocabulary in language skills to enhance language abilities.

In short, this study would guide Iranian junior high school students and 12 to 14 years old who are trying to improve their vocabulary size. Therefore, it would prove the pedagogical values of using CLIL method which enables the teachers to provide their students with sufficient input. The research question of the present study is: Does CLIL affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary achievement?

2. Literature Review

In CLIL, the content or subject matter is at the heart of what is taught and it is the content that determines what thinking skills, what language and what aspects of culture the teacher aims to teach. Valdivia (2012) believes that in teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on the content, but also on the language. Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time. CLIL is an educational approach which satisfies both educational and contextual demands. Although it concerns the four skills, its most emphasis is on receptive skills (i.e., listening and reading) since they provide learners with necessary input which enables them to present productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing). As a matter of fact with CLIL, learning the content and learning the language are equally important curriculum subjects for the students,

and are developed and integrated slowly but steadily. In the long run, students learn the content and the new language in formal settings that make them ready to use the language in informal and natural situations (Montalto, Walter, Theodorou, & Chrysanthou, 2015).

Production, considered by Muñoz (2007) as the last essential component and output of learning, and was defended by Swan and Lapkin (1995) through their Output hypothesis. According to them, a teaching methodology which only provides input and does not demand production from the learners is weak. Apart from giving the learners ample opportunities by making the input more understandable, learners need opportunities to practice the target language with different purposes and aims at their level of language competence. Munoz (2007) stated that output gives the learners two main benefits. On the one hand, in context of formal learning, it gives the learners the possibility of choosing the most appropriate and the most accurate form and on the other hand, it makes the learners aware of their errors and motivates correction.

According to Pavesi, Bertocchi, Hofmannová, and Kazianka (2001), CLIL is based on sound theoretical bases. The main language learning assumptions of CLIL concern quantity and quality of exposure to the foreign language as well as increased motivation to learn. Regarding need of exposure, the language teachers should consider exposure as a natural language learning strategy in the achievement of a good amount of vocabulary. Regarding quality of exposure, CLIL not only offers better learning conditions in terms of more exposure to the foreign language, but also offers a good quality of linguistic exposure. Regarding motivation, CLIL relies on intrinsic motivation, that is, the learners are involved in interesting and meaningful vocabulary activities (i.e. vocabularies in use) while using the language. Moreover, its features, CLIL entails several core features including multiple focus, safe and enriching learning environment, authenticity, active learning, scaffolding and cooperation (Mehisto, 2012).

A wide range of resources in CLIL (i.e., posters, flashcards, dictionaries, visual or graphic organizers, etc.) can be provided through Internet, can greatly contribute to making the subject content comprehensible (Munoz, 2014). One of the key concepts for selecting materials is multi-modal input which is various ways of presenting subject specific matters visually (i.e., through maps, diagrams, etc.) and they not only allow for diversified teaching and promote visual literacy, but also enable a deeper understanding of the specific subject content and serve to illustrate and clarify complex matters presented in a foreign language (Munoz, 2014).

2.1. Learning Vocabulary

Research on vocabulary in recent years has done a great deal to clarify the proficiency level the learners in using the vocabularies needed to achieve in order to comprehend the reading passages. Thus they need to process different kinds of oral and written texts, as well as the kinds of strategies learners use in understanding, using, and remembering words. Accordingly, teaching vocabulary may involve saying the word clearly and write it on the board, and then ask the learners to do several classroom activities (i.e., group and individual activities including repetition, translation, drawing, question and answer, definitions, dramatization, etc.). Vocabulary can be presented, explained, and included in all kinds of activities, but it must be learned by the individual. Therefore, language teachers must motivate the teachers to study sources of the words and develop their vocabulary knowledge. They also must help their students by giving those ideas on how to learn vocabulary and some guidance on what to learn. So the position of appropriate context, in relation to the problem needs to be specified in a way that Iranian EFL learners bring that strategy to their vocabulary tasks. Unfortunately, such awareness of the role of these strategies in prompting vocabulary knowledge has been ignored since the understanding of the new vocabularies has only been limited of looking up their definitions in the dictionaries.

Iranian EFL learners may learn different target words to build up their lexicon and become familiar with different phrases characteristics used in the texts. They also do some more practice in vocabulary in order to improve their comprehension and finally apply what they have learned in prompting their vocabulary recall. However, when it comes, to real comprehension of the context and then putting the vocabulary to recall and retention, majority of them fail. The use of proper strategy by learners with the aid of teachers in developing vocabulary recall is considerable importance. So the strategies should be explained by the teachers to make the

students understand of their use andto extend those strategies to other similar occasions (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Thus teaching vocabulary involves in providing the EFL learners with the context clues and structural elements such as grammatical points to form the coherent passage. This can make and create a mental image of the vocabulary. The students need to find out the ways to set about words to their vocabulary and also know the meanings of words. The words students encounter are of different types. Some words are used every day (i.e., active vocabulary) and some are used in specific situations (i.e., passive vocabulary). The easiest way to increase one's vocabulary is to recognize new things and about new experiences. The context clues often lead to the meaning of unfamiliar words. It would be helpful to refer to dictionary when the context clues do not provide clues to the meaning of the words. She also emphasizes the importance of recognizing the word elements which include: prefixes, suffixes, roots synonyms and antonyms.

A number of attempts (e.g., Coyle, 2007; Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2007; Gefall, 2009; Krashen, 1985; Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Stoller, 2004; Van de Craen & Mondt, 2003; Wolff, 2007; Xanthou, 2010) have been made to develop the ideas on vocabulary learning strategies, mostly as part of a piece of research into learners strategy use. Thus different processes are necessary for working out a new word's meanings and usages, and for consolidating it in memory for future uses. Some English teachers in Taiwan encourage students to increase their vocabulary through extensive reading, or even suggest rote memory of words in the dictionary as a means. All these approaches may fit certain number of students, but when dealing a large number of words or the timeliness of learning them, the effective principles suggested by learning psychology can be useful (Thornbury, 2004)

Merikivi and Paivi (2014) did their research about teaching vocabulary through CLIL in Finland, found out that CLIL environments would require the students to produce the second language more frequently and further lexical activation. It was revealed that learners in CLIL invested more effort into acquiring vocabulary in general. They concluded that the CLIL environment seemed to be more conducive to word acquisition, especially the development of active vocabulary, than the traditional language learning classroom (Fernandez & Halbach, 2011).

Zurek (2012) in the Czech Republic used CLIL to teach mathematics to students of 6th to 9th grade and found out that learners who are taught through CLIL are more successful in learning mathematics than others. Xanthou (2010) used this method to teach vocabulary and found out that CLIL provides opportunities for deep vocabulary learning strengthening the relationship between the semantic and syntactic form of a word and its morph-phonological form. More specifically, CLIL activated students' prior knowledge, and provide students with opportunities to learn vocabulary in context. Therefore, she concluded that learning content through the medium of the L2 may offer constant opportunities for activating background knowledge, learning L2 vocabulary in context, promoting active processing of new words, recalling target words, being provided with repeated exposures to target words offering incremental learning, and effective L2 vocabulary acquisition (Aldaz, 2013; Korpela, 2013).

Divljan (2012) also used CLIL to teach music songs, chants and rhymes are popular in EFL classroom as a source of authentic language and as appropriate way of drilling vocabulary and structures. Vocabularies related to musical instruments are a part of many learners' courses. The results showed that drawing interesting symbols above the lines and lyrics of song the makes students very interested and motivated in learning music (Ribé, 2000). Accordingly, the studies (e.g., Ringbom, 2012; Sierra, 2011) gave evidence that exposure to a meaningful and comprehensible language enhances vocabulary knowledge. He concluded that if the language is authentic, rich in content, enjoyable, and, above all, comprehensible, then learning is more successful. Therefore, CLIL can enhance vocabulary learning through encountering the target words in contexts and related information in the text as contextual clues within the content develops the learners' vocabulary domain.

Rott (1999) examined the effect of exposure frequency on intermediate learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition. Results showed that the exposures produced significantly more vocabulary knowledge. CLIL allows dealing with a particular topic for a sustained period of time providing recurring exposure to new vocabulary through clarifications, justifications, etc. with possible positive outcomes. Munoz (2014) studied the development of oral skills in

undergraduate students and one of their findings were that a higher confidence in one's own oral skills encouraged the students to use a more varied vocabulary, to speak more and to take more risk in terms of word use and formulations (Romova & Neville-Barton, 2007).

2.2. Statement of the Problem

Iranian English teachers have experienced that vocabulary learning ability is one of the major concerns of Iranian EFL learners. Most students have difficulty in learning vocabulary. Teacher, in broad sense, is responsible to manipulate appropriate methods of teaching English vocabulary to Iranian learners; however, there are a few works have been done in relation to learning and teaching vocabulary through CLIL in Iranian context. Yet, there are still questions that have remained untapped such as how to teach vocabulary effectively and how to make students learn vocabulary in short period of time. Considering the system of education in Iran, it is suggested that the problem of vocabulary learning should receive due attention even before the students enter the university, i.e. when they are at guidance and high school levels. Despite the fact that significant studies have been done concerning vocabulary a gap was perceived in the existing literature which has motivated the researcher to fill in this gap. This study is exclusively concerned with the investigation of the effect of CLIL method Iranian EFL learner's vocabulary ability. Therefore, it seems necessary to help learners with the use of the proper strategy in developing their learning in a way that they recall the meaning of a word.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The research population included90 first year university students who passed Reading Comprehension I at the Islamic University of Abadan. Their age was ranging between 18 and 50 years old. They enrolled in mixed gender classes and studied Reading II in three classes. They took Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) which helped the researchers to recognize the level of learners' proficiency. It included 60 items and the time allocated to this test was 60 minutes. The students who took between 30 and 47 out of 60 are classified into intermediate determine their level of proficiency. Seventy learners whose scores were between 30 and 47 were selected as the intermediate learners. Then they were non-randomly divided into two equal experimental and control groups through convenience sampling method.

3.2. Instrumentation

To accomplish the objective of the present study, the following instruments were employed:

A placement test: Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was used as a placement test to determine the participants' level. Its reliability was reported in some sources since it has been considered as a standard test.

The pretest and post-test: The pre-testincluded items extracted from the participants' text book "*Select readings: Intermediate*" developed by Lee (2011). The pre-test was designed based on 12 unites covered in the treatment sessions. The pre-test included 50 multiple-choice items and it focused on vocabulary recognition and production items. The test was taken to evaluate student's ability in vocabulary recognition at the beginning of the research period. The reliability of the test was tested on a small sample of students other than the participants to calculate the reliability index based on KR-21 method as (r=.794). The validity of the pre-test was met through examining of two experts in teaching EFL who confirmed its content validity. The post-test was a modified pre-test with the same content but different form to avoid the learners' reminding. Its content validity and reliability were met again. The reliability of the post-test was met as (r=.801).

3.3. Materials

Text book "*Select readings: Intermediate*" developed by Lee (2011) was used as the materials of the study. The classes were held 12 sessions and the participants review a unit of the book in each session. The first session was devoted to the pre-test, 12 sessions were devoted to treatment, and the last session was devoted to the post- test. Reading texts were based on social and scientific issues.

3.4. Procedure

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was used at the beginning of the study to assess the learners' proficiency level in order to have homogeneous intermediate learners. Thus 70 learners out of 90 first year learners who achieved the OQPT band score were selected as the participants of the study in the Azad University of Abadan. Then they were non-randomly divided in two experimental and control groups. Their age was ranging between 18 and 50 years old. They enrolled in mixed gender classes and studied Reading II in three intact classes. They took a re-test of vocabulary achievement designed based on their reading II text book "*Select readings: Intermediate*" developed by Lee (2011) including 12 units which were covered in 12 weeks. Two weeks were also allocated to the pre and post-test. The treatment sessions included the use of CLIL method in the experimental group and the traditional vocabulary teaching in the control one. Both groups had the same materials and time but they have two different class procedures. The experimental group dealt with CLIL method. The learners read the texts and the teacher explain the content of the study. Then the vocabularies of the texts were clarified in student-student and teacher-student interaction. The techniques in teaching vocabulary included teaching vocabulary function, contextual clues, content of the text, and vocabulary structures. The control group studied the units through traditional method of learning vocabulary. The main activities included vocabulary definitions, synonyms, antonyms, word explanations or even first language (L1) translation. After 12 sessions of treatment in both classes, the post-test which was a modified pre-test was given to the participants. In sum, two sessions were held to give the pre and post-test and 12 sessions for treatment. Each week, there were two sessions and each session lasted 90 minutes. At the end of the treatment, the participants took a post-test and data were collected. The data were analyzed through Independent Sample t-test to observe any significant difference between the pre and post-tests.

4. Results

The obtained results of groups in high levels were compared through Independent Samples *t*-test. The descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test in both groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	35	15.0571	11.78220	1.99155
Control	35	16.0857	9.95097	1.68202

Table 1 indicates that the difference between two groups was not significant. To find out whether the difference among the performances of the two groups was statistically significant, an Independent Samples *t*-test was applied. Table 2 displays the results.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test (Pre-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper

Equal variances assumed	.084	.773	-.395	68	.694	-1.028	2.606	-6.230	4.173
Equal variances not assumed			-.395	66.1	.694	-1.028	2.606	-6.233	4.175

Table 2 shows that the observed *t* (.395) is less that the critical *t* (1.671) with df=68. Thus the difference between the groups is not significant in the post-test ($p < 0.05$). Data analysis of the post-test is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	35	29.8000	16.10955	2.72301
Control	35	21.0000	13.55381	2.29101

Table 3 shows the results of descriptive statistics on the post-test which indicates that the difference between two groups. An Independent Samples *t*-test was run to sees any significant difference between the two groups in the post-test. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4. Independent Samples t-Test (Post-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	5.61	.021	2.473	68	.016	8.800	3.558	1.69	15.90
Equal variances not assumed			2.473	66.0	.016	8.800	3.558	1.69	15.90

Table 4 shows that the observed *t* (2.473) is greater than the critical *t* (1.671) with df=68. Thus the difference between the groups is significant in the post-test.

5. Discussion

To discuss the results of the study, the research question raised above will be referred to as follows: Does CLIL affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary achievement?

The main reason that the learners who were involved a CLIL program achieved better results in terms of reading vocabulary achievement may be the fact that CLIL students are much more exposed to content-based activities than the control group. In this case, texts which are covered through CLIL method may be mostly based on context clues resources. This result agrees with Wolf (2007) who notes that the underlying rationale is that input and particularly, comprehensible input has a lot

of importance in CLIL sessions, especially oral and written input. Thus regarding Dalton-Puffer (2008), providing the learners with comprehensible input can be fruitful to vocabulary achievement since the learners can learn the language more naturally in the classroom. This is supported by Coyle (2006) who cites that another reason is that CLIL lessons promote cognition and thinking processes, which means that CLIL pupils can link better concept formation, understanding and language. The results of the study also agrees with Peeck (1993) who supports the use of CLIL method in providing the learners with images to increase the learners' motivation and cognitive processing of the text content in order to arrive at the reading comprehension. Following Peek (1993), CLIL, which teaches reading through enriched texts including pictures, make reading texts more concrete and tangible for students, facilitates acquiring reading skill and accelerates learning a new subject. Therefore, teaching reading through images and pictures can: (1) facilitate, accelerate and strengthen the perception, comprehension and long retention of lexicon in the texts, (2) facilitate reciting, paraphrasing and answering the questions, (3) activate learners' background knowledge, and (4) enhance students' motivation and interest.

The results of this research are in agreement with Ortiz (2014). She taught reading through CLIL in Catalonia (Spain) and concluded that CLIL has a positive effect on the learners' reading skills, since the results obtained by the CLIL learners in reading comprehension tests were better than the ones obtained by the students who were not involved in CLIL program. So the data confirmed and supported her hypothesis that CLIL students would perform better in the reading tests.

The findings of this research are in line with Merikivi and Paivi (2014) who concluded that the CLIL approach brings positive effects to the students, both in terms of motivation and in terms of language development. They also agree that students in the CLIL setting were more motivated than the control group, but also mentioned that other factors such as socio-cultural background and gender, had special effects on the results of the study. However, there are several scholars (e.g., Swain, 1996) who state that comprehension-based classrooms do not pose ideal environments for language learning, despite providing much comprehensible input and conditions which allow for a low affective filter, since the teachers focused solely on meaning. Furthermore, the findings of this study are against Mearns (2011) who reported during a six week long CLIL survey, the opposite direction was performed. One of the observations regarding confidence and achievement was that, although language development was high in the more able students during the study, the students reported lack of confidence in language use. Possibly this lack of confidence was due to the relatively short time frame and the fact that this was an entirely new situation for the students. The students with lower language proficiency did not improve their academic results over the test period.

6. Conclusion

The results of the study showed that the experimental group who used CLIL method in the classroom outperformed the control group at the significant level. Data analysis revealed a significant difference between the two groups in the post-test comparing with the pre-test. The experimental group achieved high level of vocabulary in the post-test. This indicates the role of CLIL method in the learners' performance in a significant manner. Research on second language acquisition can be interpreted to show that a well-balanced language course should contain four major strands: meaning focused input, meaning-focused output, fluency development and language–focused instruction. The inclusion of a language-focused instruction strand is not reaction to communicative approaches but is the result of research findings that courses that contain such a strand are likely to achieve better results than courses that do not contain such a strand (Ellis, 1990).

In learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role. It is impossible to learn a language without learning the vocabulary of that language. Therefore, vocabulary affects the four skills of language (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Allen, 1983). In order to communicate successfully in a foreign language, students should have a good command of vocabulary and also know how to use them accurately (Chastain, 1988). According to the researchers (e.g., Nunan, 1999), vocabulary learning strategies facilitate the

acquisition of new lexis in the second foreign language as they aid in discovering the meaning of a new word and in consolidating a word once it has been encountered. Vocabulary learning may be effectively gained through presentation, explanation in formal settings or acquired by individuals in informal settings such as street talks, social interactions and mass media including TV broad casting, newspapers, journals, magazines and publications. Thus students are significantly dependent upon their vocabulary size in their academic studies of their second language vocabularies (Celce-Murcia, 2001). The implications of the study could be useful for EFL teachers and learners who deal with vocabulary learning. Since vocabulary is supposed to be the backbone of learning English language, the expansion of vocabulary domain can significantly affect other skills and sub-skills of language in the context and following CLIL activities can promote vocabulary language learning. Focusing on the content of materials and perform exercises on the real situation can be fruitful too. The main goal of CLIL may be to provide the learners with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) and help them to arrive at student-student or teacher-student interaction in the classrooms.

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STUDY OF PHRASE ERRORS COMMITTED BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract

The present paper examines Study of Phrase Errors Committed by Iranian EFL Learners at undergraduate level at Payamnoor University in Bushehr, Iran. Error analysis as one of Applied Linguistics topics always plays important role in acquiring target language. In this study, four categories of English phrase structure errors such as verb phrase; noun phrase; adjective phrase; and adverb phrase were investigated. To this end seventy Iranian EFL students ranging in age from 20 to 25 were given questionnaires through which they could identify their correct responses. In addition, the questionnaire developed by the researchers in order to collect data in this study. Through the data analysis, it has been found that Iranian learners have different types of English phrase errors; thus, the learners committed more adjective and adverb phrases errors than others in this study. In addition, the findings of the study showed that there is a significant difference between types of phrase errors committed by Iranian EFL learners. The results also drew the English teachers, course designers, and syllabus designers' attention towards more learners' errors in the use of English phrases structures.

Key words: Error analysis, Contrastive analysis, Verb phrase, Noun phrase, Adjective phrase and Adverb phrase

1. Introduction

The main aim of this study is to investigate Study of Phrase Errors Committed by Iranian EFL Learners at undergraduate level at Payamnoor University in Bushehr, Iran. Before, inquiring error analysis as a hypothesis in this project. We define phrase as a linguistic item, according to Richards et al (1992)"a phrase is a group of words which form a grammatical unit. A phrase does not contain a finite verb and does not have a subject-predicate structure"(p.53). Crystal (2003) mentioned that phrase is used in grammatical analysis to refer to a single element of structure typically containing more than one word, and lacking the subject-predicate structure typical of clauses. However, phrases are categorized based on verb phrase, noun phrase, adjective phrase and adverb phrase in English language. Noun phrase or NP is consisting of a single word or group of words with a noun or pronoun as a head. Langacker (1982, p. 66) mentioned that "a noun phrase is composed of three parts: a head, pre-modifier and post modifier". Thus, A pre-modifier usually occurs before the head and post-modifier comes after the head. A noun phrase functions as subject, object or prepositional object. Murthy (1998) argued that adjective phrase is a group of words which does the work of an adjective is called an adjective phrase. He added that adverb phrase is also is a group of words which does the work of an adverb is called an adverb phrase. Richards et al (1992, P. 399) indicated that "verb phrase is the part of a sentence which contains the main verb and also may object (s), complement(s) and adverbial(s)".

Therefore, phrase is the part of writing that is why; we discuss writing briefly in this paragraph. "the learning of writing is one of the most important skills that second language learners need to develop their ability to communicate ideas and information effectively in target language" (Khansir 2012a, p. 282). However, Learning to writing in target language is a very complex task in general and learning to phrase structure is also is not easy for English foreign learners to do this for themselves. It is important to remember that English language learners need to be aware of phrase rules that are different; language teachers should consider what types of exercises and activities can be helpful.

Let us begin by considering the definition of language error and then directly discuss error analysis and contrastive analysis. (Khansir 2012b,p.1029) mentioned that "error Analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the target language and that target language itself. Error analysis emphasizes the significance of learners' errors in second language." However, the history of language errors come back to applied linguistics in 1940s and when C. C. Fries was the first linguist started to the study of contrastive linguistics in 1945. Then this assumption was taken up by the other linguist 'Robert Lado' more than ten years later in his book, "Linguistic Across Cultures"(1957) in which the theoretical foundation of C.A was laid down. Corder was the other linguist of applied linguistics as the father of error analysis said that interference of mother tongue as the main cause of language errors by contrastive analysis approach is only one of the causes (sources) of language errors. Corder (1967) argued that errors are significance to the process of language learning. He added that they are significant in three different ways first to the teacher, in that they tell him /her, if he/she undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him/her to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learnt or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his/her discovery of the language. Thirdly, they are important and indispensable to the learner himself / herself because an error is taken to show that it is wrongly learnt. We can conclude that error analysis always plays a vital role in acquiring target language of learners in second or foreign settings. Thus, errors are appeared as output of language learners in the process of their target language, they can facilitate the process of second or foreign language learning by examining errors of foreign/ second language learners. Khansir (2012b) indicated that learner's errors are seen as an integral part of language learning which is used in teaching grammar, linguistics, psychology etc. According to Keshavarz (1994), 1) errors are inevitable as we cannot learn a language without goofing, i.e. without committing errors; 2) errors are significant in different ways; and 3) not all errors are attributable to the learner's mother tongue, i.e. first language interference is not the only source of errors.

In general, writing can be viewed as one of the reasons why researchers have designed various special research works for their learners in acquiring second or foreign language. It is felt that writing skill is not properly developed in second or foreign language setting and thus, there is serious concern on the part of language researchers, teachers and syllabus designers that the most language learners face a lot of problems in the English language writing in general and English phrase structure in particular. That is one of the reasons why the researchers of this project have researched this field. However, it is important is that Iranian EFL learners face with these problems in using of English phrase structure while they are trying to write English paragraph, essay and etc. …… The researchers of this study believe that there is a great need for such a study to point out why Iranian learners committed English writing errors in general and English phrase structure errors in particular. However, this study revealed that Iranian students have not properly developed the skill in English phrase structure. The investigators indicate that the students are needed remedial measures to enable the students to improve their writing and use English flawlessly.

This paper investigates phrase' errors of the English students such as noun phrase, adjective phrase, and adverbial phrase and verb Phrase at Payam Noor University in Bushehr city, and therefore, follow the objectives of this research paper such as a) to examine types of errors in target language; b) to compare types of errors in English phrase structure of Iranian EFL students such as noun phrase, adjective phrase, and adverbial phrase and verb Phrase; and c) to suggest

remedial measures to overcome the committing of errors. Thus, the following question and hypothesis are considered in this paper.

1. Is there a significant difference between Noun Phrase, Adverbial Phrase, Verb Phrase and Adjective Phrase Errors committed by Iranian EFL learners at under-graduate level? H1. There is a significant difference between Noun Phrase, Adverbial Phrase, Verb Phrase and Adjective Phrase Errors committed by Iranian EFL learners at under- graduate level.

2. Literature Review

The following are some of the studies related to error analysis undertaken by many research scholars as follows:

1. Khansir (2013) compared the ability of the learners of Indian and Iranian in supplying the correct rules of composition in English Language. The test of the study classified into five major categories: 1. Paragraph, 2. Punctuation, 3. Article, 4. Conjunction, and 5. spelling. He selected 200 learners from the two countries for collecting data in order to acquire knowledge of their English in written errors. The findings of the study indicated thatthe total number of errors made by the Iranian learners was 3045 and that of their Indianpeers' was 3274. The research project results showed that all errors types recorded in this study related to the knowledge of the subjects on the basis of English writing.The study indicated that the maximum errors made by the subjects were from the realm of 'punctuation' (1387).Thus, the minimum number of errors recorded in writing in this study was spelling. The total number of errors in the use of spelling was 1050.The Iranian and Indian students' errors in this project revealed that the learners did not have the ability in supplying the correct rules of English writing. They need more practice in the areas.Khansir and Hajivandi (2016) examined essay writing of Iranian Medical learners errors at Bushehr University of Medical Sciences in Bushehr city, Iran. In this study, they selected 160 medical learners in the age range of 18 to 23 as foreign language students in order to data collection. Outcome of their study showed that there was a significant difference between types of essay writing errors committed by Iranian medical learners at Bushehr University of Medical Sciences. The Findings of the research project indicated that the Iranian medical students have not mastered on essay writing and structure of paragraph writing in their responses.Ghadessy (1985) investigated a study of English verb phrase in five different schools in Singapore where English is used as the medium of instruction. Therefore, this study focused on the structure of verbs in the assigned development errors. He selected 464 students from different nations for his study. Thus, half of the learners (232) were Chinese. The rest were Malyas (120), Tamils (76) and others (45). His study showed that the choices of developmental errors were systematic among the students.Sharma (1980) examined the errors of 387 students in and around Delhi city, India were related to morphology and syntax. He also analyzed the errors of Sentence, Clause, Nominal phrase, Verbal phrase, Adverbial phrase, and Miscellaneous in English language. Therefore, this study showed that the sources of errors caused by negative transfer. He investigated the errors as a rewarding to teacher, he mentioned to the teacher, he should be in a much better position to pin point, those areas of English where the students go wrong for various reasons. He should have a keener insight into the various mechanisms that lead to errors in the English of his learners. Therefore, he should have a good systematic understanding of how the native language system of the learners interferes with their learning of English. However, he should know a lot about the learning problems of individual pupils. Ataieb Ahmad Hmouma (2014) investigated interlanguage syntax of one hundred high school students of English in the age range of 17 to 19 in Zawiya, Libya in the area of the noun phrase (NP). Outcome of this paper showed that a great deal of the learners' errors could be explained by overgeneralization and interference from the learners' mother tongue, though some other errors challenge explanations offered by contrastive analysis of English and Arabic. In addition, the learners of this study were native speakers of Arabic language. The research outcome indicated that the learners at this level experience serious difficulties in using the correct NP. He recommended that the students are needed more and more the number of exercises and homework in order to master in improving their errors.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. PARTICIPANTS

In this research work, the total number of seventy Iranian EFL learners participated. The participants were studying English language course at Payamnoor University in Bushehr in the academic year 2015/2016. The participants were in the age range of 20 to 25. All participants were Persian native speakers.

3.2. INSTRUMENTS

The instruments utilized in this study were: General English Proficiency Test, Background Questionnaire, and English Phrase Structure Test. The background questionnaire for this research was designed to elicit information on the students' subjects. The questionnaire developed by the researchers consisted of 10 questions which were related to language use, information about the parents, details about siblings, language attitude, etc.The general English proficiency test (Nelson) for this project was designed in order to assess the participant's level of proficiency in English. This test comprised of 50 multiple choice vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension items. The last Questionnaire of this study was English Phrase Structure Test was developed by the present researchers in order to collect data in this study. In addition, the test was used to identify the type of errors for this study.

3.3. PROCEDURE

To achieve the objectives of this study the following procedures were adopted.

1. Development of the questionnaire.
2. Administration of the proficiency test.
3. Development of the English phrase structure test and its administration.
4. Analysis of collected data.

Before focusing on the English phrase structure test which plays the role of a pedestal function in this study , the present investigators developed and administered the background questionnaire and English general proficiency test. Administration of the English general proficiency test: In administering the test, the researchers piloted the test for the target group with the same level. In addition, 15 students in the target group at Payamnoor University with the same level and similar characteristics to participants of this research participated in the pilot study. The General English Proficiency Test was found to be appropriate for the participants' performing level. Its reliability through the K-R 21 formula turned out to be .84 for Iranian EFL learners at Payamnoor University. The second test was Background Questionnaire. The background questionnaire for this study was designed to elicit information on subjects. The questionnaire developed by the present researchers consisted of 10 questions which were related to their age, language use, information about the parents, etc. The last test of this research paper was English Phrase Structure Test. The English phrase structure test utilized in this study was a combination of verb phrases, noun phrases, adjective phrases and adverb phrases. The test was used to identify the type of errors for this study. It was chosen to examine the ability of the subjects in selecting the correct phrase structure rules in English. Therefore, investigators also piloted this test for the target group with the same level. In addition, 15 students in the target group at Payamnoor University with the same level and similar characteristics to participants of this research participated in the pilot study. The English phrase structure test was found to be appropriate for the participants' performing level. Its reliability through the K-R 21 formula turned out to be .88 for the subjects of this research work at Payamnoor University.

In this paragraph, let us indicate briefly data analysis of this study. After participating in general English proficiency test and background questionnaire, a group of 70 participants were selected for the purpose of the data collection. Then, the English phrase structure test was used to investigate the hypothesis of the study and errors committed by the participants. After collecting all the data, the researchers analyzed the data through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis of data was concerned with the tests: General English Proficiency Test (Transparent), Background Questionnaire, and English Phrase Structure Test. In addition, the above tests were analyzed utilizing the computer programmed from SPSS. The statistical analysis proceeded in three steps: 1**)** Analysis 1, before making any attempt to investigate the English phrase structure test of this study, (Errors of this study), the general English proficiency test was

examined. The actual scores of the subjects on the test were examined. After this analysis, the subjects were selected for the purpose of the collecting data. 2)Analysis 2, in this analysis, the Background Questionnaire was used to elicit information on the subjects. 3) Analysis 3, in this analysis, the English phrase structure test was used to investigate the errors committed by the subjects at Payamnoor University. The analysis of work in this study was concerned with the processes: Classification of errors, Comparison of errors, and Suggestion of remedial measures.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the English phrase errors committed by Iranian EFL learners at undergraduate level at Payamnoor university of Bushehr. The research has been done based on its objectives. However, an attempt was made here to classify the observed errors and categorize them. A further attempt was made to compare types of errors in the English phrase structure of Iranian students. The test was specially chosen to examine the ability of the Iranian EFL learners in applying the correct rules in the construction of the English phrase structure in the English language. The test is classified into four major categories: noun phrase, adverbial phrase, verb phrase and adjective Phrase. The following tables emerge after analyzing errors committed in phrases by Iranian EFL learners at Payam Noor University in Bushehr city. Table 1 and its figure showed descriptive statistics ofEnglish phrase errors of the study.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of English Phrase Errors

Test items	Correct responses	Error responses	Total
	Number of responses	Number of responses	
	904	1896	2800
percentage	32.29	67.71	100

Figure 1: Descriptive Statistics of English Phrase Errors

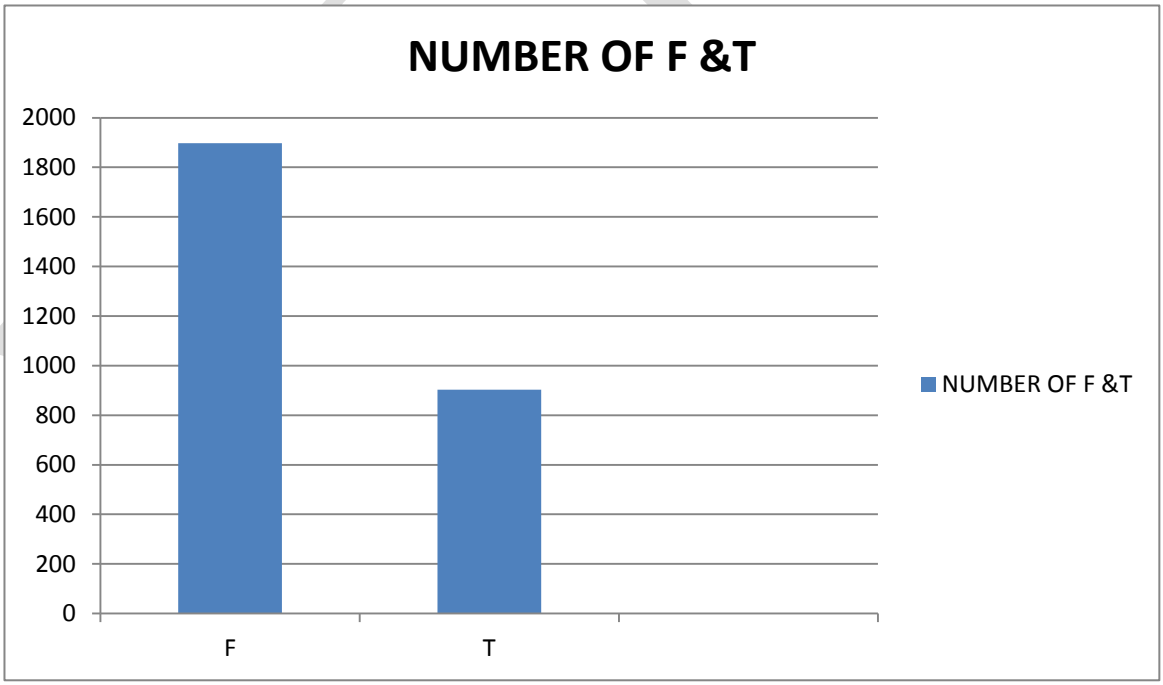

Table 1.and its figure showed the Iranian EFL students committed more error responses than their correct responses in English phrase structure. The total number of errors committed by the Iranian students was 1896 whereas their correct responses were 904.

Table 2: English Phrases

Test items		
English phrases	Number of errors	Percentage

Noun phrases	**437**	**23.05**
Verb phrases	**391**	**20.62**
Adjective phrase	**483**	**25.48**
Adverbial phrases	**585**	**30.85**
Total	**1896**	**100**

The 1896 errors which were utilized in the English phrase structure test for this study were classified into four major categories. Based on the category, it was found that the largest number of errors committed by the Iranian EFL students was from the realm of the adverbial phrases (585). The minimum number of errors recorded in the English phrase structure test in this research was verb phrase (391). The number of errors committed by the Iranian EFL students in the noun phrase was 437 which came to 23.5%. The Iranian EFL learners 'errors in the category of adjective phrase was 483 which came to 25.48%. Therefore, the four major categories have been presented in table 2.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Noun Phrase

Test items	**number**	**percent**
Wrong use of adjective phrases for noun phrases	**149**	**34.10**
Wrong use of adverbial phrases for noun phrases	**151**	**34.55**
Wrong use of verb phrases for noun phrases	**137**	**31.35**
Total	**437**	**100**

Based on table 3, in noun phrase category, the major deviation observed is wrong use of adverbial phrases for noun phrases. In this sub-category, the number of the Iranian EFL students' errors was 151 which came to 34.55%. The minimum number of errors recorded in this sub-category is wrong use of verb phrases for noun phrases was 137 which came to 31.35%. The number of the Iranian EFL students' errors in the sub-category of wrong use of adjective phrases for noun phrases was 149 which came to 34.10%.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Adjective Phrase

Test items	**number**	**percent**
Wrong use of adverbial phrases for adjective phrases	**159**	**32.92**
Wrong use of noun phrases for adjective phrases	**214**	**44.31**
Wrong use of verb phrases for adjective phrases	**110**	**22.77**
Total	**483**	**100**

Table 4 indicated that in adjective phrase category, the major error observed is wrong use of noun phrases for adverbial phrases. In this sub-category, the number of the Iranian EFL students' errors was 214 which came to 44.31%. The minimum number of errors recorded in this sub-category is wrong use of verb phrases for adjective phrases was 110 which came to 22.77%. The number of the Iranian EFL learners' errors in the sub-category of wrong use of adverbial phrases for adjective phrases was 159 which came to 32.92%.

Table 5: descriptive Statistics of Verb phrase

Test items	**number**	**percent**
Wrong use of adjective phrases for verb phrases	**117**	**29.92**
Wrong use of adverbial phrases for verb phrases	**177**	**45.27**
Wrong use of noun phrases for verb phrases	**97**	**24.81**
Total	**391**	**100**

Table 5 showed that in verb phrase category, the major error observed is wrong use of adverbial phrases for verb phrases. In this sub-category, the number of the Iranian EFL students' errors was 177 which came to 45.27%. The minimum number of errors recorded in this sub-category is wrong use of noun phrases for verb phrases was 97 which came to 24.81%. The number of the

Iranian EFL learners' errors in the sub-category of wrong use of adjective phrases for verb phrases was 117 which came to 29.92%.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Adverbial Phrase

Test items	number	percent
Wrong use of adjective phrases for adverbial phrases	**170**	**29.06**
Wrong use of noun phrases for adverbial phrases	**158**	**27.01**
Wrong use of verb phrases for adverbial phrases	**257**	**43.93**
Total	**585**	**100**

Based on table 6, in adverbial phrase category, the major deviation observed is wrong use of verb phrases for adverbial phrases. In this sub-category, the number of the Iranian EFL learners ' errors was 257 which came to 43.93%. The minimum number of errors recorded in this sub-category is wrong use of noun phrases for adverbial phrases was 158 which came to 27.1%. The number of the Iranian EFL learners' errors in the sub-category of wrong use of adjective phrases for adverbial phrases was 170 which came to 29.06%.

In the discussion of this study, a question arises that why the Iranian EFL students committed more error responses than their correct responses in English phrase structure. Thus, the researchers believes that one of the most important reasons behind this fact that the Iranian EFL students committed more errors than their correct responses in English phrase structure can be said that they have not good knowledge of English phrase structure in English. It is meant that their lack of knowledge of the proper use of English phrase structure has led to errors in this category. For example, they did not make a distinction between noun phrase and verb phrase or adverbial phrase and adjective phrase in English. Therefore, in this study, four categories of English phrase structure errors such as verb phrase; noun phrase; adjective phrase; and adverb phrase were investigated. Through the data analysis, it has been found that the Iranian EFL students had different types of English phrase errors.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to identify, categorize, and describe phrase errors committed by Iranian EFL Learners at undergraduate level at Payamnoor University in Bushehr, Iran. However, the outcome of this research paper indicated that there was a significant difference between types of English phrase errors committed by the Iranian EFL learners. The results of data analysis showed that the hypothesis of this study was accepted. It was found that in general there exist systematic errors in learners' target language. However, it seems that the sources of English phrase structure errors of the Iranian EFL students in this study can be incomplete knowledge or lack of knowledge of certain phrase structures in English language and teaching English and learning strategies. The researchers believe that the Iranian EFL learners are needed to be taught English phrase structure rules more than what is being done at present. In addition, to avoid errors in the use of the English phrase structures, teacher has to teach the students the English phrase structures rules. Teacher should do some exercises containing various types of errors in the use of English phrase structures rules in the classrooms to help the students to overcome their errors.

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A SURVEY ON ARABIC LYRIC CHANGE DURING THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES AH IN KHORASAN

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Abstract

One of the themes that had a significant presence in almost all periods of the history of Arabic literature is Qazal (Lyrics). In this study using fundamental theoretical method and citing remained examples from that era has surveyed the evolution of Arabic poems in Khorasan in the first four centuries AH. This study shows that the Arab lyrics written in the first and the second centuries have been very few and mostly written by native Arabic speakers. Most of these lyrics (Unlike the old customs, lyrics were brought at the beginning of poems) are seen independently. Gradually, from the end of the second century Khorasani poets emerged and experienced this type of poetry writing and gradually the growth of this kind of poetry increased so far as that at the late fourth century an outstanding growth in the lyric poetry of many Khorasani poets are witnessed. The themes used in lyrics until the fourth century is largely an imitation of Arabic poetry but in the fourth century, we witness the innovation of Khorasani poets in the themes of this type of poetry.

Keywords: lyric, Arabic, Khorasan, the first four centuries AH.

Introduction:

Iran is an ancient land that Khorasan was part of it although the limits of the province's borders were not the same throughout history, but always considering the strategic extent and location of the borderline with northern tribes, was of great importance. In ancient times, this province was divided into four parts (quarters) that was later considered as the basis of the division of Khorasan in the Islamic period. Khorasan quarters included: Neishabour quarters, Marv quarters, Herat quarters, Balkh quarters. (Yaqut Al-Hamawi, 1995, vol. 2, p. 351) Arab conquerors after the conquest of the province and the awareness of the situation of this province recognized Khorasan positions suitable for their permanent settlement and a number of Arab tribes settled in Khorasan. (Al-Tabari, 1967, vol. 5, p. 226; Ibn Al-Athir, 1965, vol. 3, p. 452; Zarrinkoob, 1383, p. 367) and since the poems were important for Arabic speakers, the tribes' poets came to Khorasan. The frequency of Arabic poetry in Khorasan led the province in the first century to be placed alongside with major centers of Arabic poetry (such as Mecca and Medina, Najd and Hijaz, Kufa, Basra, Egypt and Syria). (Daif, 1427, Vol. 1, p. 139) and the popular poetic styles of poetry among Arabic speakers found a way into this province. Looking at the styles of poetry in every period of Arabic literature periods we find that one of the poetic styles has always been the lyric poetry in all periods of the history of Arabic literature. But in each period according to conditions and requirements of time, changes have happened in the form and content of this kind of poetry. This article seeks to explore the question of the «developments in the Arab lyrics in Khorasan province, in the first four centuries AH». In accord with the research into the above problem, the following question is to be responded: «How the history of Arabic poems' development (in the

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first four centuries AH) in Khorasan has been?» It should be noted that so far no book or article has independently, completely or comprehensively examined Arabic lyrics in Khorasan yet. The research was conducted in the context of Arabic poetry in Khorasan. Including the book: *Arabic poetry in Khorasan in the era of the Umayyad* (Arabic: الشعر العربي بخراسان في العصر الاموي) written by Hossein Atvan that further explores the structure of Arabic poetry in Khorasan and the book '*Gem of Literary Wisdom*' by Dr. Mohammad Baqer Hosseini is another book to study the status of Arabic language and literature which is written in Neyshabur. As well as articles such as '*The causes of Arabic prose and poetry emergence in Khorasan*' and '*The rising cause of Arabic literature in Khorasan*'and'*Prospects for Arab literature in Khorasan from the second century to the fifth century*, (Arabic: آفاق الادب العربي في خراسان من القرن الثاني الى القرن الخامس) written by M. B. Hosseini, all of which by emphasizing the works remained from the fourth century onward, have studied aspects of Khorasani poetry.

Discussion

Qazal poetry idiomatically is a type of lyric poem whose subject is love and infatuation and expression of emotions and expression of beauty and perfection of the beloved and reminiscence of events and happenings, memories and love adventures. (Jacob and Assi, 1987, vol. 2, p. 902) In ancient Arabic literature and pre-Islamic and early Islamic period we are witnessing this type of lyric (in two forms, explicit sensory, implicit sensory) are at the beginning of the Qasida (Odes). Since Lyric was not a separate form but rather existed in the form of lyricism of Odes. Poets wrote their romantic remarks in this form and gradually this kind of poetry became independent over time. (Saberi, 1388, p. 484) The promotion of Qazal happened in the first century in cities such as Najd, Hijaz, Mecca and Medina which led to new innovations in this field. (Hadarah, n.d., pp. 45-46) Afif or ideal Qazal was the invention of the first century AH (Daif, 1427, vol. 2, p. 359). In this type of lyric, the poet speaks of chaste or pure love and expresses the sincere feelings to his beloved. (Saberi, 1388, p. 485) In the second century AH newer types of poems such as the Spiritual, Elegy, and Male lyric emerged. It can be said spiritual Qazal is the evolution Afifi that came into existence. Unlike sensory lyrics do not pay attention to sensory description the beloved, but restates the emotions and feelings of the lover and the degree of his honesty in love and... (Hadarah, 1963, p. 503) and this type of lyric poet often suffice a single beloved and writes all about the beloved. (Hadarah, 1963, p. 507) The Elegy lyric (either Explicit or Hazari) was the lyric that poet without following the social norms and with complete freedom depicted his emotions (Saberi, 1388, p. 484) and Male Lyric whose beloved were often young lad. (Jacob and Assi, 1987, vol. 2, p. 902; Hadarah, 1963, p. 502) This type of lyric was introduced gradually and reached to its golden age in the fourth century. (Abu Al- Hatam, 1985, p. 185)

The lyrics developments in the Literary-Arab centers, also found their ways to Khorasan and in the first four centuries AH we can find examples of different types of Qazal in Khorasan. It should be noted that the position of Khorasan and turbulent conditions in the region, especially towards the end of the Umayyad era caused that the Qazal subjects in comparison to praise and glory and syllables and gender subjects has been paid less attention.

The resident poet in Khorasan province in his lyric poem, sometimes his being far from the beautiful was set as the subject his lyric as Sabet Qotane (d. 110 AH) complains about his separation from his beloved by the deserts and sand dunes and says:

«ما هاجَ شَوقُك مِن بُكاء حَمامة تَدعُو على فَنَن الغُصُون حَماما
إلا تذكَّرك الأوانس بَعدَ ما قطع المطيّ سَباسبا و هَياما»

(Al-Isfahani, 1994, vol. 14, p. 428)

Sometimes lyrical poets introduced changes in the Arabic customary premises in lyrics and instead of describing the beloved at the beginning of the poem, considered him as the witness of expressing his opinion as Sabet Qotane in his expression of idea refers, consider his beloved as audience and said:

«يا هِندُ فَاِستَمِعي لي إنَّ سيرَتَنا أن نَعبُدُ اللهَ لَم نُشرِكُ بِهِ أحَدا
نُرجي الأُمورَ إذا كانَت مُشبَهَةً وَ نَصدِقُ القَولَ فيمَن حارَ أو عَنَدا»

(Al-Isfahani, 1994, vol. 14, p. 432; Farroukh, 1981, vol. 1, p. 642)

And sometimes, instead of describing the superficial merits of the loved depicts the battle scenes, for example, in the year 112 AH poet named *Sharabi Taee* when he Finds himself in a Foreign land, Remembers his beloved and he wishes that these days return. Then he describes in detail the events of war for his beloved. He says:

«تَذَكَّرْتُ هِنْداً فِي بِلادٍ غَرِيبَةٍ فَيَا لَكَ شَوقاً، هَلْ لِشَمْلِك مَجْمَعُ!
بِلادٌ بِهَا خاقانُ جَمٍّ زُحُوفُهُ وَ نيلانُ فِي سَبعِينَ أَلفاً مُقَنَّعٌ
إذا دَبَّ خَاقانُ وَ سَارَتْ جُنُودُهُ أَتَتْنَا المَنايَا عِنْدَ ذلك شُرَّعٌ
هُنالِك -هِنْدُ- مَا لَنَا النِصْفُ مِنْهُمُ وَ مَا إنْ لَنَا يَا هِنْدُ فِي القَومِ مَطْمَعٌ»

(Al-Tabari, 1967, vol. 7, p. 85; Atwan, 1974, p. 179)

The few number of the samples from the first and second centuries AH remained can indicate the unwillingness of Arabic language poets in Khorasan toward this kind of poetry. Since the cotroversies between the tribes and tribal prejudices against the humble poets (Al-Nas, 1963, pp. 369-368) brought the many volumes of poetry on the dispute between the tribes and their struggle in the border line areas. The point to be considered is that in many Khorasan's poems the poet goes straight to the main subject without a lyrical preliminary. (Al-Tabari, 1967, vol. 5, p. 305; vol. 6, pp. 308, 318; vol. 7, pp. 12, 51, 81; Al-Isfahani, 1994, vol. 13, p. 59; vol. 14, p. 447; vol. 16, p. 533; Ibn Al-Mutazz, 1998, p. 221) and this is another reason for the few number of the lyrics. However the lyric remaining from the first two centuries is often in Afif from of Qazal that is written by Arabic poets. Also, the main feature is its clearly stated and eloquence of words.

Gradually and with more familiarity of Iranians with Arabic language and literature, especially Arabic poetry, and also relative calm status of political situation in the third century, lyric more than ever before would be considered by poets and in addition to Arabic poets, the Persian language poets have also entered the field of Arabic literature and portray their emotions. The imitative style of Iranian poets in the Arab lyric writing is quite obvious. The use of repetitive concepts and even vocabulary is quite tangible. For example *Abou-Al-Amisel* (d. 240 AH) in a sonnet written for his beloved he des not write a new concept in the poems as to prove their kindness to his beloved he takes vows to saves but his love in his heart, and also he recommends that she should not pay attention the words of sarcastic people.

«أمَا و الراقِصَاتِ بِذاتِ عِـرْقٍ وَ مَنْ صَلّى بِنُعمانَ الأراكِ
لَقَدْ أَضْمِرتُ حُبُّكِ فِي فُؤادِي وَ مَا أضْمِرتُ حُبّاً مِنْ سِوَاكِ
أ رَيتِ الآمُريكِ بِصُرمٍ حَبلِي مُريهِمْ فِي أحِبّتِهِمْ بِذاكِ
فإنْ هُمْ طَاوَعُوكَ فَطاوِعِيهِم و إنْ عاصوك فاعْصي مَنْ عَصَاكِ»

(Yaqut Al-Hamawi, 1993, vol. 4, p. 1518)

Another feature is the simplicity of poetry in this period. The Persian-speaking poet tries to express his feelings with simple words and unpretentious, for example, *Muhammad Ibn Tahi*r (259-248AH) The last *Taheri* Leader, sees true love in tolerance of the bitterness using simple words and eloquently expresses his feelings, He says: you do not fall in love, but I was in love, because appreciation is inevitable. Between the one who hides his love and who it reveals the difference. Who endure the hardships of love, he knows love, because patient is successful.

«حَذّرتَـنِـي و ذا الـحَـذَر لَـيْسَ يُغْـنِـي مِن الـقَدَر
لَـيْسَ مَنْ يَكتُمُ الـهَوَى مِـثْلَ مَنْ بَاحَ و اشْـتَـهَر
إنَّـما يَعْـرِفُ الـهَوَى مَنْ عَلَى مُرِّهِ صَـبَـر
نَـفْسُ يا نَـفْسُ فَاصْبِـري فَازَ بِالصَبْـرِ مَنْ صَـبَر»

Al-Abshihi, 1999, p. 315; Yadegari, 1388, p. 300)

The mystical lyric was another type of Qazal that appeared in Khorasan in the third century. In this century by the establishment of Taherid dynasty, Khorasan became a safe location for Sufi and mystical school of Khorasan in the same period along with the school of Baghdad continued to grow. (Shams, 1387, p. 409) The emergence of well-known Khorasani mystics that most of who were reared Islamic-Iranian culture and were completely acquainted with Arabic and religious concepts led to the mystical lyric rise in Khorasan. For example, Abu Yazid Bastami (d. 261 AH) was among the mystics known in Khorasan (Shams, 1387, p. 409) sometimes talks about the

divine love and resembles that as seedlings planted in his heart and till the day of Judgment will not forget.

«غرست الحُبَّ غَرساً في فُؤادي فلا أسلو إلى يومِ التنادى»

(Al-Awadi, 1979, p. 180)

Although mystical lyric, was not Khorasanians invention and after the rise, the Sufis of Baghdad emerged in the works of Islamic mystics, it appeared in the works of Khorasan Mystics and they applied this type of lyric to express their inner feelings. Among the main feature of this lyric type is the simplicity of phrases and vocabulary easily and avoidance of the pretentious literal and spiritual.

Despite the efforts of Khorasan Tahir dynasty in Arabic literature in the third century, lyric poetry still as compared to other topics such as Praise, Satire, Elegy, Brotherhoods, and ... are very few. Besides in this century like the last two centuries, Qazal often in the form of lyric poetry is independent and is not placed at the beginning. A small amount of Lyrics left have the simple and clear style. And all are among territory of Affif sonnets.

In the fourth century we see a higher incidence of Arabic poetry in the literary scholars in Khorasan. Khorasan poets in the book «Yatim Al-Dahr» is indicative of the variety of subjects of Arabic poetry among Khorasanians. According to the same extent the attention of the lyric poets of this period was more than three centuries and Persian-speaking poets showed their skills in this area, however, in this century, still the use of concepts and repetitive themes and concepts seen in poetry and some other poets also in style imitated the traditional methods lyrics of Ignorance period such as Abu 'Abd Allah Ibn Al-Faqih Abi Saleh Al-Sarraji, depicted his feelings on separation time from his beloved and while the tears flows over his cheek like a roaring sea and imagines his beloved in the convoy that plan their migration and invites him to endure the pain of departing and said you should get along with the sorrow and whimper and stand the departure and do destroy yourself of the disappointment and be patient.

«قَالَتْ، وَ قَـدْ جَدَّ الرَّحيـ لُ بِحَسْرَةٍ وَ تَنَـهَّد
الحُـزنُ بَعْدِي وَ البُكـ ـاءُ عَلَى الوِصَالِ تَعَوَّد
وَ اصْبِرْ عَلَى بُعْدِي وَ لا تَـهْلِك أسىً وَ تَـجَلَّد
فَجَرَى عَلى خَدَّيَّ نَـهْـ ـرٍ مِثْلَ بَحْرٍ مُـزَبَّد»

(Al-Bakharzi, 1414, Vol. 2, p. 1052; Hosseini, 1386, p. 46)

The poet's imitative style in this piece is quite well outstandingly displayed and the concept and even the words used in it recollects the lyrics of ignorance period and particularly of Moa'aleqe Amr'-Al-qeis.

The entry of figures of speech and exquisite in the poetry is of the outstanding feature of the poetry in the Abbasid period (Al-Fakhoury, 1422, Vol. 1, p. 667) also was dsplayed in Khorasan lyrics and Khorasani poets utilize it well. An obvious example of this type of figures of speech can be seen in the Qazal of Abu Qavas.

«مِن عذيري مِن عُذولي في قمر قامَرَ القَلبُ هَواه فَقَمَر
قَمَرٌ لَم يَبقِ مِنّي حُبُّه و هَواهُ غَير مَقلُوبِ قمر»

(Al-Tha'alibi, 1983, p. 510)

Sometimes Persian language poet presents the imitative meanings Arabic Qazal in the new form of the lyric as Abu Hafs Amro ibn Ali Matouy knows his weeping and grief as the best evidence of his honesty to his beloved and in expressing their feelings takes advantage of eloquent figures of speech as paradox, puns and rhetorics and said:

«أيَا مُنْـيَةَ الـمُشْتَاقِ فِيمَ تَرَكتنـي كئيباً بِلَا عَقْلٍ قَتِيلاً بِلَا عَقْل
فَإِنْ كنْـتِ أنْكرتِ الَّذِي بِي مِن الهَوَى أَقَمْتُ بِـــهِ مِنْ أدْمُعي شَاهِدي عَدْل»

(Al-Tha'alibi, 1983, p. 502; Hosseini, 1386, p. 46)

Describing the beloved face is among the concepts that always were considered by poets and each in whichever form had tried to be innovative i.e., Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Abdul-Al-Jabbar Atabi is astonished during a visit to his beloved that covered her cheeks with yellow cover and compares he with the sun radiation the Earth, sprays gold over the Earth.

«و قاتلَةٍ ما بالُ خدِّك كُلّما رآني يَلقاني بِصفرَةِ جِلباب
فَقُلتُ كذا بدرُ السماءِ إذا بدا أفاض على الغَبراء صفرةُ زِرياب»

(Al-Tha'alibi, 1983, p. 465)

Sometimes Persian language poet writes his Qazal under the impact of Persian lyrics as Abu Al-Fah Bosti (d. 400 AH) writes the context of Abu-Shakur Balkhi's in his poetry. Abu-Shakour considers looking at his beloved as a jury that is why he considers the retaliation verdict for his injury, and he admits and says:

از دور به دیدار تو اندر نگریستم مجروح شد آن چهره پر حسن و ملاحت
وز غمزه تو خسته شد آزرده دل من وین حکم قضایي است جراحت به جراحت

(Dabir Siaqi, 1374, p.79; Daudpota, 1382, p.169)

Abu Al-Fath Al-Busti has brought the same meaning in his poetry and says:

رَمَيْتُك عَنْ حُكمِ القَضَاءِ بِنَظرَةٍ وَ ما لِي عَن حُكمِ القَضَاءِ مَناصُ
فلَمَّا جَرحْتُ الخَدَّ مِنك بِنَظرَةٍ جَرحتَ فُوادي و الجُروحُ قِصَاص

(Al-Busti, 1989, p.113; Daudpota, 1382, p.171)

Also the simile of beloved hair and her face spot existed with alphabetically dotted letters or without it in Persian poetry Rudaki likens the hair of his beloved in her face to "Jim" letters in Persian and says:

زلف ترا جیم که کرد؟ آن که او خال ترا نقطه آن جیم کرد

(Dabir Siaqi, 1374, p. 54)

Abu Bakr Al-Khwarizmi (d. 383 AH) is almost similar content with this way he wrote in a lyric while playing with words and applying innovative figures of speech like pun, describes the beloved face and depicts the long hair of his beloved over her cheek, with a spot and the other without it and compare it with dotted alphabet letter and without it, saying:

و أرَتْك خَدَّيْهَا و لاحَ عَليهِمَا صُدْغَانَ ذُو خَالٍ وَ آخَرُ خالِي
فَكأنَّ ذَا ذالٌ خَلَتْ مِنْ نُقْطَةٍ و كأنَّ ذا دالٌ وَ نُقطَةُ ذالِ

(Al-Tha'alibi, 1983, p. 241; Hossein Taha, 1976, p. 116)

And the poet sometimes in the form and content is the initiative innovator as Abu Bakr Al-Khwarizmi in his poems warns himself of love of the beautiful and fair and using allegorical simile compare it with colorful garden snakes and says:

قُلتُ لِلعَينِ حينَ شامَت جَمَالا مِن بروق كواذِبِ الإيماضِ
لا تَغُرَّنَّك هذه الأوجَهُ الغُـ ـرُّ، فيا رُبَّ حَيَّةٍ في رِياضِ!

(Al-Tha'alibi, 1983, p. 240; Hosseini, 1382, p. 229)

Exaggeration in the expression of the beloved beauty is also among the features the Abbasid lyrics who found their way to Khorasan. Abu Bakr Al-Khwarizmi in the lyric, when describing her beloved face considers her brighter than the sun and believes that the sun gains its shine from the beloved face shine, and the passage of time not only cannot reduce the shine and face value of the beloved but the fairness and luminosity increases over time as wine gets clear and pure with aging and the allegorical sense of the analogy is said:

شَمْسٍ مَا بَدَتْ إلّا أرَتْنَا بأنَّ الشَّمْسَ مَطْلَعُهَا فُضُولُ
تَزيدُ عَلى السِّنينِ ضِياً وَ حُسْنا كمَا رَقَّتْ عَلى العِتقِ الشَّمُولُ

(Al-Tha'alibi, 1983, p. 239; Hossein Taha, 1976, p. 115)

Another dominant feature of Arabic poems in the fourth century is its simplicity fluidity. Abu Bashr Ma'mun bin Ali bin Ibrahim Khwarizmi his lyric with simple terms and without pretension considers publication of the secrets and displays of love as true remedy for the lover and says:

تَـكلّفْتُ كتْمانِـي هَواك فَلَمْ أطِقْ وَ لَمْ يسْتَقِمْ لِلنَّفْسِ مَا قَدْ تَكلّفَتْ
شَفَانِـي إنْ أفْشَيْتُ سِرَّك فِـي الـهَوَى كذلك أسرارُ الـهَوَى إنْ فَشَتْ شُفَتْ

(Al-Bakharzi, 1414, Vol. 1, p. 655; Hossein Taha, 1976, p. 118)

Also the development of Male lyrics was among the innovations of the Abbasid period and found their way to Khorasan and although few examples of this type of lyric can be found, however, but the few samples indicates the existence of this kind of poetry, especially in the fourth century. For example, Abu Ali Saji, describing the Turkish Slave and he sees her face more beautiful than all, and writes as follows:

لا سُمْرَةٌ، لا بَياضٌ فيه، لا سَمِنٌ وَ لا هُزالٌ و لا طَولٌ و لا قِصَرٌ
ذُو قَامَةٍ قَامَ فِيهَا عُذْرُ عَاشِقِهَا وَ صُورَةٍ قَبُحَتْ مَعَ حُسْنِهَا الصُّوَرُ

(Al-Tha'alibi, 1983, p. 91)

Abu Sahl Muhammad Bin Hasan writes about the Indian servant: He is black and set in the depth of the heart.

«و لِي أسْودٌ فِـي أسْودِ القَلْبِ حَاضِرٌ وَلكنَّــهُ عَنْ أسْودِ الـعَيــنِ غائِبُ»

(Zenon Al-samri, 2001, p. 100)

Abu Al-Hasan Muhammad ibn Ahmad Afriqi Matim writes in description of enchantment and charm in the eyes of Turki servants and says:

«قلبِـي أَسِيـرٌ فِـي يَدي مُقْــلَةٍ تُـركيَّةٍ ضَاقَ لَـهَا صَدْرِي
كَأَنَّهَا مِنْ ضَيْـقِهَا عُـرْوَة لَيْسَ لَـهَا زِرٌّ سِوَى السِّحْـرِ»

(Al-Tha'alibi, 1983, p. 179)

Most lyrics remaining are of Afif and spiritual from the fourth century, although sometimes we can find lyrics with sensational description. (Hossein Taha, 1976, p. 118) Also Khorasani poets also use expressive and innovative figures of speech in moderation and far from pretension.

Conclusion

The Lyrics is among the popular Arabic poetry that existed in all periods of Arabic literature. Entering the Arabs Khorasan led the way to Arabic poetry in Khorasan and Khorasan along the literary-Arabic centers is known as one of Arabic poetry strongholds. Few lyrics remaining from the first and second centuries indicates that the tendency of Khorasan's poets who want this kind of poetry is not high and because of Arabic poets and involvement in issues such as disputes between tribes, conflicts and jihadi battles and ... sometimes the lyrics takes the conflict flavor. The poet instead of describing the superficial merits of the beloved poet displays the battle scenes. Also the lyrics left of Khorasan indicates that in Qazal lyrical introductory arrangements at the beginning Lyrics existed although very few, and in most cases the poet directly made his own subject. Often these poems were void of customary Arabic poetry lyrical introduction.

From the late second and early third century, when gradually Khorasanians found their way into the realm of Arabic literature and they began writing their own lyrics in the style of Arabic poems and wrote in a manner largely imitative. The main feature in this era is the simplicity and fluidity, and its being Afif. Also, due to the emergence of Sufism school in Khorasan, and the frequency of Sufists, the mystical lyrics were also founded. The honesty of the poet in expressing his inner feelings and simplicity of phrases and vocabulary and being far from pretentious literal and spiritual is among the mystical lyrics features.

In the fourth century Khorasanians will be more dominant on Arabic literature and show their abilities in this field. And the poet offer their poetry using unique figures of speech and creative adorning their lyrics and sometimes imitating the same meaning in a new format and sometimes on their initiative b in this regard, sometimes come innovative and in this regard get help from the concepts of Persian poetry. Exaggeration in describing the beloved beauty can be seen in some Qazals. The fourth century outstanding features of the lyrics are simplicity and fluidity that can be seen in most of the lyrics. Although most lyrics that have survived are of Afif and spiritual lyric types in this period, sometimes sensory descriptions of the beloved can be seen in some of the lyrics. Also, the Male lyric is also in the century poets' work in this century. In this century the known poets such as Abu Bakr Khwarizmi and Abu Al-Fath Al-Basti have lyrics in abundance.

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A CORPORAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE EMPLOYMENT OF ADVERBS IN MASTERS EFL CANDIDATES' ACADEMIC ESSAYS

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Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the employment of adverbs in Iranian MA EFL learners' academic writing at Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch, Iran. This was done through three different corpora: Corpus of Contemporary of American English (COCA), Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE), and Researcher Corpus (RC). This research worked on 460 essay papers written by 60 female and male MA EFL candidates on argumentative and descriptive types of writings to see to what extent they used adverbs in writings, which type/types of adverbs were overused/underused, how different genders used adverbs in writings, and to what extent MA EFL candidates wrote native-like. The results of the current study indicated that Iranian learners tend to overuse adverbs of linking, stance, degree, and manner and underuse adverbs of place and time. It also showed that female learners employed adverbs more than the male ones. The findings of this study can help language teachers identify the discrepancy between non-native and native writings and take appropriate measures wherever needed.

KEY WORDS: academic writing; adverbs, corpus, essays, writing skill

1. Introduction

Adverbs describe adjectives, verbs, or other adverbs in English. They can take a wide variety of functions like time, space, manner, and frequency. They can occur initially, medially, and finally in sentences and appear before and after verbs, and before adjectives (Heidler, 2011). Adverbs are not a homogeneous class of words, but they are a controversial category (Cruschina, 2010).

Of the four English skills, writing has been found to be the most difficult for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners to master, as writing in a second language requires both syntactic and semantic knowledge. Clearly understood, the insufficiency of linguistic knowledge or limited wrong competence has a negative impact on writing proficiency as well as L2 (second language) writing quality (Watcharapunyawong &Usaha, 2013). Santos (2000) explained that there are three reasons making writing increasingly essential. 1) more international linguists are promoting writing as their field of specialization, 2) more articles and journals are being published in English, and 3) more international students are pursuing their degrees in English speaking countries.

One of the most important challenges in writing is non-nativelikeness. Heidler (2011) showed that non- native speakers' overuse of some words can make writing unnatural. And this is also true for Iranian EFL learners who make use of certain words in particular adverbs to express

themselves. Thus, one aim of this research study is to compare the employment of adverbs by Iranian EFL learners and native speakers.

1.1 Research Questions:

The current study aims to investigate the employment of adverbs in Iranian EFL learners' academic writings to answer the following questions **.**

1) To what extent do Iranian masters EFL learners use adverbs in writings?
2) Which types of adverbs are overused/underused?
3) How differently do genders use adverbs?
4) To what extent are Iranian EFL learners' writings native-like?

1.2 Hypotheses of the study:

$H_0$1: Iranian MA EFL students do not use adverbs to a great extent in writings.
$H_0$2: Iranian MA EFL students have no variety in using adverbs in writings.
$H_0$3: There is no employment of adverbs in academic writing.

2. Review of the related literature

Zareva (2011) investigated the use of linking adverbials in academic presentations given by university students, both undergraduate and graduate students, in the U.S.A. The author compiled two corpora of individual presentations. The L1 corpus contained 30,205 words and the L2 corpus 30,269 words. It was found that the two groups did not differ much in choosing linking adverbials in terms of semantic types, forms, frequency and position. In a few cases, the ESL learners overused some types and forms of linking adverbials (e.g. so) in their presentations. The author also suggested that L1 presenters should not be the model for L2 presenters, but L2 learners should be made aware of some of those markers used by L1 presenters. This study also claimed that ESL presenters tended to use linking adverbials in the wrong register. They used formal linking adverbials in their oral presentations which were normally used in academic writing.

Koller and Zhang (2015) examined written works of Chinese students enrolled in college ESL. They recorded adverbs and adverbial phrases which they used in their writing. They used adverbs in different positions in sentences. The results of the study showed that sentence-initials and post-verbals had the highest frequency.

Cruschina (2010) found that modality adverbs have a high frequency at an initial position. Manner and punctual adverbial categories were frequently used by his study students and most of them placed adverbial phrases in the sentence- initial position. It seems that this was due to the ease and prestige which were associated with the sentence- initial placement and the default position of English adverbs.

Hussian and Mahmood (2014) examined distinctive linking adverbs in native and non-native Englishes. They used International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English of five different varieties and tried to find out if Pakistani speakers of English employed linking adverbials like other non-native Asian speakers of English. The results indicated that Pakistani speakers used an additive type of linking adverbials more than others. The frequency of an additive type of linking adverbials showed that the Pakistani learners were more interested in adding new information. They also used more additive, summative and contrastive types of linking adverbials as compared to native speakers and other non-native speakers.

Shea (2009) worked on the use of adverbial connectors in 30-minute timed essays written by non-native students in the Intensive English Program at a large Midwestern university. This was a corpus-based study and focused on the use of conjunctive adverbials in learners' writing, which were extracted from a corpus of time learner writing. The research made a correlation analysis between the usage of conjunctive adverbials by non-native speakers and the scores given to the texts by two raters. Shea concluded there was little correlation between connective adverbials used in non-native English learners' writing and the use of these cohesive devices and raters' perceptions of the texts.

In another study, Swan (2010) focused on one type of adverb, subject modifier adverbs or adjuncts such as ***sadly***, ***thoughtfully*** and ***pinkly*** and concluded that adverbialization process is developing in English. It is a process which caused Germanic languages to diverge into "adverbial

languages" like English and "non-adverbial languages" like German. Swan (1984, 1988) focusing on manner adverb suggested sentence adverbs and subject-modifier adverbs. For example, in the sentence *Tom walked slowly* the adverb modifies the verb while sentence adverbs dominate the whole sentence and serve to encode the speaker's evaluation of either the truth of the proposition, or the (presupposed) fact expressed by the proposition. Sentence adverbs can fill initial or post-subject positions (Swan, 1988, p. 506). Subject-modifier adverbs indicate states or modes of mind and refer to external characteristics of the subject as in *stupidly he answered the question.*

Gorjian et. al (2013) worked on the use of conjunctive adverbials between Iranian non-native and native researchers of English in two types of native and non-native corpora. The findings revealed that some researchers overused conjunctive adverbials while others underused them in the writings. Iranian researchers underused connectors, which may be attributed to their inability in writing complex sentences and so producing simple and incoherent sentences.

Alkhotaba (2013) worked on errors made by Arab postgraduate students at University Sains Malaysia and focused on the frequency, kind and any developmental tendencies of these errors. The results indicated a majority of errors were due to mother tongue interference, lack of training, and exposure to errors presented by language teachers and the errors were mainly based on the function and replacement of the prepositions and adverb particles.

Krantz and Leonard (2007) examined the influence of accompanying temporal adverbials (e.g., just, already) on past tense production of children aged 4-6 who were diagnosed as having language impairment. The researchers wanted to find out if children's difficulty with past tense was influenced by the presence of temporal information elsewhere in the sentence. The finding indicated that that children may use adverbials temporally as an adequate marker of past time, so there was no need to inflict past time marker upon verbs.

Ernest (2003) proposed analyses for the distribution of event-initial adverbs like manner, measure, and domain adverbs. Domain adverbs may occur everywhere, semantically. For example, *under* is a predicate which can accompany every verb it is allowed within a verb phrase and nothing prevents it from occurring in higher positions.

Weijen et al. (2009) studied the employment of L1 in writing argumentative essays by 20 L2 students. They were asked to write in think-aloud protocol position. The results of this study indicated that all the participants in this study were dominated by L1 while performing the tasks. The findings revealed that the quality of L2 writing decreased because of interference of L1.

Biber, Johnson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (1999) have reported their corpus findings on the position of linking adverbials in two registers of conversation and written academic prose. Also, when identifying the positions, the authors used the terms 'initial', 'medial' and 'final' but they did not make explicit whether these were in a clause, a sentence or some other units of analysis.

Milton and Tsang (1993) compared the employment of linking adverbials in Hong Kong students' writing in a four-million–word learner corpus. They investigated the frequency of 25 single-word linking adverbials developed from categorization of Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) and claimed that students tended to overuse linking adverbials in their writing. They qualitatively interpreted the two cases of *moreover* and *therefore* and argued that students' difficulty lay in redundant use and misuse.

Fei (2006) worked on adverbial connectors used by Chinese EFL learners with different English proficiency levels, investigating the employment of adverbial connectors by learners who were different in language proficiency. It was found that all levels of learners used adverbial connectors more frequently than native speakers, which may be attributed to L1. The findings also revealed that higher level EFL learners employed more and various kinds of adverbials in their essays, which may be associated with L1 and class instruction.

Liu (2014) studied twenty most frequently used adverbs which Chinese college learners used in their writing and speaking. The research was meant to find out to what extent they used 20 most frequently adverbs differently from native speakers. It was found that Chinese college learners tended to overuse and underuse certain adverbs in their speaking and writing. Chinese college learners used only three adverbs native like (15%), used adverbs differently from native speakers (85%): 45% overuse and 40 % underuse. It was also revealed that Chinese college learners had a different register from the native speakers on the use of adverbs. In the learners' corpora,

"regularly", "normally", "occasionally" are written-register sensitive, but they are register neutral in the native speakers' corpora.

Hinkel (2002) compared the frequency of adverbs in academic essays written by first-year native speakers and academically- advanced non-native students. The results showed that non-native students employed adverbs of time similarly, but adverbs of place had a lower frequency in the essays by Japanese and Korean speakers than by the Chinese, and Indonesians. Compared to others, the Japanese employed a higher rate of adverbs of manner.

Demirel (2015) focused on the employment of adverbial connectors in published research articles of academicians. He worked on two corpora: Turkish Academic Corpus non-native speakers and American Academic Corpus consisting of articles by native academians, finding that among 20 adverb connectors, three out of six (i.e. *on the other hand*, *moreover*, and *besides*) were overused by non-native writers and three adverbs (i.e. *thus*, *in particular*, and *in contrast*) were underused.

3. Methods of research

3.1 Corpora

This research employed three different corpora, including two native corpora and one non-native corpus. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (LGSWE) is a native corpus, which describes the grammatical features in actual usage. It. contained 40,026,000 words in such registers as conversation, fiction, newspaper language, and academic prose (Biber et al 2007). The second source, COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) is the largest available Corpus of American English which contains subsections for spoken English. It contains more than 450 million words. Some information can be taken from it; for example, the frequency of the word in academic prose. The Researcher Corpus (RC) was obtained from 460 academic essay papers written by 60 female and male Iranian MA EFL students, at Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch, Iran. Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE) was one of the native sources.

3.2 Participant

The participants of the study included 10 male and 50 female MA EFL candidates (aged 25-35) majoring at Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch, Iran.

3.3 Procedure

The current study employed a quantitative method design. The data was gathered through the 460 academic essay papers of MA EFL learners' classwork at Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch, Iran. The researcher elicited the adverbs used in the papers and categorized them into seven sets based on the classification of LGSWE (Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English). The frequency of utilized adverbs was manually calculated, taking advantage of Excel tool for data analysis. Finally, the researcher compared the frequency of employed adverbs in RC with native speakers of English through two native corpora (LGSWE and COCA) to find answers to the research questions.

4. Results and discussion

This study classified adverbs based on Biber et al. (1999) into seven categories: Adverbs of time, adverbs of place, adverbs of manner, adverbs of linking, adverbs of additive/restrictive, adverbs of stance, and adverbs of degree.

4.1 Adverbs of time:

Adverbs of time convey information about time in four ways: position, frequency, duration, and relationship (Bibber et al., 1999).

The adverb *finally* occurred 7 times in RC (the frequency of occurrence in RC is 0.005%). It does not occur in academic prose in LGSWE; therefore, the rate of its occurrence is zero. Surveying in COCA shows that *finally* occurred 17,624 times (it was used in academic prose 0.003% in COCA). Comparing the employment of *finally* in the three corpora indicates that native- English speakers tend to use the adverb *finally* more than non-natives (Iranian MA EFL learners) .

Lastly is another adverb used in RC. This adverb occurred 6 times in this corpus and formed 0.004% of words used in MA EFL learners' essays. *Lastly* was not observed in academic prose in LGSWE. *Lastly* occurred 621 times in COCA, around 0.0001% of the adverbs used in academic prose. As the percentage of the employment of *lastly* in three corpora shows, MA EFL candidates tend to use *lastly* more than native speakers do.

The least utilized adverb in RC is *ever*. It occurred only 3 times in MA EFL learners' essays (0.002%). This adverb was not observed in LGSWE. The number of occurrence of *ever* in COCA was 11,796 (0.002%). Statistically, it can be said that MA EFL candidates have used the adverb *ever* native-like.

Like *finally*, the adverb *immediately* occurred 7 times in RC (0.005% of the total used words in RC). This adverb was not used in LGSWE. Investigation in COCA shows that native-speakers used *immediately* 6,847 times in academic prose (0.001%). Comparing the percentage of employment of *immediately* in three corpora says that this adverb was used more by native-speakers than Iranian MA EFL candidates in academic prose.

Daily as an adverb of time occurred 29 times in RC (0.02%). Corpus results show that *daily* did not occur in LGSWE. Corpus results of COCA indicate that *daily* occurred 10,086 times in academic prose (0.001%). In this case, comparing the percentages shows that MA EFL candidates used *daily* in their essays more than native-speakers did.

The adverb *never* was used 23 times by MA EFL candidates and formed 0.017% of the total used words in RC. This adverb occurred 24,129 times in COCA (0.004%). *Never* was not used in LGSWE. A comparison of using *never* in the three corpora proves that this adverb was used more by Iranian MA EFL candidates than native-speakers.

The most frequent adverb of time used by MA EFL candidates was *just* which occurred 131 times in the essays. The percentage rate of employment of *just* in RC was 0.1%. It was not observed in LGSWE but occurred 43,254 times in COCA (0.008%). It is statistically obvious that MA EFL candidates used *just* more than native-speakers did.

Evidence from LGSWE shows that *always* occurred 200 times per million in academic prose (0.02%). This adverb occurred 83 times (0.063%) in RC and 22,245 times in COCA (0.004%). The results of comparison of the use of *always* between two other native corpora show that this adverb was used more in LGSWE. The frequency of *always* in RC was the least.

The amount of occurrence of *usually* in RC was 89 (0.068%) and 145,521 (0.002%) in COCA. It occurred 200 times per million in academic prose of LGSWE (0.02%). As the percentage of use of *usually* in three corpora shows, this adverb was used more in two native corpora than in RC. Another adverb which occurred in all three corpora was *often*. This adverb occurred 30 times in RC (0.022%). The frequency of *often* in COCA was 52,844 times (0.01%). It occurred 200 times per million in academic prose in LGSWE by native-speakers (0.02%). It may be deduced that the employment of *often* in two native corpora was more than in RC.

Sometimes occurred 80 times in RC and formed 0.06% of the employed words by Iranian MA EFL candidates in their essays. This word by 14,537 times of occurrence in COCA formed 0.002% of the used words in academic prose. This adverb occurred 200 times per million in LGSWE in academic prose. It means that *sometimes* was employed 0.02% in LGSWE. Comparing the results of three corpora may imply that *sometimes* was used in more extent in one of the native corpora (LGSWE) and has the least percentage of occurrence in RC

4.2 Adverbs of place

Adverbs of place can show position, direction, or distance (Biber et al., 1999). These adverbs are put before the direct object or the verb. The common adverbs of place in English are *away, far, outside, towards, upstairs, where, down, below, behind*, and *above*.

Somewhere is an adverb of place which occurred once in the Iranian MA EFL learners' essays (0.0007%). This adverb was not observed in LGSWE academic prose. *Somewhere* occurred 1,536 times in COCA (0.0002%). The results of comparing three corpora show that native-speakers used adverbs in academic prose more than Iranian MA EFL candidates did.

Anywhere occurred only once in RC (0.0007%). It occurred 1,858 times in COCA (0.0003%) and did not occur in LGSWE. Comparison between the percentage rates of using *anywhere* in RC and COCA shows that native-speakers used *anywhere* more than Iranian MA EFL candidates did.

The adverb *here* was utilized only once in RC and formed 0.0007% of the total used words by MA EFL learners. It was used 200 times per million in LGSWE (0.02%). *Here* occurred 30,547 times in COCA (0.005%). As the results show, the use of *here* by Iranian MA EFL candidates was lower.

4.3 Adverbs of manner

Adverbs of manner express information about how an action is performed. It is the largest group of adverbs. They are usually formed by adding an –ly to the end of adjectives. For example, *careful+ ly= carefully*. These adverbs can be freely placed before the direct object (or before the verb if there is no direct object). The most common adverbs of manner are *carefully, anxiously, easily, equally, fast, happily,* and *hard.*

In comparison to adverbs of place, the adverbs of manner are more frequent in RC, such as *badly,easily, hardly, happily, slowly, properly, significantly, fast, carefully, automatically*, and *undoubtedly*.

Badly, happily, slowly, automatically are the least frequent adverbs of manner in RC. MA EFL learners' use of adverbs of manner amounted to 14.86% of the total adverbs of RC. Males tended to use adverbs of manner more than females .

Badly as an adverb of manner by the lowest frequency (1 time) formed 0.0007% of the total used words in RC. This adverb did not occur in LGSWE. It occurred 981 times in COCA (0.0001%). The result of comparison between COCA and RC shows that the percentage of using *badly* in RC was more than that in COCA.

Easily occurred 69 times in RC (0.052%) by MA EFL candidates while it did not occur in LGSWE. This adverb occurred 8,732 times in COCA (0.001%). As the statistics show Iranian MA EFL candidates used *easily* in a greater amount than native-speakers did.

Happily occurred once in RC (0.0007%) while its occurrence in COCA was 450 (8.6%). This adverb did not occur in LGSWE. As the percentage rate shows native-speakers used happily more than Iranian MA EFL candidates did .

Slowly was another adverb by a low frequency rate in RC which occurred once in this corpus (0.0007%). *Slowly* occurred 2.866 times in academic prose in COCA (0.0005%) but it did not occur in LGSWE. It may be concluded that Iranian MA EFL candidates utilized it more than native-speakers did.

The results of RC show that *properly* occurred 6 times in RC (0.004%). According to COCA native-speakers used it 3,196 times in their writings (0.0006%). There was no evidence of the occurrence of *properly* in LGSWE. By comparing the percentages of employment of *properly* in two corpora, it may be concluded that Iranian MA EFL candidates tended to use *properly* in their essays more than native-speakers did.

Significantly was the only adverb of manner which occurred in LGSWE. It appeared 200 times in million (0.02%). But as for RC it had a low rate, 2 times. (0.001%). Its occurrence in COCA was 18,735 times (0.003%). Comparing the use of this adverb in the three corpora indicated that it was used in native-speakers' writing more than in Iranian MA EFL learners' and the occurrence of *significantly* in LGSWE was more than in COCA.

Iranian MA EFL candidates utilized the adverb *fast* four times in their essays (0.003%). While there was no record in LGSWE. Regarding the use of *fast* in COCA it was 3,348 times (0.0006%). It may be stated that Iranian MA EFL candidates used *fast* more than native-speakers did.

Carefully occurred 3 times in MA EFL learners' essays (0.002%). This adverb was not observed in LGSWE. Surveying this adverb in COCA shows that it occurred 4,583 times (0.0008%) in academic prose by native-speakers. By making a simple comparison between the frequency rate of *carefully* in two corpora, it may be said that Iranian MA EFL candidates utilized *carefully* more than native-speakers did.

The adverb *automatically* was used in the lowest amount in RC. It occurred once (0.001%). According to Biber (1999) *automatically* did not occur in academic prose in LGSWE. The rate of its occurrence in COCA was 1,784 (0.0003%). As the percentage of using *automatically* in two, three corpora indicates, Iranian MA EFL candidates used *automatically* more than native-speakers did.

Iranian MA EFL leaners employed *undoubtedly* 17 times in their essays (0.013%). There was no occurrence for *undoubtedly* in LGSWE. According to COCA, this adverb occurred 1,856 times in academic prose (0.0003%). This means that the adverb *undoubtedly* was overused by Iranian MA EFL learners.

The adverb *hardly* occurred twice in RC (0.0001%) but did not occur in LGSWE. This adverb occurred 3,708 times in COCA (0.0007%). By comparing the percentage rate of using *hardly* in the three corpora, it can be said that native-speakers used this adverb more in their academic prose.

4.4 Adverbs of linking

Adverbs of linking serve to make semantic connections between spans of discourse of varying length, thus contributing to the cohesion of discourse. The findings of RC show that adverbs of linking contribute to 1.26% of the total used adverbs. MA EFL candidates employed *consequently, additionally, similarly, specially, namely*, *secondly*, *alternatively*.

The more frequent used adverbs were *similarly* and *secondly*. They did not use these adverbs in great amount in their essays. The female learners tended to use adverbs of linking more than the male learners who employed only *alternatively* in their essays while female leaners utilized *consequently*, *additionally*, *similarly, specifically, namely,secondly*, and *thirdly*. Females did not employ *alternatively* in their papers while males did. It means that 94.73% of the total used adverb in this category belongs to female MA EFL learners.

Then, *so*, *e.g., i.e., therefore* and *thus* occurred 200 times per million in LGSWE; however, they occurred 1,000 times per million in academic register in LGSWE. The Corpus findings show that adverbs of linking are used in academic prose in greater extent than in conversation register.

Consequently, as a linking adverb occurred twice in RC (0.001%). It occurred 5,210 times in COCA (0.001%). The employment of this adverb in both corpora was the same. It may be deduced that Iranian MA EFL candidates employed *consequently* native-like.

Additionally occurred only once in RC (0.0007%). The frequency of the occurrence of *additionally* in COCA was 3,697 (0.0007%). As the percentage shows, the use of *additionally* in both corpora was the same. This adverb was not observed in LGSWE.

Similarly occurred 5 times in RC (0.003%). It was used in COCA 8,462 times (0.001%). Comparison between the two corpora says that Iranian MA EFL candidates used *similarly* more than native-speakers did.

Specifically occurred once in RC (0.0007%) while the amount of the occurrence of *specifically* in COCA was 10,859 (0.002%). Therefore, it may be concluded that native-speakers used *specifically* more in their academic writings.

The adverb *namely* occurred twice in RC (0.001%). It was used 2,954 times in academic prose in COCA (0.0005%). Comparing the percentage rate in COCA and RC shows that Iranian MA EFL candidates used, *namely* more than native-speakers did.

Secondly was used 5 times by Iranian MA EFL candidates (0.003%). It occurred 694 times in COCA (0.0001%). Making a comparison between the percentages of the use *secondly* in COCA and RC shows that Iranian MA EFL candidates used *secondly* more than native ones did.

Alternatively was a low frequent adverb in RC. It was used only once time in RC (0.0007%). The corpus results show that *alternatively* occurred 1,085 times in COCA (0.0002%). According to the statistics, Iranian MA EFL candidates used *alternatively* in a greater extent than native speakers did.

The adverb *thirdly* was used twice by MA EFL candidates in essays (0.0007%). It occurred 147 times in COCA (0.0002%). It means that *thirdly* was used in COCA more than in RC. This adverb did not occur in academic prose of LGSWE.

4.5 Adverbs of stance

Adverbs of stance are in three types: Epistemic, attitude, and style. Epistemic adverbs can show levels of certainty or doubt, like *probably* and *definitely*. They can comment on the reality and actuality of a proposition; for example, *actually* and *really*. They can be used to show that a proportion is based on some evidence, without specifying the exact source, for instance, *apparently, reportedly*. Adverbs can be used to show limitations on a proposition, like *mainly*. Adverbs can be used to convey imprecision (hedges). Attitude stance adverbs speak about speaker's or writer's attitudes towards a proposition; for example, *unfortunately,* and *surprisingly*. The style stance of adverbs comments on the manner of speaking, which the speaker is adopting; for example, *frankly* and *honestly*.

The common adverbs of stance introduced in LGSWE are, *of course, probably, really, like, actually, maybe, sort of, perhaps, kind of*, *generally* and *indeed.* The corpus findings illustrate that *of course, probably, perhaps, generally* and *indeed* occurred 200 times per million.

MA EFL candidates employed adverbs of stance in their essays 13.14%. *Generally* was the most frequent adverb with an occurrence rate of 21 and *apparently* is the least frequent by one

occurrence in 147 adverbs of stance. The employed adverbs of stance were *certainly*, *wisely, apparently, mainly, probably, simply*, *of course*, *actually, generally, unfortunately, fortunately* and *definitely*. Surveying these adverbs indicates that female learners utilized adverbs of stance *extendedly* and *variously* .

Fortunately occurred 16 times in RC (0.01%). It did not occur in LGSWE. *Fortunately* occurred 1,085 times in COCA (0.0002%). Comparing the percentage of using *fortunately* in three corpora shows that Iranian MA EFL candidates used it more than native-speakers did.

Unfortunately was used 16 times by Iranian MA EFL candidates in their writings (0.01%). Results of COCA say that it occurred 4,435 times in academic prose (0.0008%). This adverb did not occur in LGSWE. The adverb *unfortunately*, as the statistics shows, was used in a greater extent by Iranian MA EFL learners.

Generally was used 21 times in RC (0.016%). This adverb occurred 200 times in LGSWE (0.02%) while it occurred 16,819 times in COCA (0.003%). *Generally* occurred in both native corpora, but it was used in a greater amount in LGSWE. Iranian MA EFL candidates employed *generally* more than in COCA and in a lower amount than in LGSWE .

It was observed that *simply* occurred 6 times in RC (0.004%) but it was not observed in academic prose in LGSWE. *Simply* occurred 17,589 times in COCA (0.003%). The result of the comparison between the use of *simply* in the three corpora indicates that Iranian MA EFL candidates used it more than native-speakers did.

There is an adverb which occurred in all of the corpora. It was *ofcourse* which occurred 3 times in RC (0.002%), 200 times in LGSWE (0.02%) and 12,640 times in COCA (0.002%). According to the statistics, *ofcourse*, was used in both RC and COCA but it was used more in LGSWE. It may be deduced that Iranian MA EFL candidates employed *ofcourse* native-like.

The least frequent adverb in RC was *certainly* which occurred only once (0.0007%). This adverb was not observed in LGSWE and was employed 9,411 times in COCA (0.001%). The figures indicate that native-speakers used *certainly* more than Iranian MA EFL candidates in their essays.

The adverb *definitely* occurred 3 times in RC (0.002%). It did not occur in LGSWE, but occurred 1,186 times in COCA (0.0002%). The percentage rates show that *definitely* occurred in a great extent in RC.

There was an adverb which was not recorded in LGSWE corpus and occurred in the lowest amount in RC. It was *actually* which occurred only once in RC (0.0007%) and occurred 13,068 times in COCA (0.002%). A simple comparison between RC and COCA indicates that native- speakers employed *actually* more than Iranian MA EFL candidates did.

The corpus results indicate that the adverb *wisely* occurred 3 times in RC and formed 0.002% of the total used adverbs in it, but it did not occur in LGSWE and was used 358 times in COCA (0.27%). As the rates show, the employment of *wisely* in COCA was more than in RC.

Probably occurred in all the three corpora: 200 times in LGSWE (0.02%), 5 times in RC (0.003%) and 12,718 times in COCA (0.003%). It was used more in LGSWE with a little difference and occurred equally in RC and COCA. It may be said that Iranian MA EFL candidates used *probably* native-like.

Mainly did not occur in LGSWE. It was used by Iranian MA EFL candidates 6 times (0.004%) and its occurrence rate in COCA was 4,575 (0.0008). It may be deduced that Iranian MA EFL candidates used *mainly* more than native- speakers did.

Apparently occurred once by Iranian MA EFL candidates (0.0007%). It did not occur in LGSWE but occurred 4,900 times in COCA (0.0009%). Accordingly, the use of *apparently* did not occur in academic prose in all corpora, but can be said that Iranian MA EFL candidates tended to use it more than native speakers in academic prose.

4.7 Adverbs of additive/restrictive

The additive/ restrictive adverbs show that one item is being added to another at a clausal level. For example: *too*, and *also*. LGSWE listed a number of words as additive/restrictive adverbs in academic prose. The adverb *only* occurred 1,000 times per million and *just, even, too, else, also*, *especially* and *particularly* occurred 200 times in million. Findings of corpus illuminate that additive/restrictive adverbs are used in academic prose in a greater extent than in conversation register.

Particularly occurred 10 times in RC (0.007%). It was used 200 times per millions in LGSWE (0.02%). The results show that particularly occurred 20,906 times in COCA (0.004%). It occurred in a greater extent in LGSWE than in COCA and RC. The adverb *particularly* may be said to occur more in Iranian MA EFL learners' essays.

Another adverb of additive/restrictive used in RC was *especially* which occurred in all corpora: 82 times in RC (0.062%), 200 times per million in LGSWE (0.02%) and 639 times in COCA (0.0001%). As the results indicate, it was used more in LGSWE than in the two other corpora and was employed in a greater amount than in RC. It may be concluded that native-speakers use *especially* in a greater extent than Iranian MA EFL candidates do.

4.6 Adverbs of degree

Adverbs of degree describe the extent to which a feature holds. They can be used to mark that the degree is either greater or less than usual or that of something else in the neighboring discourse. They occur as both adverbials and modifiers. Examples of adverbs of degree are *slightly*, *almost*, *thoroughly*, and *completely*.

LGSWE introduces *very*, *quite, more, relatively* as adverbs of degree which occurred at least 200 times per million. Corpus findings indicate that MA EFL candidates utilized adverbs of degree 26.96% in essays. *Very* held the largest frequency which occurred 230 times and *totally* and *absolutely* had the lowest frequency which occurred once in RC. There were also some adverbs like *totally, absolutely*, and *quite* which did not occur in female learners' essays.

The adverb *well* occurred 8 times in RC (0.006%). Investigation into academic prose indicates that this adverb occurred 200 times per million in LGSWE (0.02%) and 71,926 times in COCA (0.013%). Comparing the percentage of use of *well* in the three corpora indicates that this adverb was used more in academic prose by native-speakers than Iranian MA EFL learners.

Too as an adverb of degree did not occur in LGSWE while it occurred 29,126 times in COCA (0.005%) and 82 times in RC (0.062%). It may be said that Iranian MA EFL candidates tended to utilize *too* in a greater amount than native-speakers did.

Very was used in all the three corpora: 82 times in RC (0.06%), 200 times per million in LGSWE (0.02%) and 54,442 times in COCA (0.01%). As the percentage shows, *very* was employed in a greater amount by Iranian MA EFL candidates than native-speakers.

The adverb *totally* which occurred only once in RC (0.0007%) but did not occur in LGSWE. It occurred 2,338 times in COCA (0.0004%). The result of the comparison between the percentage of the use of *totally* in RC and COCA indicates that Iranian MA EFL candidates used it more than native speakers in academic prose.

Exactly occurred 14 times in RC (0.01%) but did not occur in LGSWE. It occurred 4,521 times in COCA (0.0008). It may be said that Iranian tended to use *exactly* more than native speakers in academic prose.

Iranian MA EFL candidates utilized *completely* 14 times in their academic essays (0.01%). This adverb was not observed in LGSWE. The occurrence rate of *completely* in COCA was 6,205 (0.001%). It may be deduced that Iranian MA EFL candidates tended to use *completely* more than native speakers.

Absolutely occurred once in RC (0.0007%). It did not occur in LGSWE. The results show that *absolutely* occurred 1,685 times in COCA (0.0003%). The comparison between the percentage rates of use of *absolutely* in the three corpora shows that Iranian MA EFL candidates tended to use *absolutely* more than native speakers.

The adverb *extremely* was utilized 5 times in RC (0.003%). It occurred 12,905 times in academic prose in COCA (0.002%) but there was no evidence of occurring of *extremely* in LGSWE. As the results show, Iranian MA EFL candidates used the adverb *extremely* more than native speakers did.

The results say that *quite* occurred 200 times per million in LGSWE (0.02%). Iranian MA EFL candidates used *quite* 5 times in academic essays (0.003%) and it was used 12,905 times in COCA (0.002%). *Quite* was utilized in both native corpora more than in RC; therefore, it may be said that quite was used more by native speakers. MA EFL candidates used *very* to a greater extent. *Too* was another adverb of degree which was used frequently in RC. *Well, very*, and *too* were those which were utilized in LGSWE. *Totally* and *absolutely* were the least frequent adverbs. The investigation of using adverbs of degree in MA EFL learners' essays indicates that they tended to

use adverbs of degree in their writings more than native-speakers did. *Very*, *too*, *completely*, *exactly*, *extremely*, and *absolutely* were used more by Iranian MA EFL candidates than native-speakers.

MA EFL candidates utilized adverbs in different types variously. They used some types of adverbs in a great extent and some of them in low extent. For example, the adverb of place was a category with the lowest number of members (*somewhere*, *anywhere* and *here*) and the lowest frequency in RC (3 times). Adverbs of time and adverbs of degree were the largest

Comparing RC with LGSWE corpus findings shows that MA EFL candidates had a variety of categories of adverbs. For instance, adverbs of time included 11 types. LGSWE introduced 16 types of adverbs nine of which were used in academic prose. It indicated that MA EFL candidates used adverbs of time variously. The rate of adverbs of degree used in RC was 10 while only three adverbs were presented in LGSWE (two adverbs of them were used in academic register) so MA EFL candidates used adverbs of manner variously. MA EFL candidates used 10 adverbs of stance with various frequencies. The rate of these adverbs in LGSWE was 5. MA EFL candidates employed these adverbs twice the number, so they used adverbs of stance in a various way. Only two adverbs were used in the additive/restrictive category in RC while LGSWE presented 7 adverbs as additive/restrictive; therefore; MA EFL candidates did not use these types of adverbs variously. Adverbs of degree which formed one of the largest categories of adverbs, included 9 adverbs. LGSWE listed 4 adverbs in this category, so it can be deduced that the adverbs were utilized in a various way by MA EFL learners. The rate of adverbs of place used by MA EFL candidates was 2 and for LGSWE one. It can be said that they used adverbs of place similarly to the corpus findings of LGSWE. Corpus findings indicate that in both corpora the rate of used adverbs was 7. It can be implied that they are similar to each other.

Based on the findings in writing and native speakers' employment of adverbs in academic writing. MA EFL candidates employed some adverbs like native speakers. As the results of the study illustrated, in some cases they used some adverbs like native speakers. For example, MA EFL candidates used *very* in their essays like native speakers, but according to two native corpora there were some other words that were used in academic prose by native speakers which were absent in MA EFL learners' essays.

To answer the first research question asking about the extent Iranian masters EFL learners use adverbs in writings, the findings indicate out of 130,700 words in RC, only 1,246 words were adverbs, and compared to the other two corpora, it held a low stance. Hence, the first research hypothesis is not rejected as the study population showed a low frequency in the application of adverbs.

The second research question asked about the overuse/underuse of adverbs. The results show that Iranian MA EFL learners used adverbs differently in seven categories. They tended to overuse adverbs of linking, stance, degree, and manner in essays. On the other hand, they tended to underuse the adverbs of place and time in essays.

The third question enquired about the employment of adverbs by different genders. The findings reveal that female MA EFL learners employed adverbs of stance, linking, additive/restrictive, and time categories more frequently and variously, but the male MA EFL leaners utilized adverbs of manner and degree variously. It seems that in employing adverbs of place they were the same. It may be concluded that female MA EFL learners employed adverbs in a greater amount and in a greater variety than the male MA EFL learners. Hence, this can reject the second null hypothesis stating that Iranian MA EFL students have no variety in using adverbs in writing.

The fourth question focused on the native-likeness of Iranian MA EFL learners' use of adverbs. Statistics can tentatively show that they both overused and underused certain adverbs. However, there are some adverbs such as *ever*, *consequently*, *additionally*, *of course*, and *probably* which the learners seem to have used native-like.

By considering all mentioned points, it can be said that the findings cannot reject the third hypothesis saying that there is no relationship between Iranian MA EFL learners' employment of adverbs in writing and native speakers' employment of adverbs in academic writing.

5. Conclusion

By doing this research, the researcher concluded that Iranian MA EFL learners used different types of adverbs in a low extent. It was also found that they tended to overuse adverbs of linking, stance, degree, and manner and underuse adverbs of time and place. It may be concluded that Iranian MA EFL learners tended to overuse adverbs in their writing.

Investigating different classes of adverbs illustrates that the learners were weak in using some classes of adverbs in their essays. It may be said that they need to be exposed to more instruction to become familiar with how to use adverbs in writing appropriately.

Writing skill has a significant role in communication especially in academic activities. This study may be beneficial for both teachers and writers. It may make teachers aware of learners' strengths and weaknesses in utilizing adverbs in writing and help them to employ appropriate strategies in teaching writing. In addition, course designers and material developers will certainly benefit from findings like those achieved in this article.

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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract
This study aimed at investigating the influence of teaching listening comprehension strategies on the improvement of listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. In doing so, 80 upper-intermediate students were chosen to take Interchange Placement Test. The students were divided equally into two groups: experimental group and control group. They were given a strategy use questionnaire. According to the results of the study, the experimental group showed higher levels of proficiency in comparison with the control group after receiving instruction. Therefore, it was concluded that teaching listening comprehension strategies can play a major role in the improvement of listening comprehension ability. The implications of the finding are presented at the end of the study.

Keywords: *Listening strategy, strategy instruction, listening comprehension ability*

Introduction

Listening has a significant role in language learning, yet it is still an area where students feel most disappointed and powerless. In Iran's English teaching, listening has been stressed for a long time, however this skill stays poor for some learners even after they have had five to ten years of involvement in learning English.

One main reason is related to the teaching and learning methodology. The reality of the matter is that teaching learners how to solve a listening task by using a variety of strategies will prompt better comprehension. Be that as it may, for some teachers, teaching listening is the most effortless of all English courses. They should simply play the tape, let the students listen and do the Comprehension activities, play the tape again and check their comprehension. Undoubtedly, teaching practice in this perspective has by and large neglected to get up to speed with the advancement of EFL theory. The target of classroom teaching is to help students create listening strategies and skills as opposed to giving random practice. In light of numerous new breakthroughs and advances in comprehension the way of listening and the strategies and skills included, this study considers the effect of strategy instruction on listening comprehension. Most of language learners find it hard to go on concerning listening comprehension in the course of learning any language especially when there is lack of comprehensible input (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). Listening is the most important skill which can be improved therefore, it should be the focus of attention in language class (Oxford, 1998). The problem is how to improve this skill. Oxford (1990) states that learning strategies are specific actions taken by students to improve their learning. With regard to strategy instruction in terms of listening comprehension, since listening is important for learning a language, in recent years there has been a growing tendency in what should be done to help learners develop and use this skill more efficiently; because not all language learners acquire the same listening proficiency level in order to communicate successfully. Some researchers state that strategy instruction is still a matter of controversy (Goh, 2002; Cohen and Macaro, 2007). Listening strategy instruction has received little attention in language classrooms because learners are not aware of the true nature of listening and the way of improving their listening ability. Therefore, the present study aims at investigating the impact of teaching listening comprehension strategies on the listening comprehension ability on Iranian EFL learners.

Research Question

This study attempts to answer the following question:

Does teaching of listening comprehension strategies affect the listening comprehension ability of students?

Review of the literature

Listening Strategies

According to Tyagi (2013) listening strategies are techniques which help students understand and remember listening input. Listening strategies can be classified based on the way the listener processes the input.

Top-down strategies are listener oriented; the listener makes use of background knowledge of the topic, the context, the language, and the type of text. This background knowledge helps the listeners to interpret what they hear and to predict what might come after that. Top-down strategies include

- listening for the main idea
- predicting
- making inferences
- summarizing

On the other hand, *Bottom-up strategies* are text oriented; the listener relies on the sounds, grammar, and words that make meaning. These strategies are:

- listening for specific details
- recognizing cognates

- recognizing word-order patterns

Strategic listeners also make use of *metacognitive strategies* in order to monitor, plan, and evaluate their listening. They are used to plan for thinking about the process of learning and also to monitor their comprehension and production (Brown, 2007).

Cognitive Strategies: These strategies are confined to some special learning tasks which include more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. These strategies are as follows:

Inferencing: Listeners provide in the missing information like the meanings of unknown words and parts of a text when they are listening by using keywords and context.

Elaboration: Listeners relate new information to existing knowledge in order to provide a more complete interpretation.

Prediction: Helps listeners to predict what comes next through anticipating the content based on the topic or title before they listen and they predict the details when they are listening.

Conceptualization: Listener relates new information to a more general and wider situation or context to make a better interpretation of it.

Fixation: Listener pays a closer attention to a small part of spoken text to make a better comprehension of it.

Reconstruction: Listener uses new words from the text to make to meaning of the original input.

Socio-affective strategies: These strategies are related to the social-mediating activities and the interaction with other individuals. Several factor might affect the choice of language learning strategies such as gender, learning styles, cultural background, tolerance of ambiguity, attitudes and beliefs, degree of awareness, type of task, personality traits, and nationality (Oxford, 1990).

How to Teach Strategies in the Classroom:

Oxford (1990) makes a comprehensive view of learning strategies. The strategies are classified into two groups: *direct or cognitive strategies*, which learners use directly to the language itself. And *indirect or metacognitive strategies*, in which learners manage their own learning process.

The following three different approaches can be found to be applicable in teaching strategies in language classrooms.

Frameworks for teaching strategies

The first framework, developed by Chamot and O'Malley (1994), is useful after students have had practice in using a wide range of strategies in different contexts. Their approach to helping students complete language learning tasks can be described as a four-stage problem-solving process.

(1) Planning. Students plan ways to approach a learning task.

(2) Monitoring. Students self-monitor their performance by paying attention to their strategy use and checking comprehension.

(3) Problem Solving. Students find solutions to problems they encounter.

(4) Evaluation. Students learn to evaluate the effectiveness of a given strategy after it has been applied to a learning task.

The second framework, was devised by Pearson and Dole (1987 as quoted in Cohen, 2003) with regard to first language learning but it can be applied for the study of a second language too. This

framework is concerned with isolated strategies by encompassing explicit modeling and explication of the benefits of utilizing a specific strategy, extensive functional practice with the strategy, and the chance of that strategy to transfer the strategy to new learning contexts.

Oxford et al. (1990) proposed another framework, which can be useful for introducing of strategies, including explicit strategy awareness, functional and contextualized practice with the strategies, discussion of the benefits of strategy use, self-evaluation and monitoring of language performance, and the suggestions and demonstrations of the transferability of the strategies to new tasks.

Steps for Designing Strategy Instruction:

The following seven steps are based largely on suggestions of strategy training by Oxford (1990).

1. Determine learners' needs and the resources available for training.
2. Select the strategies to be taught.
3. Consider the benefits of integrated strategy training.
4. Consider motivational issues.
5. Prepare the materials and activities.
6. Conduct explicit strategy training.
7. Evaluate and revise the strategy training.

Goals of Strategy Instruction:

Strategy instruction tries to provide learners with the instruments to do the following (Cohen, 2003):

- Self-diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in language learning
- Become aware of what helps them to learn the target language most efficiently
- Develop a broad range of problem-solving skills
- Experiment with familiar and unfamiliar learning strategies
- Make decisions about how to approach a language task
- Monitor and self-evaluate their performance
- Transfer successful strategies to new learning contexts

Cohen (2000), defined language learning and language use strategies as processes which are consciously chosen by learners. However, language learning strategies are used to improve learner knowledge of a given language, and they comprise affective strategies, cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, and social strategies.

3. Method

Participants:

The participants in this study were 80 EFL learners between 18 to 30 years of age in Navid Language Institute in Shiraz, Iran. The students took Interchange Placement Test devised by Lesley Hansen, and Zukowski-Faust (2005). The students were divided into experimental and control groups, with forty students in each group.

Instruments

The three questionnaires used in this study were Listening Comprehension Strategy Inventory (LCSI), Interchange Placement Test, and the Listening Task Battery. Students were asked to take Interchange Placement Test in order to specify their proficiency level. Then, they were asked to fill in the LCSI devised by Gerchek (2000).This questionnaire is comprised of twelve listening comprehension strategies.

Procedure

The students were required to take Interchange Placement Test. Based on their scores, there were divided into control and experimental groups. Students were asked to fill in LCSI to show what listening strategies they use. Then the LCSI results of both experimental and control groups were compared to see whether there was any significant difference between the two groups in terms of using listening comprehension strategies. Finally, their listening comprehension ability was assessed by the Listening Task Battery.

The students in the experimental group received instruction for two months, two hours a week. They talked about the strategies they used explicitly. But the students in the control group received no instruction and did not talk about their strategies explicitly. Students in the control group followed the class activities and followed the listening activities of the book but they were not with listening comprehension strategies. Then, a listening task battery was administered to students to measure their listening comprehension ability before and after treatment. Table 4.4 shows the result.

4. Data Analysis

In order to compare the difference in listening comprehension ability and the frequency of using listening comprehension strategies of students before and after teaching listening comprehension strategies, the LCSI was administered to students twice (i.e. before and after teaching listening comprehension strategies). The LCSI items were scored on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (= never or almost never used) to 5 (= always or almost always used). Therefore, the lowest mean (= 1) indicates the lowest ability in listening comprehension and the highest mean (= 5) indicates the highest ability in listening comprehension. The mean for the experimental group before treatment was 4.23 and for the control group it was 3.07. But after treatment the mean for the experimental group was 4.95 and for the control group it was 3.12.

Table 4.1 Mean frequency of listening comprehension strategy use before and after the instruction

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
	N	**Mean**	**N**	**Mean**
Before	40	4.23	40	3.07
After	40	4.95	40	3.128

As Table 4.1 indicates, there was a significant difference in the mean value of experimental group after treatment. In order to find out whether there was a significant difference between listening comprehension ability of students before and after receiving instruction in listening strategies, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. Tables 5.1 shows the result of independent-samples t-test.

Table 4.2 Independent-Samples t-test of using listening strategies before instruction

	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
Equal variances assumed	1.597	.340	1.255	44	.236	.462	.06358	-.3036	.87987
Equal variances not assumed			1.255	41.745	.241	.462	.06473	-.3140	.89291

According to Table 4.2, there was no statistically significant difference between experimental and control groups before instruction (Sig. 2-tailed = .236). The same statistical procedure was followed after students received instruction to see whether there was any improvement in students' listening comprehension ability after receiving instruction in using listening strategies. Table 4.3 shows the result.

Table 4.3. Independent-samples t-test of using listening strategies after instruction

	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
Equal variances assumed	.343	.598	6.128	44	.000	1.245	.04256	.76523	1.4672

	Equal variances not assumed			6.128	42.723	.000	1.245	.04256	.76241	1.4891

As Table 4.3 indicates, there was a statistically significant difference (Sig 2-tailed= .000) between experimental and control groups after treatment in terms of using listening comprehension strategies.

Table 4.4 Listening performance by task pre- and post- test means

Pre- and Post- test means	Task 1 Short story	Task 2 Science report	Task 3 News report
Experimental group (N=40)	4.85 / 5.34	4.21 / 4.89	4.12 / 4.83
Control group (N=40)	4.74 / 4.79	4.32 / 4.41	4.09 / 4.13

According to Table 4.4, the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of their listening comprehension ability on the three tasks.

5. Discussion

This study aimed at investigating the impact of teaching listening comprehension strategies on the listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. Listening Comprehension Strategy Inventory (LCSI) was administered to both experimental and control groups to find out what strategies students used while listening. Then, the Listening Task Battery administered to the students in order to assess their listening comprehension ability. The results showed that there was a statistically significant difference between experimental and control groups in terms of their means. So, we can conclude that teaching listening comprehension strategies had a significant effect on students' listening comprehension ability.

6. Implications

The aim of this study was to see whether teaching listening comprehension strategies had any impact of the betterment of listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. It was found that teaching listening comprehension strategies to students leads to the improvement of their listening comprehension ability. Therefore, teachers should not only teach their students what to learn but also they should tell them how to learn and they should develop their students' self-awareness in learning. In doing so, teachers should find their students weakness in order to help them fill their gaps through teaching them listening comprehension strategies. Therefore, it is advisable to mix listening activities with strategies-based tasks in classrooms. The finding of this study can be useful for teachers, instructors, textbook writers, and anyone who is directly or indirectly engaged in designing textbook materials to take into account the importance of listening comprehension strategies in designing textbook materials.

7. Conclusion

The idea of only providing students with listening materials does not seem to lead much progress in listening comprehension ability. Therefore, we conclude that the teachers' role should be beyond just the mechanical operation of tape recorders. Teachers must be familiar with listening comprehension strategies and make students familiar with those strategies and teach them how to use them effectively in order to develop their students' listening comprehension ability. The more strategies students use, the better their performance.

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EVALUATING INSTRUCTIONAL EFFICACY OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING: THE CASE OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN ISFAHAN

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Abstract
The primary purpose of the current research was to investigate the instructional efficacy of clt in iranian high schools evaluating the high school teachers' and students' attitude towards this approach and its fundamental tenets. The research also aimed to explore the extent to which the high school teachers implement the clt principles in their classrooms. To these ends, modified versions of karvas doukas (1996) questionnaire were employed to explore the attitude of 20 efl teachers as well as 200 high school students towards clt and its main principles. Moreover, a careful observation was carried out to evaluate the extent to which the teacher participants implement the clt principles in real practice. The findings of the study revealed that both high school teachers and students had positive attitude towards clt in general. The findings also indicated that while high school english teachers had favorable attitude towards all the main clt principles, the students expressed neutral attitude towards "place and importance of grammar" and positive attitude towards all the other principles. Furthermore, it was concluded that in spite of the positive attitude towards clt, the high school english teachers did not implement clt principles in real practice and the only principle rarely fulfilled by them was "group/pair work tasks and activities".

Key words: communicative competence, communicative language teaching (clt), clt principles, efl teachers' attitudes, efl learners' attitudes.

1. Introduction

The very primary goal of any foreign language teaching is enabling learners to communicate through that language, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become one of the most wildly used methods in EFL contexts around the world (Richards & Renandya, 2002). In recent decades, EFL teachers in many countries, including Iran, have been encouraged to substitute CLT for traditional teaching methods (i.e. Grammar translation and Audio-Lingual methods) in their English classrooms. Consequently, EFL teachers have implemented CLT in both schools and English institutes to help learners improve their communicative abilities to use English appropriately for their communicative

aims including making a request, making a promise, giving advice, making a suggestion, extending an invitation (Chang, 2011). As a result, learning a foreign language may be evaluated based on how successful EFL learners can use linguistic competence as well as the communicative competence to convey their intended meaning in real contexts (Ansarey, 2012; Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

The fulfillment of CLT in EFL contexts rely heavily on the implementation of CLT principles in the classroom settings (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). That is, applying CLT principles in practice (i.e. focus on learner's role as an active person in learning process, concern teacher's role as a facilitator, use of collaborative activities, and benefit from classroom activities relevant to communicative competence as well as linguistic competence) plays a prominent role in teaching or learning process (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Teachers' attitude towards CLT influence their decisions to implement the CLT principles in their classrooms inspiring them achieve their goals by adopting the most appropriate teaching strategies and activities based on the facilities and opportunities available to them (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). The role of teachers is more vital in an EFL context, where English is used only in the classrooms and learners have very few opportunities to use the language in real situations. Inevitably, it would be a demanding task for EFL teachers to help learners enhance their communicative competence owing to the apparent lack of English environment in EFL settings and the other probable limitations. In this regard, EFL teachers' attitude towards CLT can be considered as a powerful factor towards implementation of CLT in classroom settings (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). Moreover, most of the researchers on the issue concluded that student's attitude is an integral part of learning and it should, therefore, become an essential component of second language learning process. Gardner and Lambert (1972), for instance, stated that the ability of the students to master a foreign language, which enables them to communicate effectively, is not only influenced by their linguistic competence, but also by their attitude towards the target language. They also advocated that attitude could enhance the process of language learning influencing the nature of student's cognition towards the target language community and its culture which has a significant effect on their perception and outcomes.

Considering the widespread implementation of CLT in high schools in Iran and the significant role of teachers and learners in this fulfilment, the main purpose of the current study was, firstly, to compare teachers' and students' attitudes towards the CLT principles in junior high schools in Isfahan, Iran. Secondly, the present study sought to examine the extent to which Iranian high school teachers implement the CLT principles practice in their classrooms.

2. Literature Review

The term *communicative competence* was first proposed by Hymes (1972) as "the overall underlying knowledge and ability for language which the speaker-listener possesses" (Hymes, 1972, p. 13, as cited in Mondal, 2012). Based on the Hymes' (1972) definition, communicative competence is a complex notion that involves knowledge of linguistic rules as well as sociocultural knowledge which enable language learners to use language structures appropriately in different contexts.

Considering the main goal of CLT (i.e., to enable learners to communicate appropriately), it has been implemented gradually into the English curriculum in different ESL and EFL settings and it has been widely considered as one of the most efficient language teaching method around the world, including Iran (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006).

In spite of employing various teaching methods (i.e., Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, and Audio Lingual Method) at schools in Iran, almost none of the students observed by several researchers (e.g., Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Tabatabae & Pourakbari, 2012) were able to use English language as a communicative tool after their graduation as a result of the traditional teaching methods failure. Considering this failure, CLT has got approval and the ministry of education decided to fulfill CLT at schools in the early 1990s in order to develop the Iranian EFL learners'

communicative abilities. Consequently, CLT has played a pivotal role in language education in Iran so far and English teachers try to perceive its primary goals and characteristics.

Regarding the characteristics of the communicative view of language, Richards and Rodgers (2001) presented the four main characteristics as follows:

1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning;

2. The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication;

3. The structure of language reflect its functional and communicative uses;

4. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Therefore, it can be said that Richards and Rodgers (2001) considered the communicative approach, CLT in particular, as a system through which the meaning is expressed appropriately in order to form a successful communication. From their point of view, the primary elements of language are not only grammatical structures but also the functional and communicative components (Ansarey, 2012).

Achieving the main goal of CLT (i.e., to enhance learners' communicative competence) different factors like appropriate textbook, carefully-structured syllabus, and effective activities, have to be considered. In this regard, English teachers ought to focus on CLT principles in their teaching process. A lot of researchers and linguists in this domain, have introduced the CLT principles to facilitate the CLT implementation in different settings (e.g., Berns, 1990; Brown, 2000, 2001; Chastain, 1988; Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Williams, 1995).

Considering different sets of CLT principles suggested by various researchers, the principles can be summarized as follows:

1. Place/importance of grammar

2. Group/pair work task and activities

3. Quality and quantity of error correction

4. Role of teacher in classroom

5. Role and needs of learners in learning process (Derakhshan & Torabi, 2015; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006).

Derakhshan and Torabi (2015) elaborated the five principles mentioned above as follows:

Place/Importance of grammar

The significance of grammar in English learning is undeniable but the teaching of grammar can occur indirectly and teachers should teach the necessary grammatical structures considering their communicative function.

Group/pair work tasks and activities

Language learners can increase their communicative skills through group/pair work activities. These types of activates give the learners opportunities to cooperate with each other. It is worth mentioning that teachers have a prominent role in providing efficient activities to bring real situations in the classroom. Therefore, learners gain more confidence in dealing with the target language in various contexts.

Quality and quantity of error correction

Making errors is considered to be an inseparable part of language learning process. Teachers can give different kinds of feedback namely explicit correction, recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, and repetition to correct the learners' errors (Derakhshan & Torabi, 2015). It is worth noting that teachers in CLT should correct the learners' errors unless they may cause communication breakdown.

Role of teacher in classroom

The main role of teachers in CLT is to be a fascinator in the classroom. That is, teachers are independent participant within the learning process. They provide opportunities for learners to communicate appropriately in different situations by the relevant activities such as explanation, writing, and giving examples. The total fulfillment of this principle is greatly rely on teachers' attitude towards CLT which enables teachers to play their role as a fascinator successfully in learning process.

Role and needs of learners in learning process

CLT is a learner-centered approach in which learners are active in learning process. They communicate with their classmates through pair/group work activates and try to improve their communicative abilities in various English contexts (Derakhshan & Torabi, 2015).

The fulfilment of these five CLT principles in EFL settings is highly significant, thus to see whether CLT is fully implemented as a teaching method, one might look to what extent principles outlined above are materialized in class activities (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). Therefore, various studies have been conducted to explore the implementation of CLT and its main principles in EFL contexts (e.g., Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Thompson, 1996).

Taken together, the general conclusion from research in this domain is that the implementation of CLT depends on teachers' attitudes towards CLT due to the fact that the teachers, as facilitators, give their learners opportunity to get completely involved with language learning process (Lerasen-Freeman, 1986). While teachers held favorable attitudes towards CLT, their classroom practices often deviated considerably from the principles of CLT (Rahimi & Naderi, 2014; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Sato & Kleinasser, 1999). Moreover, Learners' views of learning in this method cannot be ignored owing to the fact that learners are active in their own learning process to achieve their goals (Lerasen-Freeman, 1986).

In line with Lerasen-Freeman (1986), Savignon (1997) stressed the importance of learners' attitude in CLT explaining that learning achievement relies on learners' attitude towards language in general, and on learners' beliefs about appropriate practices in particular. Savignon (1997) also suggested that teachers should be aware of their corresponding students' attitude and feelings towards language and the way they desire to learn the target language.

Owing to the noteworthy role of teachers' and learners' attitude towards CLT, Khoi and Noriko (2012) compared Vietnamese learners' attitudes with teachers' attitudes towards CLT concerning four factors relating to CLT; namely, grammar instruction, error correction, group and pair work, and teachers' role. The finding of the study revealed that both groups held favorable attitudes towards CLT, but the teachers had more positive attitudes than the learners for all the factors, except group and pair work. The researchers' focus in the study was on the fact that CLT does not exclude grammar instruction or error correction but the explicit teaching of grammar can occur without disturbing the communicative flow of the classroom and that positive outcomes can be attained by integrating formal instruction of grammatical points into communicative tasks.

Razmjoo and Riazi (2006) investigated the EFL teachers' attitude towards CLT as well as the level of its implementation in high schools and institutes contexts in Iran. To these ends, researchers observed 60 teachers (from the high schools and institutes) and applied the questionnaire developed by Karavas-Doukas (1996), including the major principles of communicative language teaching, namely, group work, quality and quantity of error correction, the place and importance of grammar, the role

and contribution of the learners, and the role of the teacher. The finding of their research revealed that teachers in both schools and institutes similarly had positive attitudes towards CLT principles. The researchers also reported that although most of Iranian high school teachers had positive attitude towards the principles, they practiced traditional methods in their classrooms and only the institutes' teachers applied the CLT principles. The result of Razmjoo and Riazi's (2006) study was in line with some other previous studies in Iran which revealed that there was no positive correlation between the teachers' attitudes towards CLT principles and the relevant practices and activities (e.g., Bagheri, 1994; Moradi, 1996; Rahimi, 1996; Rashidi, 1995; Saadat, 1995; Yarmohammadi, 2000; Zanganeh, 1995).

In another recent study, Rahimi and Naderi (2014) investigated the relationship between EFL teachers' attitudes towards CLT and difficulties of applying CLT principles in their language classrooms in Iran. Analyzing 203 EFL teachers' questionnaires, the researchers concluded that EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards CLT in general and 'group/pair work' in classes in particular. Further, the researchers indicated that EFL teachers generally did not find much difficulty in implementing CLT, however they faced some difficulties as a result of the educational system in Iran and its top-down curriculum type. Therefore, the researchers suggested that Iranian educational system needs to undergo a number of major changes at both the macro and micro levels in order to enhance English teaching/learning in Iran.

Despite the recent attempt to examine the teachers' and the learners' attitudes towards CLT in Iran, few studies have comparatively examined both teachers' and students' attitudes towards CLT, as well as exploring the extent to which the CLT principles totally implement in real practice. Therefore, the current research attempted to examine both teachers' and students' attitudes towards CLT within the context of high school in Iran. Besides, the present study also aimed at evaluating the level of implementation of CLT principles in Iranian high schools, particularly the schools in Isfahan. Following these goals, the current research raised to address the following research questions.

1. What is the junior high school students' attitude towards the application of CLT at high schools?
2. What is the junior high school English teachers' attitude towards the application of CLT at high schools?
3. Are there any significant differences between high school teachers and students in terms of their attitude towards different principles of CLT?
4. Is CLT practice really materialized in high school classes?

3. Method

3.1. Participnts

Based on the purposes of the research, both EFL teachers and students were needed to take part as the participants in this study. To this end, stratified cluster sampling method was employed to select four high schools for girls and four high school for boys among the population of public junior high schools in Isfahan, Iran. Subsequently, a cohort of 200 teenage students (100 male and 100 female), studying in one of the three grades (seven, eight, and nine) in the selected high schools, were selected utilizing simple random sampling method. The students were all within the age range of 13 to 16. The other group of participants included 20 English language teachers (10 male and 10 female) teaching at the high schools mentioned above. The teachers were between 28 and 49 years old (M=33, SD=3.24) having 4 to 25 years of teaching experience.

3.2. Instrumentation

3.2.1. Teachers' Questionnaire

To explore the teachers' opinions towards communicative language teaching, a modified version of Karvas Doukas (1996) questionnaire including 28 items about the five main principles of communicative language teaching was used. This questionnaire consists of six items concerning group/pair work tasks and activities, five items about the quality and quantity of error correction, five items related to the place and importance of grammar, six items about the learners' role and needs in learning processin learning process, and finally six items on the role of teacher in classroom. The questionnaire was constructed based on a five-point likert scale including: Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The items were rated from five points (Strongly Agree) to one point (Strongly Disagree).

The content validity of the questionnaire was approved by the appraisal of two EFL experts teaching at Khorasgan University. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through piloting prior to the main study. The Cronbach's alpha calculated based on the data from a group of 15 EFL teachers turned out to be .765, indicating an acceptable internal consistency of the questionnaire.

3.2.2. Interview

A semi structured interview was used to not only provide adequate support for the results obtained through the teachers' questionnaire, but also to illuminate the overall attitude of the teachers towards CLT in Iranian teaching context. The interview included six questions concerning the teachers' attitudes towards the five main CLT principles as well as their overall attitude towards CLT and its implementation at high schools in Iran (See appendix B). Each interview lasted about 10 minutes. The teacher participants were asked to review the questions briefly, before the interview.

3.2.3. Class Observation Checklist

Another step for collecting data was structured observation of the classroom practices of the teachers who had previously been interviewed. The purpose of this phase was to know whether or not the teachers employ the CLT principles in real practice. To this end, a structured observation checklist was designed by the researcher. . In order to avoid the subjectivity of the observer, a four-point likert scale (always, sometimes, rarely, and never) was used for recording the observation's results (See appendix C). The instrument was then evaluated by two experts in the field of English educational research. Guided by their comments and notes, a final draft including ten items on the main CLT principles was developed

3.2.4. Students' Questionnaire

The last instrumentation phase in the current study was developing a questionnaire to measure the student participants' attitude towards CLT and its main principles. Since it was too difficult and demanding for the students to thoroughly fill in the teachers' questionnaire, a simplified version including 14 items on the five main CLT principles was designed and translated into Persian.[1] Similar to the teachers' questionnaire, the items were rated by a five-point Likert scale ranging from five points (Strongly Agree) to one point (Strongly Disagree). The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The alpha calculated for the whole questionnaire (.84) showed a good degree of internal consistency for the instrument. The content validity of the questionnaire was established through the experts' appraisal.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

To select the teacher and student participants, first, stratified cluster sampling method was employed to select four male and four female junior high schools among all the public high schools enumerated by Isfahan Education Department. The student participants were then randomly selected from the sample schools. In addition to the student participants, 20 high school English teachers teaching at the sample schools undertook to participate in the research. The teachers answered a modified version of Karvas Doukas (1996) questionnaire. A simplified version of the teachers' questionnaire was also developed and administered to the students to get their attitude towards CLT as well. In addition to

the questionnaires, all the teacher participants were asked to participate in the structured interviews. In order to gather accurate information, all interviews were recorded. Finally, the researcher observed all the 20 teachers' classes for two full sessions to investigate whether there was any discrepancy between EFL teachers` beliefs toward CLT and their practice in classroom.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedures

The results of the questionnaires were analyzed to determine the students' and teachers' attitude towards CLT and its main principles. Descriptive statistics were generated on each of the five main principles of CLT. Further, the data obtained through the interviews were analyzed to investigate whether the results provide additional support to those obtained through the teachers' questionnaire. In order to examine whether the teachers' and students' attitude towards CLT differ significantly in terms of different principles representing CLT, Chi Square tests were conducted at .05 level of significance. Finally, to investigate the extent to which different CLT principles were implemented in real practice, the data gathered by the means of the observation checklists were analyzed descriptively.

4. Results

4.1. Students' Attitude towards CLT and Corresponding Principles

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the students' scores for the whole questionnaire.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Students' Overall Attitude towards CLT

	N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overall attitude scores	200	32	68	52.75	9.18	-.512	-.506

As Table 1 shows, the students' overall scores for the whole questionnaire ranged from 32 to 68, with a mean of 52.75 and a standard deviation of 9.18. Since the mean score was almost one standard deviation above the possible median score (42), it can be concluded that the participants had positive attitude towards CLT in general.

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of the students' attitude towards different CLT principles. To report comparable results, each student's raw score for each of the principles was divided by the total number of the items representing the principle in question, which resulted in a score on a scale ranged from 1 to 5.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Students' Attitude towards Different Principles of CLT

CLT principles	*N*	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
Place and importance of Grammar	200	1.75	3.96	3.11	0.87
Role of teacher in classroom	200	2.92	4.52	4.15	0.64
Group/pair work tasks and activities	200	3.73	4.79	4.40	0.40
Role and needs of learners in learning process	200	3.20	4.42	4.22	0.48

Quality and quantity of error correction	200	2.98	4.23	3.62	0.50

As displayed in Table 2, the mean scores for all the principles except "place and importance of grammar" were at least one standard deviation above the neutral scale (3). Accordingly, it can be concluded that the students had positive attitude towards these principles in general. With regard to the place and importance of grammar, although the mean score was above the neutral scale (*M*= 3.11), the students' attitude would be interpreted neutral considering the standard deviation value (*SD*= 0.87), which indicated a high degree of diversity in the students' attitude towards this principle. In addition, the students had the most favorable attitude towards "group/pair work tasks and activities" (*M*= 4.40, *SD*= 0.40) and the least favorable attitude towards "place and importance of grammar" (*M*=3.11, *SD*= 0.87).

4.2. Teachers' Attitude towards CLT and Its Main Principles

To investigate the high school English teachers' attitude towards CLT, the data obtained through the two different instruments (teachers' questionnaire and interview) were analyzed and the results are presented separately as the following.

4.2.1. Results Based on the Questionnaires' Data

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the teachers' scores for the whole questionnaire.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Teachers' Overall Attitude towards CLT

	N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overall attitude scores	20	89	122	101.5	10.55	-.115	-.958

As shown in Table 3, the teachers' overall scores for the whole questionnaire ranged from 89 to 122, with a mean of 101.5 and a standard deviation of 10.55. Since the mean score was almost one standard deviation above the neutral score (84), it was inferred that the high school English teachers had positive attitude towards CLT in general.

Table 4 shows the teachers' attitude towards the five main CLT principles.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the Teachers' Attitude towards Different Principles of CLT

CLT principles	N	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
Place and importance of Grammar	20	2.97	4.18	3.77	0.42
Role of teacher in classroom	20	2.81	4.19	3.99	0.49
Group/pair work tasks and activities	20	2.79	4.62	4.15	0.63
Role and needs of learners in learning process	20	2.76	4.31	3.91	0.59
Quality and quantity of error correction	20	2.68	4.03	3.64	0.54

According to Table 4, the mean scores for all the principles were at least one standard deviation above the neutral scale (3), indicating positive attitude of the teachers toward these principals in general. As

shown in Table 4, the teachers had the most favorable attitude towards "group/pair work tasks and activities" (*M*= 4.15, *SD*= 0.63) and the least favorable attitude towards "quality and quantity of grammar" (*M*=3.64, *SD*= 0.54).

4.2.2. Results Based on the Interviews' Data

The interview' results were precisely analyzed and coded into three categories of overall agreement, neutral attitude, and overall disagreement. Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of the interviewed teachers' attitude towards CLT and its main principles based on the interviews' results.

Table 5

Teachers' Attitude towards the CLT Principles Based on the Interviews' Results

Feature	Overall Agreement		Neutral Attitude		Overall Disagreement		Total	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Place and importance of Grammar	14	70%	2	10%	4	20%	20	100%
Role of teacher in classroom	16	80%	1	5%	3	15%	20	100%
Group/pair work tasks and activities	16	80%	1	5%	3	15%	20	100%
Role, needs, and contribution of learners in learning process	13	65%	1	5%	6	30%	20	100%
Quality and quantity of error correction	12	60%	2	10%	6	30%	20	100%
Overall Attitude	14	70%	3	15%	3	15%	20	100%

As table 5 displays, the majority of the teachers agreed on every five principles of CLT as well as the totality of this approach. A visual representation of the teachers' overall attitude towards CLT is illustrated in Figure 1.

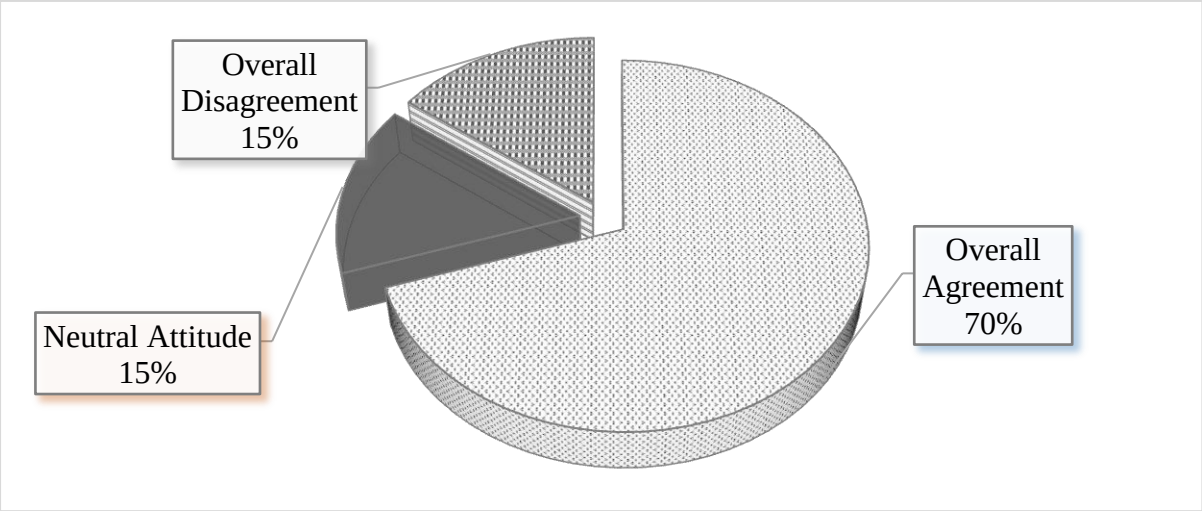

Figure 1. Teachers' attitude towards CLT based on the interviews' results.

As shown in Figure 1, 70 percent of the teachers expressed an overall positive attitude towards CLT; however, only 15 percent of them disagreed with the totality of this approach. The other 15 percent evaluated CLT neutrally.

4.3. Comparison between the Teachers' and Students Attitude towards CLT

To investigate how the attitude towards CLT differ between teachers and students, Chi Square tests were conducted at .05 level of significance on different CLT principals. It is worth mentioning that the 14 items in the students' questionnaire, which were used in the teachers' questionnaire as well, were considered as the basis of the comparison. Table 7 reports the actual results of running these tests.

Table 7

Results of Chi-Square Tests on Attitude towards the CLT Principles

Principles	Pearson Chi-Square Value	*df*	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Place and importance of Grammar	15.371[a]	4	.004
Role of teacher in classroom	3.555[a]	4	.470
Group/pair work tasks and activities	2.906[a]	3	.406
Role and needs of learners in learning process	8.760[a]	4	.067
Quality and quantity of error correction	6.760[a]	4	.149

As presented in Table 7, there was a statistically significant association between the participants' role (being teacher or student) and their attitude towards "place and importance of grammar", χ^2 (4) = 15.371, p<.05. In other words, the teachers and students used significantly different patterns of the scale to evaluate this principle. No statistically significant association was found between the participants' role and their attitude towards the other four principles.

4.4. The Observation's results

Table 8 shows a quantitative summary of the observation's results in terms of the extent to which each of the CLT principles was operationalized in real practice.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of the Materialization of Different CLT Principles

Principles	Item No.	*M*	*SD*
Place and importance of Grammar	1,5,6,&8	1.2	0.461

Role of teacher in classroom	2&9	1.45	0.677
Group/pair work tasks and activities	4	1.9	0.813
Role and needs of learners in learning process	3&7	1.25	0.543
Quality and quantity of error correction	10	1.25	0.444

According to Table 8, the mean amounts for four CLT principles, namely "place and importance of grammar", "quality and quantity of error correction", "role and needs of learners in learning process", and "role of teacher in classroom" were not even one standard deviation above 1 (*never*), indicating that, these four major principles of CLT were missing to a large extent in real practice. "Group/pair work tasks and activities" was the only tenet rarely practiced by the observed teachers (*M*=1.9, *SD*=0.813).

5. Discussion

The present study initially aimed to evaluate the overall attitude of Iranian Junior high school students towards CLT and its main principles. The results demonstrated that the junior high school students had positive attitude towards CLT in general. Although, some research projects have investigated the high school students' attitudes toward CLT in different countries (e.g. Akbarov & Eroze, 2014), there was no empirical evidence of examining this domain in Iran. In general, this finding of the study corroborated the view often expressed in the literature that teaching language by developing communicative competence in learners is perceived highly favorable by them. (e.g. Abdullah, 2015; Akbarov & Eroz, 2014; Chung and Huang, 2009; Craig Gamble et al., 2013; Khoi and Noriko, 2012; Zeeshan, 2013).

According to the results of the more detailed analysis in this study, it was revealed that the junior high school students had positive attitude towards "role of teacher in classroom", "group/pair work tasks and activities", "role, needs, and contribution of learner in learning process", and "quality and quantity of error correction". However, they expressed neutral attitude towards the pivotal tenet of CLT as the "place and importance of grammar". Furthermore, the students had the most positive attitude towards "group/pair work tasks and activities" and "role, needs, and contribution of learners" respectively; however, "place and importance of grammar" was perceived as the least favorable one by them. The findings are consistent with those of Ngoc and Iwashita (2012) who investigated the Vietnamese learners' and teachers' attitude towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in general and towards each of the four CLT-related factors viz. grammar instruction, error correction, pair/group work activities, and teachers' role. In their comparative study they concluded that learners have most favorable attitudes towards the role of pair/group work activities than the other CLT principles, however they had the least favorable attitude towards grammar instruction.

The main logic behind the students' neutral attitude towards the key CLT tenet of grammar instruction, as stated by Mai Ngoc and Iwashita (2012), would be attributed to the high-stakes English language examinations that typically aim to test linguistic competence rather than communicative competence methods and seldom contain listening and speaking components. As the researchers believed, such traditional methods may have convinced learners that what language learning requires is just a good knowledge of grammar. Additionally, students' mild perceptions of the place and importance of grammar might have been emanated by the classroom atmosphere they have experienced. As the results of observation showed, grammar structures were mostly taught directly in real practice, so it seems reasonable that students may believe that receiving direct instruction in rules

and terminology of grammar as well as mastering the language rules would be the only effective method to enable them to communicate in a foreign language.

Following the same line of inquiry and interests, the study also aimed to explore the high school English teachers' attitude towards the application of CLT at high schools. The descriptive analysis of data collected through the teachers' questionnaire indicated that the high school English teachers had positive attitude towards CLT in general. This finding is in line with other research on teachers' attitudes towards CLT in other contexts (e.g. Lee, 2014; Naderi & Rahimi, 2014; Ahmad & Rao, 2013; Ansary, 2013; Raissi et al., 2013; Mai Ngoc & Iwashita, 2012; Chang, 2011; Ozsevik, 2010; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006).

The results of more detailed analysis revealed that the majority of the high school ٥٥English teachers agreed with and appreciated all five tenets of CLT. Moreover, based on the results of the conducted analysis, the teachers had the most positive attitude towards "group/pair work tasks and activities"; however, "Quality and quantity of error correction" as well as "place and importance of grammar" were perceived as the least favorable ones by them. The findings of this study supported those of Rahimi and Naderi (2014) who assessed EFL teachers' attitudes towards CLT and the problems they face in implementing this method in their classes. The results of their study revealed that EFL teachers have highly positive attitudes towards implementing group work in language classes; however they have roughly positive attitudes towards error correction patterns of CLT. The results are also consistent with Ngoc and Iwashita's (2012) findings that teachers have more favorable attitudes towards the role of pair/group work activities than the other CLT principles.

The findings based on the interview's results corroborated and validated the results obtained through the teachers' questionnaire in the current study. Based on the results of semi-structured interviews, the majority of high school EFL teachers expressed overall agreement with CLT believing this approach helps students improve their communicative competence as well as grammatical knowledge more effectively compared to the other approach (GTM) they already used to apply. In addition, the majority of participants agreed with all five principles of CLT. According to the results of a close examination of interviews' transcriptions, it was revealed that the majority of high school English teachers' (70%) appreciated the place and importance of grammar as the key tenet of CLT believing that grammar is not sufficient as a single factor and does not guarantee learners' success in a communicative context. Based on what the researcher acquired from the interviews, most of the interviewed teachers (80%) were in agreement with the role of teachers in CLT classes as an independent participant which is the facilitator and monitor of the learning process (among the students and also between the students and different activities) not only transformer of input. They believed that teachers would accelerate the rate of language learning by making learners take responsibility for their own learning through interaction with their classmates and exploring the grammatical points together. The results of the interview for "group/pair work tasks and activities" indicated that most of the teachers (80%) agreed with such activities overall. They expressed employing groups or pairs of learners to interact with each other experiencing the real situations in the classroom would facilitate students' contribution to each other's learning. However, all of the interviewed teachers, more or less, asserted that arranging such activities takes a long time. With regard to learners' role and needs during learning process in CLT classrooms, a considerable number of participants (65%) expressed that learners must take responsibility for their own learning, and do not be totally reliant on their teachers; however, some interviewed teachers (30%) disagreed with this principle as they believed high school learners are not able to take responsibility for their own learning owing to their low levels of language proficiency. In terms of the quantity and quality of error correction, most of the interviewed teachers (60%) believed that making errors are natural in language learning process therefore student shouldn't be avoided, although they stated that paying attention to the condition of errors is very important. They clarified that if errors, for instance, occur while learners have discussions, they are ignored or teachers write them down on a piece of paper in order to correct them at the end of the discussion, or at least when the speaker is done with his/her speech. On the other hand, a number of the participants (30%) disagreed this principle believing that

if error correction is postponed by the teacher, it will result in imperfect learning, specifically during the process of learning grammar or conversation.

Another underlying aim set out to be achieved in the present study was to examine whether there are significant differences between high school EFL teachers and students on their attitude towards different principle of CLT. Based on the results of the descriptive as well as inferential statistics, "place and importance of grammar" was the only CLT tenet perceived differently by high school EFL teachers and students, whereas, their attitudes towards the other CLT principle were significantly similar. However, many researchers have investigated the teachers' and students' views on CLT in different domains and contexts (Karavas, 2013; Raissi et al.,2013; Zeeshan, 2013; Mai Ngoc & Ivashita, 2012), no research, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, was conducted to compare high school EFL teachers and students attitudes towards different principles of CLT.

Based on the results of a closer examination of the data, the difference between the teachers' and students' attitudes towards the place and importance of grammar would be attributed to their attitude towards an item evaluating whether grammar should be taught indirectly by providing a variety of context-base examples. A powerful factor which is likely to influence learners' preference for a focus on the structural aspects of language, as stated by Mai Ngoc and Ivashita (2012, p.39), would be the grammar-based nature of discrete point testing methods. As they believed, "high-stakes English language examinations typically aim to test linguistic competence rather than communicative competence, and seldom contain listening and speaking component. Such traditional, discrete-point testing methods may have convinced learners that what language learning requires is just a good knowledge of grammar." (Mai Ngoc and Ivashite, 2012, p.390)

According to the results, in real practice, four major principles of CLT namely "place and importance of grammar", "role of teacher in classroom", "role and needs of learner in learning process, and "quality and quantity of error correction" were missing to a large extent in the observed classes. "Group/pair work tasks and activities" was the only CLT tenet which was rarely practiced by the observed teachers. These findings indicates that the high school English teachers do not put their beliefs with regard to CLT into action. The findings of some studies done in Iran are in line with the results of the present research (Yarmohammadi, 2000; Moradi, 1996; Rahimi,1996; Saadat, 1995; Rashidi, 1995; Zanganeh, 1995; Bagheri, 1994); that is, they do believe that classroom practices are not necessarily a reflection of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. Theory and practice are often at odds for a number of reasons (Savignon, 2002).

The findings of this study, specifically, corroborated those of Razmjoo and Riazi (2006), who conducted a study to explore high school and institute teachers' attitudes toward the CLT within the context of an expanding circle, Iran. Based on their study's results, both high school and institute teachers' attitudes towards CLT were positive, indicating a welcoming atmosphere toward the implementation of CLT. The results also revealed that, while institutes teachers implement the CLT approach partially in their classes, the high school teachers attach no importance to CLT and its principles in real practice.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the current study showed that High school English teachers as well as junior high school students have positive attitude towards CLT in general. Moreover, it was revealed that while High school English teachers have favorable attitudes towards all five main principles of CLT believing that this learner-center approach improves learner autonomy and accelerates the rate of acquiring communicative competence as well as grammatical knowledge, junior high school students expressed favorable attitudes towards all the CLT principles with the exception of "place and importance of grammar" perceived neutrally by them. Among all main CLT principles, "group/pair work tasks and activities" was appreciated the most by high school English teachers as well as junior high school students. Drawing a precise comparison between High school English teachers and students in terms of their attitude towards different CLT principles led the researchers to conclude

that they have significantly similar attitudes towards most of the CLT principle. Gaps, however, do exist between teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the place and importance of grammar; so that While high school English teachers have strongly positive attitudes towards teaching grammar indirectly and as a means not as an end, a significant number of high school students believed that direct instruction of grammar rules and terminology would be effective. Furthermore, despite high school English teachers' positive attitudes towards CLT in general, and towards its main principles in particular, they practically do not implement CLT principles in real practice. Group/pair work tasks and activities" is the only CLT tenet which is rarely practiced by high school English teachers in English classrooms.

On a pedagogical level, the findings of the current study could be contemplated by the educational system in Iran to undergo a number of fundamental changes in English teaching system in high schools (e.g., revise the textbooks, and the examination format) to enhance the English teaching and learning process. To achieve this goal, the findings of this study might encourage the administrators to cooperate closely with EFL teachers as well as researchers in the field of language teaching to provide a pleasant learning environment in which high school students may improve their communicative abilities in English. This study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, is the first attempt to explore the similarities and differences of students' and teachers' attitudes towards CLT and its main principles. Thus, it would be an interesting topic for profound research in future to examine how teachers' and learners' attitudes towards CLT principles would be resulted to real practice of the principles in English classrooms.

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Appendices:

Appendix A:

Modified Version of Karvas Doukas (1996) questionnaire

This survey questionnaire is designed for Iranian EFL teachers teaching in public schools in Isfahan. It aims to explore the teachers' attitude towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the Iranian context.

It will take you 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. There is no correct or best response to the questions. Please answer them based on your thinking at this time.

Name …….. Date ……

Age …….. Degree ……..

Years of teaching ……

Item	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1. Grammatical correctness is an important criterion by which language performance should be judged.					
2. Group work activities are essential in promoting genuine interaction among students.					
3. Grammar should be taught indirectly and as a means to an end and not as an end in itself.)					
4. The learners are not knowledgeable enough to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for him/her.					
5. Training learners to take responsibility for their own learning is futile since learners are not used to such an approach.					

6. The teacher's feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' response.					
7. The teacher is no longer as the only model of imitation for students.					
8. The learner-centered approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline.					
9. Group work allows students to explore problems and thus have some measure of control over their own learning. 10. Errors should be corrected on the spot. If error correction is postponed, it will result in imperfect learning					
11. It is impossible in a large class of students to organize your teaching so as to suit the needs of all.					
12. Knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to use the language.					
13. Group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching time.					
14. Since errors are natural in learning language, much correction is wasteful of time.					
15. The Communicative approach to language teaching produces fluent and accurate learners.					
16. The teacher as transmitter of knowledge is only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson.					
17. By mastering the rules of grammar, students become fully capable of communicating with a native speaker.					
18. It is difficult to implement a student -centered method in language classrooms.					
19. Activities such as explanations,					

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writing and examples are not the only role of the teachers.					
20. Tasks and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the students' needs rather than imposed on them.					
21. Small group work can replace whole class and formal instruction					
22. Group work activities have little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor the students' performance and prevent them from using their mother tongue.					
23. Direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is essential if students are to learn to communicate effectively.					
24. The teacher must supplement the textbook with other materials so as to satisfy the widely differing needs of the students.					
25. Teachers take part in classroom activities as a participant.					
26. Errors should not be tolerated and must be avoided.					
27. Teachers should be the monitor and facilitator of student learning.					
28. Group work activities make students have the courage and confidence to speak in the classroom.					

Appendix B

Teachers' Interview

1. Grammar rules should first be taught and explained explicitly and then practiced and applied by students.

2. It is best for teachers not to overcorrect. Too much correction decreases student motivation.

Group work activities are very essential in students learning. They learn best through meaningful interaction.

3. Teachers should not just stick to the textbooks. Supplementary materials such as short stories, films, tapes, handouts, and so on should also be used

4. The teacher has several roles including "participant" and "facilitator".
5. What is your overall attitude towards CLT?

Appendix C

Classroom Observation Checklist

School …… **Date ……**

Teacher…… **Unit ……**

The Observation Statements	**Always**	**Sometimes**	**Rarely**	**Never**
1. Language is utilized as a medium of communication.				
2. Teachers take part in classroom activities as a participant.				
3. Students' talk-time is dominant.				
4. Students work in groups/ pairs.				
5. Teachers focus on meaning more than linguistic forms.				
6. Teachers focus on all four skills (Writing-Reading-Speaking-Listening).				
7. Teachers use audio-visual aids.				
8. Teachers focus on fluency.(gr)				
9. Teachers facilitate and monitor students learning.				
10. Errors are not corrected on the spot although the students are directed to correct themselves.				

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COLLABORATIVE ASPECT OF WEB-BASED WRITING

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Abstract
The main objective of the present study was to investigate the effect of writing collaboratively using e-mail on the improvement of efl learners' writing performance. The participants of the study included 80 learners from malayer azad university assigned into two groups each consisting 40 students. A pre-test was administered to assess the participants' initial performance in writing. The treatmrnt was given to the both groups. The subjects in the experimental group were divided into groups of five people and were required to write five paragrapg essays together through e-mail. Each member of the group wrote his paragraph and sent it to the other member of the team and they were supposed to correct and make comments. The control group members were supposed to write invividually without having revisions and peer comments. The effect of the treatment on the both groups' performance was measured by a final writing test. The final performance was scored holistically using brown's (2003) rubric. The results showed that the experimental groups' performance outweighed the control group's performance, signifying the fact that the experimental the learners' collaboration in language skills could improve their language performance.

Introduction

Learning is not an individual process and it could be facilitated through group work. The use of small groups in English classes, particularly in second language, is backed by some well-established theories and pedagogical practices. From a theoretical point of view, group learning is in line with social constructivist view of learning originated in the works of such scholars as Vygotsky, Piaget, Dewey, Elwin, and Deutsch.

Vygotsky considered learning as a social process. According to his socio-cultural theory, learning takes place through our interactions on the social level then it will be carried into our individual selves. Piaget, on the other hand, takes intellectual development as something supported by social interaction. Dewey talked about the social nature of learning and supported the idea of teaching through discussion and through hands-on problem solving. Elwin proposed the social inter-dependence concepts and Deutsch believed in cooperation and competition. All these, in fact, can be considered to be the foundations of the Collaborative Learning process.

Using Email in Language Learning

According to Ferris and Hedgcock, (2014), the field of FL writing lacks a comprehensive theory. With the coming of technology into the field, different researchers have shown interest in different aspects of the skill including learners' collaboration (Lee, 2004); various characteristics of collaboration (Fung, 2010); the effect of the context, means, and individuals on collaborative writing (Arnold & Ducate, 2006); the role of task-type (Aydin & Yildiz, 2014); and the application of online tools in writing (Bikowski, & Boggs, 2012; Lee, 2004). But regarding the use of e-mail service to help EFL learners, one could hardly find any research study.

Warschauer (1996) believes that computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is an area of interest for people who like to use computer for any purposes especially to do all their works with computers. Nowadays, despite the emergent competition from the current cutting-edge media, email is still considered to be one of the communication tools broadly exercised in education (Le & Le, 2002). Some research has even claimed that email is more popular than face-to-face interaction between learners and teachers (Berge, 1997; Gustafson, 2004). Commenting on the advantages of the Net for language skills, researchers such as Li (2000) and Belisle (1996) argue that direct composing on the computer could assist learners to be more aware of the process happening when they write. Belisle (1996) maintains that in EFL writing classes, email could be an effective and powerful tool for teaching. It gives the teacher the possibility to monitor learners' writing process and to save class time for the teacher's assignments and comments. So the students are involved more in active and interactive learning. According to Warschauer (1995a), email provides an opportunity for learners to use real communication as they do not have many opportunities to communicate in English. Also, email could assist learners to improve independent learning skills which are essential for L2 writing. And finally, email facilitates learners' communication with other students.

Writing Collaboratively and Peer Reviewing

Writing is a skill through which learners have the possibility and benefit of practicing collaboration and peer reviewing. Such activities can foster students' interaction in the EFL classroom, help learners to lower the anxiety concerned with completing their assignments individually and, at the same time, boost learners' self-confidence (Johnson & Johnson, 1998; Rollinson, 2005). In collaborative writing tasks, learners need to make use of a number of social skills to assist them in fostering a sense of cooperation and community (Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996; Murray, 1992). Moreover, Reid (1993) claims that collaborative writing tasks can foster motivation, risk-taking and tolerance among students, allowing them to maximize their interaction in the target language.

Regarding writing improvements, the process of peer writing and editing can help learners to raise their awareness of main organizational and syntactical points. According to Hansen and Lui (2005), and backed by others people (Storch, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998), peer editing results in more beneficial and meaningful revisions, as they result in superior and better vocabulary, organization and content.

In second language context, there are studies (e.g., Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996; Nelson & Carson, 1998) showing that when learners are required to peer review, the result is more emphasis on errors at sentential or lexical level. Research (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1998 Storch, 2002) has also shown that when learners are engaged in co-authoring process, they tend to consider accuracy, lexis and discourse. In fact, a sense of co-ownership is boosted and learners are motivated to share the decision making process on all aspects of writing such as content and grammatical structure.

Donato (1988, 1994) considers collaborative writing as collective scaffolding, something which provides a basis for sharing knowledge about language, claimed by Storch (2002, 2003).

Technology and Writing

Making use of technology for writing is considered as a tool to help learners to take writing as a dynamic process and focus more on meaning in their writing performance than on form (Wresch, 1984). Given the present technologies, collaborative writing may be practiced through communication software, online chats, and e-mailing. These communication tools may provide learners effective help to boost their writing ability (Parks, 2000).

The mentioned technologies could facilitate collaborative writing as they provide more convenient feedback and revision and lower the response time, finally leading to more motivation and creativity (Lam & Pennington, 1995). Besides, newer technologies permit learners to have simultaneous collaboration on the text, and produce the text together while they all have access to the text.

Despite the advantages mentioned above, technology cannot be seen as the final remedy and solution to the language learning problem as the application of these cutting- edge tools in an EFL setting depends on the nature of users and the environment they act rather than the nature of that technological tool. They require such infrastructures as the Internet and various types of hardware which are not available in all EFL settings around the world. Lam and Pennington (1995) suggest that language teachers who make use of these new technological tools need to be patient as learners' adapting to the technology and the strategies associated with that requires time and energy.

Theoretical Framework

A well-known theoretical framework to assist EFL instructors in developing and analyzing learners' performance collaboratively is the one proposed by Kessler et al. (2012). They argue that as the technology has evolved during the recent years the way FLA classes is managed needs to be changed, that is, both learning and teaching process should be re-considered to accommodate the recent achievements in the field of technology. They believe modern technologies in the Web and media services have offered a lot of opportunities for more flexible writing process, opportunities for learners to be involved in group writing in different locations and time, and they claim that these cutting edge technologies have also shifted attention from individual-centered activities to collaborative oriented process through collective scaffolding.

In line with what was mentioned above, Storch's (2005) suggests that a kind of "re-conceptualization of classroom teaching" is required if foreign language learners are going to be prepared for collaborative writing (p. 169). Now, thanks to the technological advances, FL teachers can easily monitor learners' writing in real-time from a distance (e.g., through e-mail services or web-based word processing). Besides, learners and teachers equally find themselves to be "co-constructers of content" in "co-constructed participatory environments" as learners are surrounded by a large amount of information and language (Kessler, 2013, p. 307). For example, in collaborative writing, learners can make use of main encyclopedic entries for a topic or use talk (Kessler, 2013).

The framework offered by Kessler et al.(2012) tries to depict all the necessary elements for a collaborative learning process. The collaborative autonomous language learning, being the central point, is assisted by the necessary collaborative tools and also the required pedagogical practices which are increasingly applied by learners. In fact, the model implies that as pedagogical practices evolve, collaborative tools evolve as well, ultimately helping collaborative use. Within this framework, they suggest that a collaborative autonomous learning practice could be realized if (a) tools for a collaborative activity will be available,(b) appropriate strategies are applied to make use of these technological means.

There are many studies trying to investigate learners' behavior or perceptions regarding collaborative writing with the use of technology (Elola & Oskoz, 2010; Kessler, 2009; Kessler et al., 2012), on the role of task type in corrections (Aydin & Yildiz, 2014), and on the nature of collaborative writing (Kost, 2011; Li & Zhu, 2013), but few studies regarding the role of technology-based collaborative writing on EFL individual writing performance could be found. These studies could be considered significant as" the use of technology could encourage discussion about writing since computer communication

can be done either synchronously or asynchronously and it allows learners to have more chances to engage in discussing others' work and helping one another to improve their work" (Wai-ching CHOI, 2008).

Rationale for the Study

In the recent years, the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has increased remarkably in the field of education. However, CALL is not widely used in foreign language learning and teaching context in Iran. Integrating computer technology into education can maintain learners' interest as well as engage them in the classroom (Pemberton, Borrego, & Cohen, 2006). Zaremba and Dunn (2004) suggest that "students have greater enjoyment of classes using active learning techniques like using computer technology in the classroom" (p. 192). With acceleration of technological developments in educational contexts and, at the same time, integration of computer technology into academic learning can provide learners better opportunities to gain interest in exploring learning content.

E-mail as one of the tools in CALL can help both teachers and learners to make language teaching and learning process more effective as it (a) cultivates students' interest in study; (b) promotes students' communication capacity;(c) improves teaching effect;(d) improve interaction between teacher and student; and (e) creates a context for language teaching.

Aims and Research Questions

The present study aims to investigate the performance difference between the learners writing an essay individually and those who do it collaboratively. The research also sets out to compare the essays produced by learners in collaborative group who use word processing software to write and their works are reviewed by their peers with the ones who write individually. To compare the effects of collaborative writing and individual writing on EFL learners' writing performance, a quasi-experimental design using pre-test and post-test was used.

The research is guided by the following research question:

1. Does writing collaboratively have any effect on EFL learners' essay writing performance?
2. What are the subjects' attitudes about collaborative writing?

Method

Participants

Eighty male and female intermediate-level students being members of two parallel classes at Malayer Islamic Azad University participated in the study. The subjects were all Persian native speakers. All the participants were nearly at the same language proficiency level determined by the Preliminary English Test (PET). The subjects were randomly grouped into collaborative writing group (CWG) with 40 learners and individual writing group (IWG) with 40 learners serving as control class and experimental class. The experimental group was later divided into eight groups in which one member headed the team (based on the pre-test and PET results). The two classes were taught by the same instructor.

Materials

The first step in the study was to check the homogeneity of the students with regards to language proficiency. For this purpose, the Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered. Based on the test results, the subjects were made homogenous to make sure that the results obtained from the study were due to the treatment not their language proficiency. Then, the subjects were required to write a five paragraph essay (consisting of 250 words) as pre-test. Also, a post-test was assigned which was a writing test similar to the per-test. At the end of the study, the subjects' opinions regarding the

collaborative writing were sought through a questionnaire including seven questions for which the participants were required to provide an answer in a five-point Likert scale form.

Choice of Topics

To make the subjects use their maximum cognitive and academic potential, the researcher required the subjects to write on topics in argumentative genre. Previous research in EFL writing suggests that argumentative writing is essentially different from other types of writing in terms of quality and requiring higher cognitive capacity engagement (Freedman and Pringle 1984, Andrews 1995). Besides, this type of writing is regarded by many instructors to be challenging, academically rigorous, and possibly more difficult than the narrative writing, accordingly it could better reflect learners' writing ability. Allowing the subjects to make use of the topic-related information and their background knowledge, the researcher made sure that the students were all familiar with the chosen topics. The following topics were specified to be written by the subjects during the treatment: (a) living in a big city, (b) to go or not to go to college, (c) why we need to preserve the environment (d) social media and social relations (e) importance of having a healthy diet (f) learning a foreign language (g) having a pet at home (h) getting married early.

Scoring

The subjects' performance was assessed holistically by two raters, using the rubric developed by Brown (2003). The raters were trained how to make use of the rubric, so that they could gain a rough idea of the students' proficiency level and the sense of how the criterion should be used. The total score given to each writing performance was 100. The reliability of the rating measures was calculated to be (r=.81).

Procedures

The following steps were taken to accomplish the purpose of the study during the research process.

At first a language proficiency test, the Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered to 120 sophomore English language teaching students. The students whose scores fell one standard deviation above or below the initial sample mean score were recognized as eligible and included in the study. Finally, eighty subjects were selected and the subjects were divided into two groups: Control Group (IWG) and Experimental Group (CWG), each consisting of forty subjects.

Then, before starting the actual study, extending ten weeks, two sessions were specified to familiarize the students in the experimental group with the way to send and receive emails, use the Microsoft word processing, how to provide the comments within the word file, and also with the principles of collaborative work and formal writing. The concepts of peer correction and interaction were explained. The subjects were instructed to be attentive to the comments made by each member of the group and be ready to consider their correction and opinions. During the other eight weeks, the subjects in the experimental group were required to write an essay each week.

The subjects in experimental group were divided into eight teams, each consisting of five people. The subjects in each team were required to write a five paragraph essay in such a way that each member was responsible to write one paragraph using the Microsoft word processing and was supposed to e-mail it to another member of the team.

For each team, randomly assigned, a head member was specified according to his writing performance on the pretest and the PET test. He was required to write the first paragraph and send it to the second member. The reason is that the first paragraph of an essay mainly includes the most important pieces of information guiding the following paragraphs. If it is well- organized and well-written, the process of writing the following paragraphs will be smoother and easier. The second member was required to read and correct it, make his own comments using the Comment tool in the

Microsoft Word and write the second paragraph. The comments made by the writers in the groups were required to be justified by them. Take this example commented by a subject:

'She was required to sent the documents'.

The sentence was accompanied by a comment like this: Infinitive marker 'to' is followed by base form of a verb not by an inflected form like 'sent'. He e-mailed his paragraph to the third member of the team together with his correction and comments on the first paragraph. The third member of the team added his own share while correcting and commenting on the preceding paragraphs. The process continued to the fifth, that is, the final paragraph. The last member read the whole work, did his part and revised the essay. Finally, he sent it to the first member to be revised and delivered to the teacher. After being corrected by their peers, the subjects revised their own writing based on their peers' comments and suggestions. Each member performed the role of both author and editor simultaneously.

The teacher made sure that the students followed the weekly schedule. The final draft was sent to the teacher for assessment. The main objective of the course was to make learners make use of the groups' collective knowledge. It also represents how the students collaboratively participate in the assessment of their peers' writing. In the control group, the subjects had the same of number of weeks to do writing, the same materials and the same teacher. The main difference with the experimental group was that the 40 members of the group were required to write individually. There was no team work and no collaboration. Like the experimental group, they had to write on a topic every week and but they did not benefit from any correction made by their peers. The essays written by the subjects were delivered to the teacher every week and the teacher corrected them and returned them back to the subjects with some written feedback.

The essays written by the subjects in both control and experimental group were scoredholistically based on the assessment measure provided to the two raters (Appendix 1).

Results

Pre- Post test Results

The groups' performance on pre-test and post-test is presented in the following table:

Table1Groups' Performance						
Source	min	max	M	SD	Var.	N
Pre-test CGW	51	81	68.3	6.15	37.90	40
Post-test CGW	69	91	80.0	4.95	24.45	40
Pre-test CGW	54	83	68.95	6.16	38.04	40
Post-test CGW	67	86	72.50	5.77	33.33	40

First, in order to make sure that there was not statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' writing performance before the treatment, an independent *t*-test was conducted.

As seen in Table 2, the results suggest that the difference between collaborative writing group (CWG) and individual writing group (IWG) writing performance was insignificant on pre-test stage. In other

words, the t-value found was not statistically significant, meaning the two groups were homogeneous in the beginning of the study in terms of writing skill.

Table 2 t-test Result before Treatment

	N	df	t	sd	p
Exp and Con groups' means	80	78	-0.472	6.16	0.64

There was no significant difference in the scores obtained by the both groups before the treatment (M=68.3, SD=6.15) and (M=68.95, SD=6.16); t (78) = -0.472, p = 0.64. The results indicated that the two groups enjoyed the same level of writing proficiency and they belonged to the same population prior to the experiment.

Then, two different types of treatment were given to the control group and experimental group. To find the effect of the intended treatment (collaborative peer revising), a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare experimental group's performance on the pre-test and post-test.

Table 3 Comparing CWG performance on Pre- and Post-test

Group	M dif.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CWG1-CWG2	-11.65	-24.77	39	.000

As the table 3 suggests collaborative writing really does have an effect. There was a significant difference in the scores obtained before the treatment (M=68.3, SD=6.15) and after the treatment (M=80, SD=4.95); t (39) = -24.77, p = .000. These results suggest that collaborative writing really did have an effect. Specifically, our results suggest that when learners write collaboratively, they could improve their writing performance better.

Another t-test (an independent t-test) was conducted to compare the performance of the subjects in IWG and CWG groups on the post-test.

Table 4 Comparing CWG and IWG on Post-test

Group	Mean dif.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CWG				

IWG	7.9	6.57	78	.0001

As the Table 4 indicates, there is a significant difference in the scores for CWG (M=80.0, SD=4.95) and IWG (M=72.50, SD=5.77) conditions; t (78)= 6.57, p = .0001with the effect size d=1.39. These results suggest that collaborative writing really does have an effect on writing performance. Specifically, our results suggest that when learners collaborate in writing they can better develop their writing performance.

The Result of the Students' Responses to Perception Questionnaire

A questionnaire, consisting of seven questions, was devised to seek the subjects' opinions regarding collaborative writing at the end of the project. A five-point Likert Scale was used in the questionnaire, and responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency analysis and percentages. The results are as follows (see Figure 1):

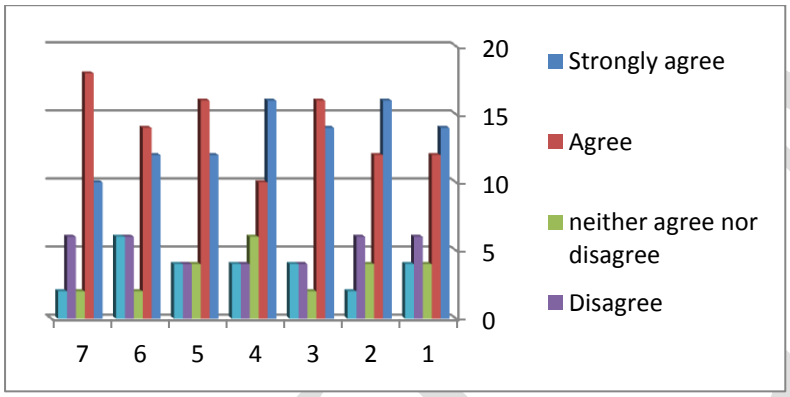

Figure 1 Learners' Perception of the CW Task

A high percentage of the students (65%) chose "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" for Q1 that group work writing helped them to be conscious of their writing problems. The second item was about how the subjects liked web-based tools such as e-mail service. 70 percent strongly agreed on the item that they liked using such tools as e-mail to do their writing tasks (Q2). 75% agreed that using web-based tools helped them to lower their stress (Q3), and 65% agreed that collaborative writing motivated them to do more writing (Q4). 70% of the respondents agreed that collaborative writing cultivated a sense of cooperation and acknowledgement among them (Q5). 65% of the subjects responded that the exchange of views helped them to write more carefully (Q6). Finally, 70 % of the subjects agreed that they became more analytical and critical in their writing performance (Q7).

Discussion

This study investigated the possible impact of collaborative writing tasks on EFL learners' individual overall writing scores and examined their perceptions of both tasks. Both the collaborative writing group and the individual writing group experienced gains in their pre- to post-test writing scores. However, an independent samples *t*-test demonstrated that the collaborative web-based writing group indicated statistically significant higher mean gains from their pre- to post-test scores than individual writing, an increase with a significant effect size (d=1.39). According to a meta-analysis conducted by Zhao (2003), the employment of technology in language learning courses can produce a large effect size (d=.89) compared to courses with no technology. Learners in the current study experienced an effect size larger than the one found by Zhao which is indicative that collaborative writing with technology can develop learners writing performance.

The framework proposed by Kessler et al. (2012) on the co-evolution of collaborative autonomous pedagogy can help us to gain a better understanding of the possible reasons for the success of the collaborative writing. According to Arnold and Ducate (2006), a number of factors such as context, tools, and participants can affect the collaborative learning experience. The proposed framework by Kessler et al. suggests that with the evolution of technology, both learners' and teachers' use of technology should experience change as well. In this context, teachers monitored participant groups. The learning context was picked out with great care, by using e-mail and word processing application to facilitate collaboration. In this study, the technological tools helped mediate communication among learners (Thorne, 2003) in such a way that paper-based writing could not have done. However, these web-based collaborative writing tasks were found to be motivating to most learners, particularly for participants who probably would not have been eager to write individually. Therefore, in this context, the tool plays an important role in learning (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010).

In addition, learners' involvement in the collaborative process with other people probably resulted in increased individual learning. Vygotsky (1978) draws attention to the importance of collaboration in learning. So, grouping in the study was done systematically so that each team member had a skill to offer. In each team, a more knowledgeable person was included to allow development to take place first between people at an interpsychological level, and then lead to better development of individuals at an intrapsychological level (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning potential can be enhanced when learners are given opportunities to interact with peers who have different abilities and skills.

Another advantage of the web-based collaboration is increased involvement in the writing process as it could lead learners to experience increased critical thinking (Kinsella & Sherak, 1998) and allow them to reflect upon their writing in a different manner and understand areas of development (Hirvela, 1999). Collaborative writing also provides learners opportunities to build confidence, as editing is performed by the group for the group. When people reflect on their writing as the product of the group instead of only an individual creation, this could help them with their critical analysis while they could maintain a sense of ownership (Spigelman, 2000). Using web-based word processing provided the learners the opportunity to view, edit, and thus feel ownership over their products.

The collaborative process also enables learners to do more self-reflect (Hirvela, 1999), which can be conductive to increased learning. In this study, technology facilitated reflection, helped the learners to analyze their writing as readers and enabled them to see how well they performed compared to their peers. This could be considered to persuade a healthy sense of competition among group members as well, directing learners to better performance in individual writing. Hubbard (2004) points out the importance of learner training with new technologies. Because of their training, these subjects of the study were able to reflect on their writing without being worried about the technology.

Collaborative writing provided the learners the chance to exchange immediate feedback on language with each other while this opportunity was missing when they were writing individually. This type of editing and collective scaffolding let the learners to pool their knowledge of language and analyze their linguistic production. The possibility to provide and receive appropriate feedback is considered to be essential for optimal collaborative writing to take place (Storch, 2005). Web-based word-processing tools also make observations of students' behavior possible, which are realized without these tools. This is a reasonable explanation for the question of why groups tended to show better performance in grammatical accuracy and complexity than individual performers. The result of the present study could be in line with the previous studies (Kuiken and Vedder, 2002b; Storch and Wigglesworth, 2007) in which collaborative writing was claimed to be effective on improving grammatical accuracy of the EFL learners' writing performance.

Collaborative writing was shown to be superior to individual writing because the learners' writing problems were identified by the more skillful members of the team, while all the strengths of the team members were pooled. Also, the subjects in the experimental group had the opportunity of exchanging their ideas and comments, sharing their understanding of the task and consequently finding solutions to their current problems.

Finally, as acknowledged by the results of the questionnaire, the majority of the participants in collaborative writing group liked the collaborative writing tasks. They thought the tasks helped them improve their personal writing, and motivated them to do more collaborative writing.

Pedagogical Implications

The following pedagogical implications can be considered in light of the research situation for both teaching and learning.

Collaborative writing, particularly with web-based word processing, could allow students to be conscious of their writing needs as they can appraise their writing compared to that of their peers. This ability for EFL writers to examine their own writing as a reader is a vital skill to develop (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). Learners can also be encouraged to evaluate and consider their own needs regarding grammar and/or content and organization.

Learners might find collaboration interesting for many reasons such as (a) it allows them to work on their writing as a group, (b) they learn how to write under time pressure and manage their time, (c) it assists them to emphasize on the writing process and their own writing, (d) and it allows them to produce a better written product.

Finally, interactive software could help teachers to monitor their learners' progress and contributions in collaborative writing if teachers are acquainted with the features of the technology.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the biggest change taken place by online education is that the cooperation between teachers and learners is strengthened more and more (Greg, K. 2000: 4). The conclusion drawn from the above analysis is

that learners' initiatives and interests will be greatly aroused if the teachers make good use of e-mail in the teaching process. Teachers need to catch up with the technology development through acquiring the modern teaching methods so that they can assist their learners to benefit more from the use of e-mail. Besides, email writing can help learners to deal with writing apprehension resulted from teacher assessment. As learners' performance is not immediately assessed by the teacher, learners are not worried about being assessed and evaluated by the teacher.

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Appendixes

Brown (2003) Holistic Rating Scale of Writing

Rating Scale/ Category	**Description of Criteria**
6	Demonstrates clear competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels, though it may have occasional errors
5	Demonstrates competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels, though it will probably have occasional errors
4	Demonstrates minimal competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels
3	Demonstrates some developing competence in writing, but it remains flawed on either the rhetorical or syntactic level, or both
2	Suggests incompetence in writing
1	Demonstrates incompetence in writing
0	Contains no response, merely copies the topic, is off the topic, is written in foreign language, or consists only of keystroke characters

Learners' perception of collaborative writing Questionnaire

1. Group work writing helped me to be conscious of their writing problems.

a. strongly agree b. agree c. neither agree nor disagree d. strongly disagree e. disagree

2. I liked web-based tools such as e-mail service.

a. strongly agree b. agree c. neither agree nor disagree d. strongly disagree e. disagree

3. Using web-based tools helped me to lower my stress while writing.

a. strongly agree b. agree c. neither agree nor disagree d. strongly disagree e. disagree

4. Collaborative writing motivated me to do more writing.

a. strongly agree b. agree c. neither agree nor disagree d. strongly disagree e. disagree

5. Collaborative writing cultivated a sense of cooperation and acknowledgement.

a. strongly agree b. agree c. neither agree nor disagree d. strongly disagree e. disagree

6. The exchange of views helped me to write more carefully.

a. strongly agree b. agree c. neither agree nor disagree d. strongly disagree e. disagree

7. I have become more analytical and critical in my writing.

a. strongly agree b. agree c. neither agree nor disagree d. strongly disagree e. disagree

IMPROVING IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY RETENTION AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH THROUGH DIGITAL STORY TELLING: A TASK- BASED APPROACH

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Abstract
According to Bull and Kajdar (2004), digital storytelling is the combination of still images with a narrated soundtrack containing voice and music at the same time, providing a semi-video clip. As the societies have grown up, and technology has penetrated into almost all families in towns and cities, traditional methods provide little impetus for children to learn and progress; thus, they need to be replaced by new ones. This study aims to illuminate the effects of digital storytelling on Iranian EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary retention. The researchers actually presented a story via video projector and power point software which contains audios, videos, and texts. This study also checks Iranian participants' attitudes towards this new educational instrument, applying a task-based approach. The researchers sought to explore whether digital storytelling has any significant effects on Iranian EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary retention. Besides, they were eager to know the learners' attitudes' toward modern method. The obtained results out of the comparison between the pre-test, posttest, and delayed posttest, revealed that digital storytelling significantly affected EFL learners' vocabulary retention. This means that the experimental group displayed a greater improvement in vocabulary retention than the control one. At the same time, learners were asked about their attitudes and ideas towards digital storytelling (experimental group) and traditional storytelling (control group). Regarding the achieved data, the results indicated that majority of students in the experimental group had positive attitudes towards applying digital storytelling for learning English. They believed that the stories were attractive, amusing and helpful. On the other hand, learners in the control group believed that studying eight stories in the traditional manner was a little difficult.

Keywords: Digital storytelling, vocabulary retention, task, attitude

Introduction

According to Friederici (2011), language acquisition is one of the vital facets of human life. As an English learner, people need to acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language and at the same time produce words, clauses, phrases, and sentences to be able to engage in various speech communications in different occasions. As Curtis (1987) has mentioned, "There is a quantitative and qualitative dimension to vocabulary acquisition. On one hand we could ask 'How many words the learners know?' while on the other hand we might enquire: 'What the learners know about the words

they know?" (Cited in Nation and Carter, 1989, p. 8) Interestingly, according to Ellis (1984), this refers to the breadth and depth of one's lexicon; as it seems to be crystal clear, by depth he means the quality of vocabulary acquisition and by breadth he means the Quantity of it.

On the other hand, sometimes learners may grasp a vast number of words to be able to communicate well, but after a while, they may forget a large percentage of them. Therefore, words' retention seems to be as important as learning them. Vocabulary retention has been defined as "the ability to recall or remember things after an interval of time. In language teaching, retention of what has been taught (e.g. grammar rules and vocabulary) may depend on the quality of teaching, the interest of the learners, or the meaningfulness of the materials" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, cited in Keshta and Al-Faleet, 2013, p. 47). Storytelling, especially the digital one, is one of the newest methods in acquiring vocabulary. Storytelling as a learning instrument can interestingly engage students deeply in the classroom and inject most of the required knowledge to the learners indirectly. Besides the effect of this method in vocabulary acquisition, it helps you providing an intimate atmosphere in the classroom (Abdulla, 2012).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conceptualization of Storytelling

According to Motallebzadeh and Ganjali (2011), Iran is one the Asian countries in which English is assumed as a foreign language (EFL) rather that a second one (ESL); thus, classroom is believed to be the only limited source of exposure to English language. In this regard, providing influential ways to improve learners' language and the subskills in this era seems essential. Since applying vocabularies in various contexts seems to play an important role in building communication, many researchers have been looking for techniques to enhance learners' vocabulary acquisition and retention effectively. According to McDrury and Alterio (2003), this is a unique human experience that enables us to convey, through the language of words; Stories enable us to know real and imagined worlds and our place in them (Cited in Soleimani and Akbari, 2013, p. 1). Delette (1997) also explains storytelling as "the oral interpretation of a story, during which the storyteller invites the listeners to create meaning through conversation and imagination" (Cited in Abdulla, p. 5).

The Importance of storytelling in Language learning and Teaching

Soleimani and Akbari claim that, "There are so many reasons for storytelling to young learners, it combines all four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing in a meaningful context. Besides, it fosters cultural awareness and offers values and beliefs. It stimulates children's curiosity and encourages them to learn more about the world"(P. 2). Gonzalez (2010) found that stories used for teaching English as a foreign language to children in first, second and third grade develop students' motivation and increase their participation in different activities (Cited in Moon and Maeng, 2012).

Cameron (2001) asserts that storytelling is an oral activity that is designed not only for listening but also for involvement; then it enhances class participation. He believes intense eye contact between the teacher and the pupils is a unique in storytelling because such behavior is a natural one in communication, then it increases the communication ability in the classroom (Cited in Setyarini, 2012). Soleimani and Akbari also believe that storytelling is an ancient tradition in Iran; therefore, it is so widespread in different regions and parts in Iran. Most Iranian children are familiar with all prototypes, various themes, old anecdotes, fables, legends, allegories, apologues, and etc. This is assumed a precious inheritance from their ancestors. Furthermore, there have been lots of legendary writers in Iran's history as Roodaki, Nezami, Ferdowsi, Molana, Sadi, and etc.

In consequence of all points mentioned above, it is asserted by Abdulla, that "storytelling can be regarded as an influential strategy in educational agenda" (p: 5). He also appoints the following reasons for this thought:

- Storytelling leads to better understanding and objective realization of materials by pupils. So it is a new experience for them.
- This can increase one's social and relational experiences, through listening to events occurred to characters from different places of world.
- It can also reinforce students to read more and more. Besides, they will learn how to tell a story for friends.

The International Center for Leadership in Education (2009), states that "learners' engagement is a crucial strategy for learning and education in 21st century. It is assumed as a student's achievement and school success. This way, students would enjoy the process of learning more than before" (Cited in Smeda, 2014, p. 199). Abdulla asserts that "storytelling equals defining an event that evolves around some specific characters. These events may be totally different, from scientific to historical and philosophical. In this regard, Cultural realities can be mentioned as well." He also claims that, "stories are told for many reasons as: describing an occurrence in an interesting manner, to talk about one's opinions and experiences and share them with others"; thus, teachers need to be aware of different formats of stories as means of communication and even training for having a better interaction with pupils and receiving a desirable feedback in this regard.

Abdulla also states that "storytelling is largely essential to teachers since this can help them provide a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for learners and leads to a friendly and intimate relationship between the teacher and the learners. In addition, storytelling can bring amusement to class, so that students would be much more motivated rather than the past" (p. 3). Pupils can improve their speaking, writing, and listening skills through this way. In addition, students' vocabulary bank would be enhanced likewise.

Isbell, Sobol, Lindaur and Lowrance (2004) investigated the effect of storytelling and story reading in promoting young learners reading comprehension. The results showed that both storytelling and reading stories enhanced reading comprehension skill in children aged three to five. They came to the conclusion that the group who only heard the stories had greater reading comprehension than the group who just read the stories, even though the storytelling and the story reading had the same content. (Cited in Soleimani and Akbari, p. 2). Koisawalia (2005) claims that "stories are associated with feelings and memories as they are distinctive manifestations of cultural values and perceptions. Besides, they present linguistic forms, grammar, phrases, vocabulary, and formulaic speech within a meaningful and structured context that supports comprehension of the narrative world" (Cited in Verdugo and Belmonte, 2007, p. 1).

Conceptualization of Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling could be assumed as a product of all types of literacies mentioned above. As Robin (2006) states, there are various definitions for digital stories; however, they all eventuate in pointing out that digital stories are the combination of traditional form of a story with different means of digital multimedia as images, audio, video, graphics, text, recorded audio narration, video and music to provide information on a specific topic. It seems that both traditional and digital form of stories hold a unique theme and point of view in common as the basic features of any story.

According to Robin and Barret (2005), "digital storytelling seems to be a proper way to engage students in both traditional and innovative ways of telling a story. The students learn how to combine some basic multimedia tools such as graphics, animation, with skills such as research, writing, presentation, technology, interview, interpersonal, problem-solving, and assessment skills" (Cited in Signes, 2008, p. 1).

Task- based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Ellis (2003. p. 16) defines a pedagogical task in the following way:

A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes (Cited in Nunan, 2006).

Nunan (2006) believes that while there might be many definitions for a task, they all emphasize the fact that pedagogical tasks involve communicative language use in which the user's attention is focused on meaning rather than grammatical form. This does not mean that form is not important. However, as Willis and Willis (2001) point out, tasks differ from grammatical exercises in that learners are free to use a range of language structures to achieve task outcomes – the forms are not specified in advance.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Q1. Does digital story telling have any significant effects on Iranian EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary retention?

Q2. What are the Iranian EFL elementary male learners' attitudes toward digital story telling?

HO. Digital storytelling doesn't have any significant effects on Iranian EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary retention.

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Setting

In order to collect the required data, 40 Iranian teenage male EFL learners, studying at Hafez private English Institute in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi, in the summer semester were chosen randomly out of 400 learners studying at the same level. The participants were divided into two classes at the elementary level (KC3b). The students were shown to be all homogeneous based on Macmillan placement test established by the researchers with an examined validity and reliability. The candidates were all males aged between 10 to 14 years. They were all non-native speakers of English whose first language was Persian. The participants were distributed in to two groups of control (n=20), and experimental (n=20).

Instrumentation

In order to conduct the research, the following instruments were applied:

Macmillan Placement Test for Beginners

In order to check the students' general language proficiency, a Macmillan placement test was applied. It is quite interesting that Macmillan has provided a series of detailed tests for Beginner/Elementary, Pre-intermediate/Intermediate, and Upper Intermediate/Advanced-level students to help the teachers determine which level will best suit their class. This test was designed in 2007 in a photocopiable format. Besides, it has shown to be reliable and valid in certain criteria as it is an official test. It assesses Learners' general language proficiency through 50 items. In general, the test evaluates learners' grammatical knowledge and vocabulary. Participants required 30 minutes to complete the test.

Researchers-made Vocabulary test (Pre-test, Posttest, Delayed posttest)

At the very beginning point, all learners in both groups of control and experimental were required to take a pre-test. This pre-test was a researcher-made vocabulary one that aimed at determining learners' vocabulary knowledge and make sure whether students knew the vocabularies provided in the stories in advance or not. The test contained 20 pictorial items that seeks to find out the percent students know the words provided in the considered stories.

The validity of the test was measured through assessing whether the test reflect some certain abilities, that is criterion validity. This was done through comparing the test with a valid and reliable criterion that was Macmillan placement test. The high correlation between the two tests indicated that the test had strong criterion validity. It also contains face validity, since it exactly measured the words it was assumed to. Additionally, the test showed a high reliability as well.

The questions were of multiple choice types in which one was the answer and others were the distractors. Twenty minutes were dedicated to this vocabulary test. The researchers corrected the papers herself in a classical manner by hand. This vocabulary test was repeated when the treatment was done after 16 sessions to identify any difference between the grasped results before the treatment and the ones after that. In fact, learners' acquisition was examined in this step to make a conclusion. After four weeks the researchers made vocabulary test was applied for the third time with the same testees.

The only difference between the current test and the previous ones was the time interval; that is the test was taken. This was done to assess the degree of word retention, loss, and remembrance by learners after some times. There was no change in the process of scoring. The delayed post tests were corrected as the pre-tests and the immediate post tests were. The same amount of time and grade was allotted to students for this test as the pretest and the immediate posttest. Finally, the researchers corrected the whole papers by hand, in a traditional manner.

Semi- structured Interview

Learners in both groups of control and experimental were interviewed by the researchers qualitatively, so that she could find out about learners' attitudes toward two performed methods; the traditional storytelling and the digital one. In this regard, learners were all interviewed one by one, each in about five minutes.

Questions were related to the employed treatment to seek whether learners are satisfied with the program or not. Students' point of view about treatment's practicality in increasing their vocabulary knowledge was assumed prior.

Procedure

In this study, 40 Iranian EFL learners studying at Hafez English Institute, Mashhad, Iran, were selected randomly to be under research. The learners were all males. In order to start, an Elementary/ Beginner Macmillan placement test was held to obtain the required data about learners' general language proficiency and English level.

Then, a researchers-made test of vocabulary was prepared as a pre-test to check learners' understanding and knowledge about the vocabularies provided in the stories and to make sure they don't know most of the vocabularies provided in the stories. In this step, before the researchers-made vocabulary test was taken, it was piloted through performing the test in another group containing 17 learners at Hafez Language Institute, Mashhad, Iran, in the same level. The reliability of the test was measured through Cronbach alpha which yielded a score of 0.72 revealing a high reliability. Afterwards, the participants were divided into two groups randomly: a control group and an experimental one.

This design was applicable to compare two different modes of instruction (implicit and explicit).The both groups had the same instructor, course materials and the final outcomes were examined applying the same tools in both groups. On one hand, 8 stories were narrated by the teacher herself in the control group, applying some hard copies of the stories provided for each student. On the other hand, the same 8 stories were told in a digital manner in the experimental group; that is stories were told applying video projector displaying stories through audios, videos, animations and etc. Stories were chosen based on learners' proficiency level. In each session, one story was narrated in both groups. Students were asked to focus and write the new words while they were watching and listening. 20 minutes was dedicated to each story. At the very beginning of the treatment, both groups received some instructions on how to manage the tasks in and out of the class. They were both asked to do some oral tasks in the class and cover some written ones at home. Stories were narrated every other session. Thus, the tasks were checked and reviewed the session after each story.

After 16 sessions of treatment, i.e. about 2 months, the researchers-made vocabulary test was rerun as a posttest to check the amount of word acquisition in all learners in both control and experimental groups and achieve the possible effects and explore any significant difference between the two groups and determine the best strategy. Finally, to validate the data and possess a mixture of qualitative and quantitative evidences, the subjects were interviewed orally by the teachers/researchers to measure their attitudes towards classical and digital storytelling. After four weeks, the test was duplicated for the third time as a delayed posttest so that learners' responses displayed their amount of word retention. The same time allocation was applied for the delayed posttest as the immediate one before. Gathering data was summarized in SPSS software. The T-test was calculated by the use of SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Quantitative Data

The first research question relates to the potential effects of digital storytelling on Iranian EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary retention. The null hypothesis (HO1) associated with the first research question (Q1) predicts that digital storytelling has no significant effects on Iranian EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary retention.

The mean and standard deviation of the scores obtained from the responses on the first administration of the researchers-made vocabulary test (pre-test) were m1c=13.35, SD1c= 2.87, N1c=20 for control group and m1e=14.10, SD1e=2.66, N1e=20 in the control group. (Reported in Table 1)

To attain the effect of digital storytelling on learners' knowledge, the researchers-made vocabulary test was administered after receiving the treatment for the second time. The mean and standard deviation of the scores achieved from the responses on the second administration of the researchers-made vocabulary test (posttest) were m2c=15.20, SD2c=2.42, N=20 for control group and m2e=17.30, SD2e=2.23, N=20 for experimental group.

Table 1-

Descriptive Statistics

	group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	Control	20	7	19	13.35	2.87
post-test		20	10	20	15.20	2.42

Delayed post-test		20	9	19	14.55	2.82
Pre-test	Experimental	20	9	18	14.10	2.66
post-test		20	13	20	17.30	2.23
Delayed post-test		20	13	20	16.80	2.44

In order to check whether the differences between the mean scores in pre-test were statistically significant, an independent-sample t-test was run.

Table 2-

Independent- sample t-test (Pre-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means					
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.000	.992	-1.42	38	.162	-1.25	-3.022	.5226
Equal variances not assumed			-1.42	37.7	.162	-1.25	-3.022	.5229

Since the significance level (Sig=0.992) of Leven's Test was bigger than 0.05, it could be claimed that the group variances were the same. Therefore, the second row of the t-test result was considered in the analysis. The mean differences of the aforementioned groups were not significant for EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary knowledge in pretest, reporting the df of 38 and the estimated amount of t1 (-1.42) not exceeding the critical t (df=40, t=2.021, $p<0.05$) (reported in table 2). Thus, it could be understood that the two groups were homogeneous. In the same fashion, another independent t-test was applied to check whether the differences between mean scores in the pre-test were statistically significant.

Table 3-

Independent-sample t-test (Delayed post – test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	T-test for Equality of Means

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.866	.358	-2.69	38	.010	-2.25	-3.937	-.562
Equal variances not assumed			-2.69	37.23	.010	-2.25	-3.938	-.561

Since the significance level (Sig=0.358) of Leven's Test was bigger than 0.05, it could be claimed that the group variances were the same. Therefore, the second row of the t-test result was considered in the analysis. The mean differences of the aforementioned groups were not significant for EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary knowledge in delayed posttest, reporting df of 38 and the estimated amount of t (-2.69) (reported in table 3). Thus, it could be concluded that digital storytelling has significant effects on Iranian EFL elementary male learners' vocabulary retention in delayed-posttest in both groups of control and experimental. Additionally, according to the descriptive indicators (table 2), the mean retention scores in delayed posttest were respectively 14.55 and 16.80 in control and experimental group. Therefore, it could be claimed that the mean retention score increased significantly in experimental group compared with the one in the control group.

In order to further investigate the hypothesis, three paired-sample t-test were employed in each group so that it could be estimated whether the three means collected from the same sample in three different occasions in the two groups were significantly different from each other or not. In the current study, the participants in both groups answered the researchers-made vocabulary test three times. Comparing the means of the researchers-made vocabulary tests as pre-test and posttest in control group displayed that the mean retention scores has been significantly increased in post-test compared with the one in pre-test in control group. The mean retention scores in in the pre-test of researchers-made vocabulary test is mpc1=13.35, SDpc1=2.87, and the mean score of the posttest of the same test is mpc1=15.20, SDpc1=2.42 (reported in table 2)

Table 4-

Paired Sample T Test - Control group

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test - post-test	-1.85	.87509	.19568	-2.25	-1.44	-9.45	19	.000

The results of the paired-sample t-test which determined the differences between the pre-test and posttest in control group are presented in table 4. As it is indicated in this table, the estimated amount of p-value pair2 (=0.000) is less than the critical value of 0.05, indicating a significantly different

performance on participants before and after telling the story in control group. The amount of observed t pair2 (=-9.45) being greater than the amount of critical t (=2.086, p<0.05) for the degree of freedom of 20 affirms the significant difference between the two sets of scores taken from the performances of the learners in the control group. Similar comparison was run between the pre-test and delayed posttest scores in control group. Comparing the means of the researchers-made vocabulary tests as pre-test and posttest in control group displayed that the mean retention scores have been significantly increased in delayed post-test compared with the one in pre-test in control group. The mean retention scores in in the pre-test of researchers-made vocabulary test is mpc2=13.35, SDpc2=2.87, and the mean score of the delayed posttest of the same test is mpc2=14.55, SDpc2=2.82 (reported in table 2)

Table 5-

Paired Sample T Test - Control group

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test -Delayed post-test	-1.2	.76777	.17168	-1.55	-.840	-6.99	19	.000

As it is shown in table 5, the measured amount of p-value pair2 (=0.000) is less than the critical value of 0.05, indicating a significantly different performance on participants before and after telling the story in control group. The amount of observed t pair2 (=-6.99) being greater than the amount of critical t (=2.086, p<0.05) for the degree of freedom of 20 confirms the significant difference between the two sets of scores taken from the performances of the learners in the control group. Next comparison was done between posttest and delayed posttest in control group. Comparing the means of the researchers-made vocabulary tests as pre-test and posttest in control group displayed that the mean retention scores in posttest and delayed posttest are respectively 15.20, and 14.55. Therefore, it can be said that the mean retention score has been significantly decreased in delayed posttest compared with the one in posttest. The mean retention scores in in the posttest of researchers-made vocabulary test is mpc3=15.20, SDpc3=2.42, and the mean score of the delayed posttest of the same test is mpc3=14.55, SDpc3=2.82 (reported in table 2)

Table 6-

Paired Sample T Test - Control group

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
post -test - Delayed post-test	.65	.933	.20869	.213	1.086	3.115	19	.006

As it is mentioned in table 6, the examined amount of p-value pair1 (=0.006) is less than the critical value of 0.05, indicating a significantly different performance on participants before and after telling the story in control group. The amount of observed t pair1 (=3.115) being greater than the amount of critical t (=2.086, p<0.05) for the degree of freedom of 20 confirms the significant difference between the two sets of scores taken from the performances of the learners in the control group. As it is mentioned before, this study was done based on the comparison between two groups of control and experimental. Thus, the whole comparisons in the control group were run in the experimental one as well. Comparing the means of the researchers-made vocabulary tests as pre-test and posttest in experimental group displayed that the mean retention scores has been significantly increased in post-test compared with the one in pre-test in experimental group. The mean retention scores in in the pre-test of researchers-made vocabulary test is mpe1=14.10, SDpe1=2.66, and the mean score of the posttest of the same test is mpe1=17.30, SDpe1=2.23 (reported in table 2)

Table 7-

Paired Sample T Test – Experimentalgroup

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test - post-test	-2.7	1.625	.36346	-3.460	-1.939	-7.42	19	.000

As it is displayed in table 7, the estimated amount of p-value pair1 (=0.000) is less than the critical value of 0.05, indicating a significantly different performance on participants before and after telling the story in control group. The amount of observed t pair1 (=-7.42) being greater than the amount of critical t (=2.086, p<0.05) for the degree of freedom of 20 confirms the significant difference between the two sets of scores taken from the performances of the learners in the control group. In the next step, another comparison was performed between the pre-test and posttest scores. Comparing the means of the researchers-made vocabulary tests as pre-test and posttest in experimental group displayed that the mean retention scores has been significantly increased in post-test compared with the one in pre-test in control group. The mean retention scores in in the pre-test of researchers-made vocabulary test is mpe2=14.10, SDpe2=2.66, and the mean score of the posttest of the same test is mpe2=16.80, SDpc2=2.44 (reported in table 2).

Table 8-

Paired Sample T Test - Experimentalgroup

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

				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test - Delayed post-test	-2.2	1.151	.2575	-.738	-1.661	-8.54	19	.000

It is claimed in table 8 that, the measured amount of p-value pair1 (=0.000) is less than the critical value of 0.05, indicating a significantly different performance on participants before and after telling the story in control group. The amount of observed t pair1 (=-8.54) being greater than the amount of critical t (=2.086, p<0.05) for the degree of freedom of 20 confirms the significant difference between the two sets of scores taken from the performances of the learners in the control group. The last comparison of this study was run between the pre-test and delayed posttest scores in experimental group. Comparing the means of the researchers-made vocabulary tests as posttest and delayed posttest in experimental group displayed that the mean retention scores has been significantly decreased in delayed post-test compared with the one in post-test in experimental group. Therefore, it can be said that the mean retention score has been significantly decreased in delayed posttest compared with the one in posttest. The mean retention scores in the pre-test of researchers-made vocabulary test is mpe3=17.30, SDpe3=2.23, and the mean score of the posttest of the same test is mpe3=16.80, SDpe3=2.44 (reported in table 2).

Table 9-

Paired Sample T Test - Experimentalgroup

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
post -test - Delayed post-test	.50	.688	.15390	.1778	.8221	3.249	19	.004

As it is displayed in table 9, the estimated amount of p-value pair1 (=0.004) is less than the critical value of 0.05, indicating a significantly different performance on participants before and after telling the story in control group. The amount of observed t pair3 (=3.249) being greater than the amount of critical t (=2.086, p<0.05) for the degree of freedom of 20 confirms the significant difference between the two sets of scores taken from the performances of the learners in the control group.

Qualitative Data

In order to gather the required qualitative data for the study, the semi- structured interview which was mentioned in chapter three was held by the researchers within the experimental group. It did contain the following questions: Q1. What are the Iranian EFL elementary male learners' attitudes toward digital story telling?

The results gained after the analysis:

Learners in the experimental group displayed more satisfaction than the control group as they found digital storytelling a practical and enjoyable part of learning. While the members of the other group

believed traditional storytelling was not something to enjoy, but something they were forced to cover as a classwork or homework.

CONCLUSION

"Teaching and learning vocabulary in various contexts is one of the fundamental issues in second language acquisition and vocabulary retention is always regarded as one of the greatest problems by second language learners. Krashen believes that when students travel, they don't carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries." (Cited in Senel, 2013, p. 1) 21st century seems to be technology oriented. In order to live healthily and successfully in this century, we need to go beyond the basic human needs. Nowadays, we seem to be exposed to many technological tools and virtual worlds in all aspects of our life- as: learning, shopping, and etc. As a result, we need to possess such abilities for the betterment of humankind.

The research questions in this study were concerned with effectiveness of applying digital stories or traditional storytelling on foreign language vocabulary retention of Iranian elementary male learners. They were also concerned with identifying leaners' attitudes towards these two methods. Findings showed that digital storytelling is more effective, as the posttest scores display, than traditional storytelling, although they both promoted the vocabulary acquisition and retention rate. The researchers preferred to find some digital stories online to be more interesting, practical, meaningful, and funny.

Moreover, since Farsi is the only dominant language in Iran, Iranians are EFL learners rather than SLA ones; therefore, it is not easy for Iranian language learners to have direct contact with the English language in daily life. In fact, classroom is the main context for students to apply English for meaningful communication. Although language teachers should facilitate and improve students' interest in learning English in the class, it is imperative to extend learning English even outside the classrooms. Teaching materials and activities which could increase students' interests and identifications with English is better to encourage learners to use and practice English outside of the classrooms as well. To this end, teachers can use internet or other online tools like digital stories provided in many foreign websites in a high quality format, to provide much more opportunities for learners to practice learning English outside of the classroom.

As this study displayed, learners were much more motivated in the experimental group compared with the control one. This might be because of the animation format of digital stories. Hemmati, Jafarigohar, and Teimoori (2013) also affirmed that storytelling is even more influential than playing games in the process of learning English. The findings of this study support the scholars' claims regarding the incredible effects of narrating the storybooks on learners' vocabulary growth. This was admitted in previous studies such as Bus et al. (1995), Brett et al. (1996), Robbins et al. (1990), Penno et al. (2002), and Reilly et al. (2000). (Cited in Hemmati, Teimoori, and Jafarigohar, 2013, p. 176)

Like any other studies, some (De) limitations are inevitable which might be hints for further investigations in the field. Consequently, one of the limitations of this study is the few number of language schools from which data is collected, especially in Mashhad, Iran. Thus, generalizing the findings of this research to the entire population is a bit difficult. Besides, conducting the study from male elementary students in Mashhad is another example of the limitations mentioned before.

Subsequently, the researchers came up with some pedagogical implications as well. After some sessions of taking part in the two aforementioned groups, the researchers found that the members of the experimental group in which digital stories were performed were much more motivated and interested in the procedure than the other group. Additionally, the researchers found that learners in the digital story-based group were more conscientious to the word's meaning, while the other group considered the stories as class works not an enjoyable curriculum. For this purpose, this study possesses some useful pedagogical implications for English teaching and learning.

The retrieved influences of digital storytelling on Learners' vocabulary retention could serve to raise language teachers' concerns about how educational aids such as digital stories could affect the pupil's foreign language vocabularies from the very beginning and their communication in the intermediate-advanced level. In this technology-oriented century, teachers had better apply similar digital-based educational methods to attract students' attention and keep them motivated in the classrooms. At the same time, teachers have to provide the proper support and make the learners familiar with the unknowns. Additionally, story writers need to consider these methodological changes in their new products. They are also required to know that their success depends on the extent to which they are up to new trends and technologies. Moreover, language institutes ought to be aware of the most modern methods and be equipped with the practical ones. This way, all segments of the language learning process such as learners, educators, and the institute owners would profit the most.

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WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK: A WAY TOWARD ACQUISITION OF UN-ACCUSATIVE AND UN-ERGATIVE VERBS BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract
Native speakers of english can differentiate unergative verbs from unaccusative verbs, but the case is not so easy for esl students. It is difficult for them to match the mapping between thematic roles and grammatical relations for unaccusative verbs. Since corrective feedback (cf) has proved to be effective in grammar acquisition, and since grammar is important for l2 learners, the effects of using written corrective feedback on the acquisition of unergatives and unaccusatives were investigated in this study. Out of 136 students who underwent the elimination task (et), 129 participants (40 males and 89 females) were selected. They were then divided into four groups -- three experimental groups based on the type of written feedback (implicit, explicit, and mixed) they received, and one control group with no corrective feedback. Written elicited production task (wept) was used to obtain participants' knowledge of unaccusatives and unergatives before and after providing the feedback. Results of the paired samples *t*-tests on pretest and post-test scores revealed significant differences within feedback groups but no difference in the control group. Therefore, it was concluded that providing learners with written feedback can be useful in learning non-alternating/ alternating unaccusatives and unergative verbs.

Keywords*:* unaccusative verbs, unergative verbs, written corrective feedback, l2 acquisition

1. Introduction

All The question of whether learning syntax and semantics of a second language happens via a conscious or an unconscious process is still the concern of linguistic studies. As teachers, we have seen in many English language classes that EFL learners with different language proficiency levels have difficulty distinguishing the unergative and unaccusative verbs. They also find it difficult to interpret the meaning of the sentences with these types of verbs. In such situations, corrective feedback is usually provided by teachers in the form of responses to students' erroneous utterances. In this way, teachers indicate error commitment, and provide the correct language form or some metalinguistic information about the nature of the error (Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006). Since

corrective feedback is widely used in learning/teaching contexts, the present researchers are eager to discover whether feedback can help learners to learn unergative and unaccusative verbs.

1.1. Corrective feedback

Teachers' responses to learners' correct or incorrect utterances are recognized interchangeably error correction, positive or negative evidence, and positive or negative corrective feedback. One of the definitions of error correction was provided by Chaudron (1988) as a process which happens at two levels: at the first level, the error is specified by the teacher and then at the second level, the learner is expected to modify his/her production. According to Chaudron (1988), the true correction happens when there is no recurrence of the error in learner's future production. Later on, Brown (2000) mentioned that for all language learners, regardless of their personal differences, there are four stages of language learning:

1. Random errors stage at which students' previous knowledge of the language rules is not adequate;

2. Emergent stage when learners know the rules and the principles but they are not able to correct themselves;

3. Systematic stage at which learners acquire the ability of correcting their errors; and

4. Stabilization stage in which learners self-correct themselves before receiving the feedback, but still some minor errors are left undetected.

With errors being an inevitable part of learning a second language, teachers are driven into a pedagogical context in which providing learners with feedback is really essential. In what follows, different kinds of feedback are presented and explained.

1.2. Implicit vs. explicit corrective feedback

Lightbown and Spada (1999) defined corrective feedback as any sort of indication to the learners of their incorrect use of the target language and classified it into explicit and implicit feedback. They stated that it is the teacher who decides to use explicit or implicit corrective feedback to help learners progress in the process of language learning. In explicit corrective feedback, a formal explanation is usually provided by the teacher after the error, while implicit corrective feedback involves some ways that indirectly indicate the incorrectness of the learners' utterance and ask for a reformulation (Campillo, 2003). Most of the times, implicit feedback is provided in the form of recast, a reformulation of the learner's utterance where non-target-like parts of a learner's production are substituted by parallel target language form(s) (Loewen & Philip, 2006; Long, 1996).

Since quite a number of investigations have been carried out on explicit and implicit corrective feedback, different corrective feedback strategies have been introduced by different scholars (e.g., Lyster & Mori, 2006; Ammar & Spada, 2006; Loewen, 2005; Lyster, 2004; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Lyster and Mori (2006) defined feedback strategies within three categories of explicit correction, recasts and prompts. While in explicit correction and recasts, learners are supplied with target reformulation of their errors, prompts include other signals (such as clarification requests, elicitation, and repetition). Lyster and Ranta (1997) drew on strategies from previous studies and added new strategies based on their analysis of teacher-student interactions and identified explicit correction, elicitation, clarification requests, recasts, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition of error corrective feedback. Since these feedback strategies proved to be useful in teacher-student interactions, the following strategies were selected to be used in the present study:

- Recasts
- Explicit feedback
- Clarification request

- Metalinguistic feedback
- Prompt or negotiation of form (proposed by Lyster & Mori, 2006; Lyster & Ranta, 1997)

Lyster and Mori (2006) and Lyster and Ranta (1997) defined metalinguistic and explicit feedback as strategies which provide the target form of the error and placed them within the explicit feedback category, whereas the other strategies which do not provide the correct reformulation of error were categorized as implicit.

1.3. Written corrective feedback

Based on the type of teaching/learning context and the type of learning tasks, tests and activities used in the EFL classes, corrective feedback is provided by the teachers either in written or oral form. Ellis (2009) mentioned that the written corrective feedback can be direct or indirect. He also proposed six written feedback strategies that were used in the present study as a framework for providing written corrective feedback. These strategies are:

- Direct corrective feedback (the teacher provides the student with the correct form)
- Indirect corrective feedback (The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction)
    - Indicating + locating the error (it takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show)
    - Indication only (it takes the form of an indication in the margin, showing that errors have taken place in given lines of the text)
- Metalinguistic corrective feedback (teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of the error)
    - Use of error code (teacher writes the code in the margin- e.g., WW for Wrong Word)
    - Brief grammatical descriptions (teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text)
- The focus of the feedback (This concerns whether the teacher attempts to correct all (or most) of the students' errors or selects one or two specific types of errors to correct. This distinction can be applied to each of the above options)
    - Unfocused corrective feedback (is extensive)
    - Focused corrective feedback (is intensive)

1.4. Unaccusatives and unergatives

Unaccusative and unergative verbs are the intransitive verbs that attract the attention of many L2 researchers due to their learnability problems. Many studies investigated the acquisition of these verbs by learners with different L1 backgrounds (e.g., Zobl, 1989 (Italian learners of English); Oshita, 1997; & Hirakawa, 2000 (Japanese learners of English)). The present study focused on effects of applying written corrective feedback on the acquisition of unaccusatives and unergatives by Persian learners of English. In what follows, unaccusative hypothesis, unaccusative and unergative verbs and their characteristics and two types of unaccusative verbs (i.e. alternating and non-alternating) are explained.

Unaccusative hypothesis. Unaccusative hypothesis, first introduced by Perlmutter (1979), is considered as a syntactic hypothesis that divides the intransitive verbs into two classes: unergatives and unaccusatives. Perlmutter defined the unaccusative verbs as intransitive verbs whose subjects

have no responsibility for the action of the verb and the surface subjects are not the real subjects. Hawkins (2001) and Radford (2009) illustrated unaccusative and unergative verbs by two examples (1& 2):

Example 1

a) He arrived.

b) He laughed.

Example 2

a) [e [VP arrived he]]

b) [he [VP laughed]]

Regarding the sentence structure, the structures of 1(a) and 1(b) are seemingly the same; they both consist of a subject NP and a verb which is known to be intransitive; however, based on Unaccusative Hypothesis, they are different. While in the former, the subject is underlyingly an object as shown in the D-structure 2(a); in the latter, the subject occupies the subject position as shown in 2(b). The verb in (a) is unaccusative and in (b) unergative.

Since unaccusative verbs have a direct object as their argument, the syntactic structure of sentences with unaccusatives has a noun phrase (NP) following a verb (V) (V-NP). To reach the final NP-V structure, an A-movement changes the place of the NP. This movement also results in assigning a thematic role to the subject position (Burzio, 1986; Levin & Hovav, 1995; Perlmutter, 1979; Perlmutter & Postal, 1984). Figure 1 illustrates a tree representation of unergatives, transitives and unaccusatives prepared by Agnew, Van de Koot, McGettigan, and Scott (2014). As it is demonstrated in the figure, subject of the unergative verb has the agent role and is generated in the same position as transitive subject.

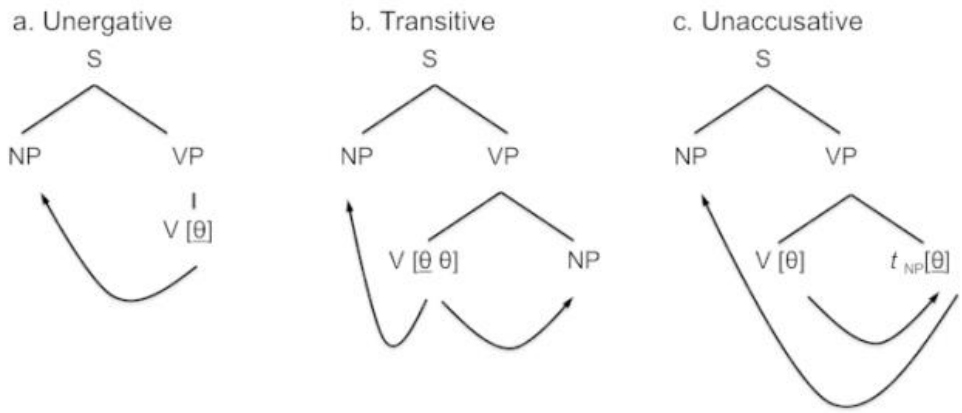

*Figure 1.*Syntactic structures of unergatives, transitives and unaccusatives (arrows show the Θ-marking relations)

Alternating and non-alternating unaccusatives. Alternating and non-alternating unaccusative verbs are used in various studies (Hirakawa, 2000; AbbasiBagherianpoor, 2010) to elicit learners' knowledge of unaccusative verbs. While an alternating unaccusative verb can be used as transitive or intransitive, a non-alternating unaccusative verb can only be used as transitive. This difference can help researchers evaluate learners' deep understanding of unaccusative structures (see Hirakawa, 2000; AbbasiBagherianpoor, 2010). In this study, too, alternating and non-alternating verbs were used to elicit learners' knowledge of unaccusatives and differentiate those who knew the structure of

unaccusative verbs from those who did not. In what follows, the two subcategories of unaccusatives are presented along with some examples to clarify the issue.

Unaccusative verbs are divided into two subcategories: alternating and non-alternating. Levin and Rappaport (1995) stated that alternating unaccusatives (also known as dyadic or +T), such as *break, burn, etc.*, are verbs with transitive counterparts and can be used alternatively as transitive or intransitive (Example 3), while non-alternating unaccusatives (also known as monadic or –T), are verbs without transitive counterparts and can only be used intransitively (e.g., *appear, die, etc.*), as shown in Example 4.

Example 3

i. The paper burnt. (Unaccusative verb)

ii. The paper was burnt. (Passive/Transitive)

iii. They burnt the paper. (Causative/Transitive)

Example 4

i. The man died. (Unaccusative verb)

ii. The man was died. (Passive/Transitive)

iii. *They died the man. (Causative/Transitive)

2. Literature Review

Several researchers focused on the acquisition of unergatives and unaccusatives (e.g., Zobl, 1989; Oshita, 1997; Hirakawa, 2000; AbbasiBagherianpoor, 2010). In these studies the acquisition of unergative and unaccusative verbs by EFL learners were investigated. Zobl's (1989) study considered three categories of verbs (i.e. unaccusative, unergative and transitive) and focused on the occurrence of these three structures in L2 production. The results of the study showed that the passive auxiliary *be* was produced with 15 of 43 unaccusative verbs and moreover, these 15 verbs were used with *be* in 25 cases. Considering the active- intransitive and active-transitive verbs, Zobl observed that *be* was used with 11 of 281 verbs and was selected in 11 cases by the learners in 173 potential contexts. He concluded that L2 learners had difficulty to match the mapping between thematic roles and grammatical relations in unaccusative verbs.

Oshita (1997) also emphasized the role and effects of L1 properties on the acquisition of unaccusatives and claimed that a comparison between Italian/Spanish speakers and Korean/Japanese speakers revealed that while the latter hardly used the post-verbal NP structure, the former used it more than passivized unaccusative structure which is due to the existence of a null expletive in Italian/Spanish.

Hirakawa (2000) conducted four separate studies to find answers to the questions concerning the acquisition of unaccusative and unergative verbs by Japanese and English speakers. The results revealed that L2 acquisition of unaccusatives and unergatives cannot be explained just by input since L2 learners cannot detect unaccusative/unergative differences in the input.

The above-mentioned literature and many other studies on unaccusative/unergative acquisition have focused on the acquisition differences of different learners with different L1s, learners' tendency to use passivized unaccusatives and unergatives and the causes of the related errors made by learners. So far, no study has investigated the effects of corrective feedback strategies on unaccusative/unergative acquisition and the aim of the present study is to fill this gap in the literature.

2.1. Objectives and research questions of the study

No one can deny the role and importance of learning syntax and semantic comprehension in language learning. In the acquisition of unergative and unaccusative verbs and the comprehension of sentences that contain such verbs, native speakers naturally and unconsciously develop the knowledge of rules and principles, but nonnative speakers seem to face some difficulty. To solve the problem in foreign language classrooms, feedback, written or oral, is provided for the students, but because there are various feedback strategies to be used by teachers, choosing different strategies may result in different learning outcomes. Hence, the aims of this study are to provide the L2 pedagogical context with information about the effectiveness of written corrective feedback and furthermore to inform L2 teachers of the most appropriate feedback strategies in teaching unergative and unaccusative verbs.

Based on the above objectives, the following research questions are sought to be answered:

1. Does providing written corrective feedback affect Iranian EFL learners' acquisition of unaccusatives and unergatives?

2. Which type of corrective feedback (implicit, explicit or a mixed method) is more effective in learning unaccusatives and unergatives?

Out of the above-mentioned research questions the following null hypotheses are formed:

1. Providing written corrective feedback for Iranian EFL learners has no effect on their acquisition of unaccusatives and unergatives.

2. Providing explicit/implicit/mixed method feedback has no effect on participants' acquisition of unaccusatives and unergatives.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were a total of 136 students (44 male, 32.4%, and 92 female, 67.6%) as shown in Table 1. From among these participants, those who failed to obtain 66.66% of the Elimination Test score and those who participated in any other English class outside the university were excluded from the study (7 participants).

Table 1.

Frequency of participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
MALE	44	32.4
FEMALE	92	67.6
Total	136	100.0

The remaining 129 participants were randomly divided into 4 different groups according to different classes they had to enroll in according to the type of corrective feedback they were supposed to receive. Figure 2 represents groups' classification and the frequency of participants in each group. As can be seen, the frequencies of students in the explicit written feedback, implicit written feedback, implicit and explicit written feedback and the control group with no feedback were 34, 31, 25 and 39 respectively.

The participants were studying Teaching English or English Translation at the Islamic Azad University in Shiraz at the time of the study and ranged in age from 17 to 44.

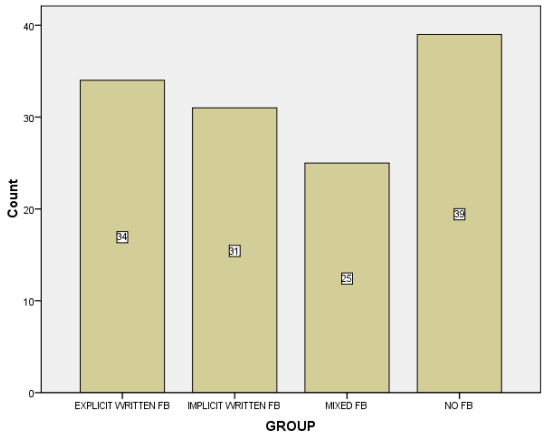

Figure 2. Group frequencies and classifications

To make sure that there was no significance difference between the groups, scores of Oxford Placement Test of all groups were analyzed through one-way ANOVA. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

ANOVA analysis on OPT scores of the four groups

ANOVA analysis	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	44.489	3	14.830	.579	.630
Within Groups	3201.992	125	25.616		
Total	3246.481	128			

The results of ANOVA revealed a significant level of .630 which indicated that there was no significant difference among the mean scores of the Oxford Placement Test of the groups.

3.2. Instruments

Oxford Placement Test (OPT). A 2004 version of OPT was used in this study to help the researcher screen the participants of the study across different levels of language proficiency and look for any significant difference among the groups in terms of language proficiency. OPT is a standard placement test and consists of two parts (a grammar test and a listening test), each with 50 multiple choice items, which evaluate learners' correct use of English. According to the OPT manual, though the administration of the complete OPT is desirable, administration of just one part (either listening or grammar) due to time or other limitation is also possible. Therefore, only the grammar part of the OPT was used in this study. Reliability of the OPT was calculated at the pilot study stage. The equivalent-forms technique of estimating reliability was used and the results revealed that the coefficient of equivalence was .94, and the reliability was .97, which indicated a high index of reliability.

Elimination Test (ET). In order to make sure that the selected participants knew the passive form rules, the ET was used. The test, taken from Mortazavi's (2012) study, was used to eliminate the participants who did not have the knowledge of passive construction in English. It consisted of 9 fill-in-the-blank items presented as a cloze test and subjects with 3 or more errors out of 9 were excluded from the study. The reliability of the test was calculated through equivalent form at the pilot study stage and the results revealed that the reliability coefficient of parallel forms was .95 which is a high index of reliability (Table 3).

Table 3

Reliability Statistics

Common Variance	1.348
True Variance	1.225
Error Variance	.123
Common Inter-Item Correlation	.909
Reliability of Scale	.952
Reliability of Scale (Unbiased)	.955

Written Elicited Production Task (WEPT). All the participants who were not eliminated by the ET were asked to complete a WEPT at the beginning and at the end of the study as the pre-test and post-test. According to Ary et al. (2002: 274), "pretesting effects are less threatening in designs in which the interval between tests is large"; therefore, the post-test was administered after a time interval of 60 days. The WEPT was taken from Hirakawa's (2000) study and was designed to elicit information about EFL learners' ability to distinguish passive structures from unaccusative verbs in English.

The task targeted incorrect application of passive morphology to unaccusative verbs and consisted of 24 items. From among these questions, 6 targeted the transitive verbs, 6 focused on unergatives and the rest contained alternating and non-alternating unaccusatives as their verbs. The test also focused on determining whether the participants would show any significant difference on answering the sentences containing alternating unaccusatives versus sentences containing non-alternating unaccusatives.

The test was used by Hirakawa(2000) and AbbasiBagherianpoor (2010) to evaluate the acquisition of unergative and unaccusative verbs respectively by Japanese and Iranian learners and the Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis of AbbasiBagherianpoor showed the index of 0.858 with the correlation coefficient of 0.734. The reliability of WEPT was calculated at the pilot study and the results revealed a coefficient of equivalence of .69, and the reliability index of .81. The following are some examples of the WEPT items:

-John had a nice toy truck. He kept it on the top of the bookshelf so his little sister could not reach it. One day when he was playing with his friends, he ran into the bookshelf. The truck …… (fall) from top of the shelf and one of the wheels came off.

-Mary liked to ski so she was very happy when it started snowing Friday afternoon. She decided to go on a ski trip with her friend. The sun came out the next morning. While they were driving, all of the snow …… (melt).

3.3. Procedures

Data collection. At the beginning of the study all the 136 participants of the study completed an OPT and an ET in one session. Then 7 participants whose ET scores were less than 66.66% of the total score were excluded from the study. The results of the OPT were used to specify if any significant difference existed among the groups in terms of language proficiency. The groups were randomly selected for the type of treatment they were supposed to receive. Between-groups homogeneity was analyzed by the one-way ANOVA (Table 2) and after making sure that there was no significant difference among the groups, three groups were randomly chosen as the experimental groups and one as the control group.

The books (i.e. Active Skills for Reading, Book 2, by Anderson (2007) and Top Notch 1A and B by Saslow & Ascher (2011)) that the participants were supposed to read and learn during the term were checked by one of the researchers and a colleague, to make sure that they contained no information on unaccusative and unergative verbs.

The WEPT was administered once at the beginning of the study (the second session) and once at the end of the study (i.e. two month later).The first WEPT served as the pre-test of the study and the second administration of the same test was considered as the post-test. As the post-test was administered after a time interval of 60 days, it can be concluded that the threatening effects of test-retest were reduced.

Right after the pre-test, a grammatical consciousness-raising technique (Yip, 1997) with sufficient data on unaccusative/unergative verbs was developed by first the researcher for all groups, regardless of the type of treatment they were supposed to receive. According to Yip (1997), L2 learners' overgeneralization of passive to unergative/unaccusative verbs indicates a challenging learnability problem. Therefore, input alone cannot be sufficient for learning and it should be accompanied with explicit explanation of the characteristics of the verb. In other words, since learners' logic collapses the meaning of passive forms and unergatives/unaccusatives into one form, consciousness-raising seems to be necessary (Yip, 1997). So, in teaching the structures of unergative and unaccusatives, related structures (i.e. passives and auxiliary system) were also discussed and explained, clear examples were provided, linguistic jargons were reduced to the minimum, translation was provided if needed and problem-solving terms of coaching were used.

When all the participants completed the WEPT at the beginning of the study, their correct responses to each verb category, along with their total correct responses were calculated. Then, the proper written corrective feedback was provided for the three experimental groups. Specifically, the participants of group 1 received explicit written corrective feedback, group 2 received implicit written corrective feedback, group 3 received both implicit and explicit written corrective feedback, and group 4 received no corrective feedback at all. Then, the second WEPT (i.e. the post-test) was administered. And finally, the results obtained from the pre-test and post-test of different groups were analyzed.

Data analysis. There were four types of verbs (transitive, unergative, alternating unaccusative and non-alternating unaccusative) in the WEPT. Participants' performance in each type of verb in both pre-test and post-test were compared by *t*-test using SPSS Version 16.

4. Results

4.1. Results of WEPT

To provide an answer to the first research question of the study, Paired samples *t*-test was run. The results, as shown in Table 4, revealed that corrective feedback created a statistically significant difference.

Table 4

Paired Samples t-tests on pre- and post-test scores

Group	Test	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Effect size
EW CF	pre - post	-4.529	2.246	.385	-11.76	33	.000	.81
IW CF	pre - post	-4.419	2.110	.379	-11.66	30	.000	.82
MW CF	pre - post	-3.840	1.841	.368	-10.43	24	.000	.82
No CF	pre - post	.590	7.880	1.262	.46	38	.643	-

EW=Explicit Written, IW=Implicit Written, MW=Mixed Written, CF =Corrective Feedback

According to the observed results of the pre- and post- test total scores, there was a significant difference in all groups from the pre-test to the post-test, except for the group that received no feedback. In other words, feedback groups improved in their second performance, but no feedback group showed no improvement. This is evident from the mean differences reported in Table 4. It is negative for all experimental groups meaning that the score in the post-test was higher. The significance level ($p < .05$) indicates that the difference is statistically significant. However, the control group does not show a statistically significant difference ($p=.643 > .05$)

As shown in Table 4, the explicit, implicit and mixed written corrective feedback groups had effect sizes of .807, .819 and .818 respectively. According to Cohen's (1988) guidelines, the effect sizes are large. However, the no feedback group revealed no effect at all.

To answer the second research question of the study and also to provide supportive results for the first research question of the study, each group's performance for each verb type was analyzed through paired samples tests. To find out participants' performance for items that included unaccusatives and unergatives, Paired samples t-tests were used. The following table (Table 5) summarizes participants' scores for unergative verb.

Table 5.

Paired Samples t-test on pre- and post-test scores for unergative verbs

Group	Test	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Effect size
EW CF	pre - post	-1.118	1.387	.238	-4.69	33	.000	.40
IW CF	pre - post	-1.161	1.440	.259	-4.49	30	.000	.40
MW CF	pre - post	-1.080	1.656	.331	-3.26	24	.003	.31
No CF	pre - post	1.128	7.895	1.264	.892	38	.378	-

EW=Explicit Written, IW=Implicit Written, MW=Mixed Written, CF =Corrective Feedback

According to the observed results of the pre- and post- test scores for unergatives, there was a significant difference in all groups from the pre-test to the post-test, except for the group that received no feedback. In other words, feedback groups improved in their second performance, but no feedback group surprisingly scored less in post-test. This is evident from the mean differences reported in Table 5. It is negative for all experimental groups meaning that the score in the post-test was higher. The significance level ($p < .05$) indicates that the difference is statistically significant. However, the control group does not show a statistically significant difference ($p=.378 > .05$).

As shown in Table 5, the explicit, implicit and mixed written corrective feedback groups had effect sizes of .408, .410 and .316 respectively. These effect sizes are considered as large effect sizes.

Table 6.

Paired Samples t-test on pre- and post-test scores for unergative verbs

Group	Test	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Effect size
EW CF	pre - post	-1.265	.790	.136	-9.33	33	.000	.72

Group	Test	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Effect size
IW CF	pre - post	-1.419	.848	.152	-9.32	30	.000	.74
MW CF	pre - post	-1.200	.577	.115	-10.39	24	.000	.83
No CF	pre - post	-.128	.570	.091	-1.40	38	.168	-

EW=Explicit Written, IW=Implicit Written, MW=Mixed Written, CF =Corrective Feedback

As shown in Table 6, there was a significant difference in all groups from the pre-test to the post-test for the alternating unaccusative verb, except for the group that received no feedback. In other words, although all groups improved in their second performances, no feedback group showed little improvement. This is evident from the mean differences and the significant values reported in Table 5. The mean differences are negative for all groups, but the significant value of the no feedback group does not show a statistically significant difference (p=.168> .05).

As shown in Table 6, the explicit, implicit and mixed written corrective feedback groups had effect sizes of .731, .749 and .823 respectively. These effect sizes are considered as large.

Table 7

Paired Samples t-test on pre- and post-test scores for non-alternating unaccusative verbs

Group	Test	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Effect size
EW CF	pre - post	-1.353	.734	.126	-10.75	33	.000	.78
IW CF	pre - post	-1.226	.805	.145	-8.48	30	.000	.71
MW CF	pre - post	-1.040	.676	.135	-7.69	24	.000	.71
No CF	pre - post	-.205	.522	.084	-2.45	38	.019	.14

EW=Explicit Written, IW=Implicit Written, MW=Mixed Written, CF =Corrective Feedback

According to the observed results of the pre- and post- test scores for non-alternating unaccusatives, there was a significant difference in all groups from the pre-test to the post-test. In other words, all groups improved in their second performance. The results revealed that no feedback group improved less as compared with other groups. This is evident from the mean differences reported in Table 7. Although it is negative for all groups meaning that the score in the post-test was higher, no feedback group has the lowest mean (-.205). The significance level ($p < .05$) indicates that the difference is statistically significant for all groups.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results of learners' total pre- and post-test scores, the researchers observed that in all feedback groups the mean value of the post-test scores was higher than the pre-test mean value, and therefore according to the obtained results the feedback was found to be effective. These results were in line with most of the previous studies which investigated the role of corrective feedback in grammar acquisition (Bitchener et al., 2005; Russell & Spada, 2006; Bowles & Montrul, 2009; Sauro, 2009; Incecay& Dollar, 2011; Ganjabi 2011; Kawaguchi & Ma, 2012).

A comparison between the obtained results of this study and the results of Bitchener (2005) revealed that in Bitchener's (2005) study, learners' average performance for different grammatical categories did not vary according to the type of corrective feedback provided and just in some categories, changes were observed. Bitchener (2005) reported that for prepositions, learners' average performance did not vary according to the type of the provided feedback, but for past simple tense and the definite article, the average accuracy performance differed. The results of the present study revealed that learners' performance varied based on the type of corrective feedback they had received. In addition to Bitchener's (2005) results which were the same as the results of this study, Bowles and Montrul (2009) and Russell and Spada's (2006) results identified corrective feedback to be beneficial for L2 grammar acquisition. Further comparisons of the obtained results of this study with Sauro's (2009) study revealed that Sauro, like Bitchener (2005) found out that although learners could positively use corrective feedback, the effects of different types of corrective feedback were not the same.

What makes the results of the present study different from the previous studies is that although some researchers have mentioned that written corrective feedback strategies are useful for L2 acquisition, no study has investigated the effects of corrective feedback strategies on acquisition of unaccusative and unergative verbs.

A close analysis of learners' responses to WEPT and a comparison of the results of groups with corrective feedback and the group without any feedback revealed that as Oshita (1997), Hirakawa (2000) and AbbasiBagherianpoor (2010) discussed, although the acquisition of unergatives and unaccusatives can be explained to some extent through the principles of UG, the acquisition will significantly be facilitated if instructions are provided. Therefore, the instructions the learners receive are considered to be very important and they should be modified in a way to provide learners with the most useful information on unaccusatives and unergatives.

Different from Hirakiwa's (2000) observation that Japanese L2 learners of English who did not receive any explicit input could distinguish unaccusatives and unergatives, in this paper, the results obtained from the no-feedback group revealed that although the group received explicit consciousness raising instruction, their post-test scores revealed no or little significant improvement. Since participants of Hirakawa's (2000) study were Japanese L2 learners of English and the participants of this study were Iranian L2 learners of English, and also based on AbbasiBagherianpoor's (2010) conclusion that unaccusative/unergative acquisition in L2 English follows from L1 universals, these differences may result from different L1s of the two studies. Hence, this is an area requiring further research.

Comparing the results obtained from the present study with the results of AbbasiBagherianpoor (2010) revealed that in both studies, consciousness raising, either in the form of explicit instruction or

in the form of corrective feedback, would result in better acquisition of unergatives and unaccusatives. However the difference between the two studies lay in the fact that AbbasiBagherianpoor's (2010) study revealed short-term effectiveness of consciousness raising, but in the present study long-term (i.e. 60 days) effects were observed.

Based on the obtained results, the group that received no feedback showed no or little significant change from the pre-test to the post-test, so it can be concluded that providing learners with written corrective feedback can help them acquire the necessary rules of unaccusative and unergative verbs.

As the results of other studies (e.g., AbbasiBagherianpoor, 2010) along with the results of this study indicated unsuccessful acquisition of unaccusatives/unergatives in the absence of feedback, teachers should pay special attention to provide learners with proper and necessary feedback. Since the results obtained from the no-feedback group of the study demonstrated that explicit instruction alone would not result in proper acquisition of unaccusative/unergative verbs, it is necessary for teachers to be aware of deep constructions of sentences with these verbs (i.e. unergative and unaccusative). Such awareness will enable teachers to provide learners with the most proper corrective feedback.

6. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Since most of the participants of each group of this study were intermediate and advanced learners, it is suggested that other studies focus on the performance of learners with other proficiency levels. Future researchers can also focus on gender differences in unaccusative/unergative acquisition. Another limitation of this study was the unavailability of computer assisted feedback programs, so it is suggested that future studies use this technology in their research. It is also recommended that future studies investigate possible effects of peer corrective feedback on acquisition of unergative/unaccusative verbs.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL LEARNERS' PERSONALITY TYPES AND THEIR COGNITIVE BURNOUT ON L2 READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract
The present study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between efl learners' personality types and their cognitive (mental) burnout on l2 reading comprehension. To do so, a non-experimental study was designed which mainly relied on a descriptive, correlational, and ex post facto model. Out of 150 iranian intermediate efl learners at a languge institute in tehran (n=150), a sample of 80 learners were selected based on their performance on oxford placement test (opt, quick test, version 2) to ensure their homogeneity. The participants received fce reading comprehension test, maslach burnout inventory-student survey (mbi-ss), and myers-briggs type indicator (mbti). The data analysis result revealed no significant relationship between learners' reading comprehension and the amount of their cognitive (mental) burnout. However, a significant relationship was found between iranian intermediate efl learners' personality types and their cognitive (mental) burnout. The reason is that all the personality traits of introvert/extrovert, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging / perceiving had significant relationships with cognitive burnout factors of exhaustion, cynicism, and academic efficacy. The findings of the present study could have implications for efl teachers and learners in the iranian context.

1. Introduction

The study of second language learners' personality types and theirrelationship with their cognitive burnout has been an absorbing research topic for SLA researchers. According to Maslach and Leiter (2008), burnout is a response to the prolonged exposure to occupational stress which negatively affects the individuals, the organizations, and the healthcare service recipients. Maslach and Leiter (2008) defined burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs among individuals who performed "people work" of some kind (e.g., health care, education, and social work. It is a pervading phenomenon affecting a variety of professional roles such as medical personnel (Kiekkas et al., 2010, Putnik & Houkes, 2011; Soler et al., 2008), teachers (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006), software developers (Singh, Suar, & Leiter, 2012), athletes (Jowett, Hill, Hall, & Curran, 2013), lawyers (Tsai, Huang, & Chang, 2009), and many other professions.

Beside the general burnout which is related to the type of profession and the kind of activities done longitudinally, another type of burnout can be recognized, i.e., cognitive or mental burnout(Kiuru, Aunola, Leskinen, & Aro, 2008). Mental or cognitive burnout means that cognitive fatigue, boredom, and lower performance due to special activities in any profession at a specific moment or shorter periods of time(Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002). Contrary to the profession-related burnout, mental or cognitive burnout is temporary. Although these kind of mental or cognitive burnout originates from the general psychological and professional burnout, its degree and mechanism of action is may follow particular patterns.

Moreover, most EFL and ESL instructors have usually reported the occurrence of such temporary or cognitive/mental burnout for their L2 learners (Gautheur, Descas & Lemyre, 2012). Some studies have reported that second and foreign language learners suffer from cognitive burnout during the acquisition of an L2 (Belgar & Hunt, 2014; Kiuru, et al., 2008; Pisarik, 2009). This kind of cognitive or mental burnout can happen longitudinally or at specific points when L2 learners are learning and dealing with the target language.

As Kiuru, et al. (2008) asserted, students' academic burnout exists because students' core activities can be regarded as a kind of work or profession. One occasion in which such mental or cognitive burnout emerges obviously serious is after taking difficult summative or standard tests(Schaufeli, et al., 2002). No outstanding study has ever been done on the second or foreign language learners' burnout. Accordingly, this study was launched to examine burnout among L2 learners after the prolonged test sessions, specifically after a reading comprehension test which demand concentration and lead to mental or cognitive burnout. This study also attempted to scrutinize if there was any significant relationship between Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' cognitive (mental) burnout and their performance on L2 reading comprehension. In addition, because the mental (cognitive) burnout is considered to be related to personality factors (e.g. Singh, Suar, & Leiter, 2012), the present research focused upon examining the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' personality types and their cognitive (mental) burnout on L2 reading comprehension. The finding of the present investigation can help learners to know their own degree of burnout and try to manage its negative effects based on their personality factors helping them to improve their L2 reading comprehension performances.

Cognitive burnout is a special type of stress- a state of physical, emotional or mental exhaustion combined with doubts about competence. It is now well accepted that the burnout phenomenon is a chronic state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that arises in personnel from the cumulative demands of their work (Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006). Generally speaking, human mind and cognition is subject to tiredness and fatigue for prolonged activity. Such a cognitive or mental burnout negatively influences the learner's performance in different areas of the target language. A very common problem for most Iranian EFL learners is that they suffer from mental fatigue or burnout during taking reading comprehension tests. Such a mental burnout can be seen as specifically after the learner has taken the reading comprehension test.

During taking a reading comprehension test, EFL learners are required to read at least three to six passages which impose cognitive and affective tiredness. This is even worse for the case of close test because it is more demanding and the learner should be more concentrated in order to guess the best choice for each blank in the close passage. Mental or cognitive burnouts can have different reasons. These reasons range from physiological to sociocultural dimensions of taking formal tests (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). This study considered that the degree of mental or cognitive burnout can have deep personality roots. Accordingly, the present investigation found it invaluable to explore the probable relationship between personality types and amounts of mental or cognitive burnout after taking reading comprehension test among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. According to the purpose of the study and the problems stated above, the following research questions were raised:

1. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and the amount of their cognitive (mental) burnout?

2: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' personality types, their cognitive (mental) burnout, and L2 reading comprehension?

2. Method

The present research was an attempt to investigate the relationship between intermediate EFL learners' personality types and their cognitive (mental) burnout on L2 reading comprehension. The present section deals with explaining participants of the study, instruments used for collecting the data, procedures taken, data analysis, and the design of the study.

2.1 Participants

A sample of 80 Iranian intermediate EFL learners participated in this study. These learners were selected from among the 150 EFL learners at Iran Language Institute (ILI) in Tehran. These 80

intermediate language learners were selected based on their performances on an administered placement test. To ensure participants' homogeneity regarding their general English language proficiency, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT, Quick test, version 2) was given. Eighty learners were selected as the intermediate ones based on the results of their gained scores according to the scale given at the end of the test booklet (see appendix A for both the test and its scaling and scoring method). Hence, the participants with scores between 30 and 47 were the intermediate level learners and consequently, 80 were labeled as the intermediate level learners. The participants' age ranged from 16 to 35 with an average age mean of 21.5. There were both female and male learners in the study sample. These learners' mother tongue was mostly Persian and they were from different socio-economic strata. Their educational degrees and study majors were also various. Most of the selected learners had been learning English for more than two years, when the study was conducted.

2.2 Instrumentation

Oxford Placement Test (OPT), FCE Reading Comprehension Test, Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS), and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) were the instruments employed in this regard.

2.2.1 Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

A standardized version of Oxford Quick Placement Test (Version 2) was administered to 150 EFL learners to choose eighty intermediate EFL learners as the main participants of the study. The test has been pretested and validated by more than 19,000 students across 60 countries, indicating high reliability and reasonable validity. The test has been frequently used in different studies and based on the Oxford University Exam Center website (www.oxfordenglishtesting.com) the test enjoys a high reliability (KR-21=0.91).

2.2.2 FCE Reading Comprehension Test

The FCE was originally used to the field of EFL/ESL testing in 1939. However, a revised version of the FCE was introduced to the field in 1996 after regular updates and a number of modifications in the content and administration of the test took place. The total FCE comprises five different sub-tests (papers): (i) Reading, (ii) Writing, (iii) Use of English, (iv) Listening, and (v) Speaking. The test includes a variety of methods such as multiple matching, multiple choice cloze, error correction, note-taking, etc. Since the focus of the present study was on reading comprehension only, one of the reading papers of FCE (June 2002) was used as an instrument in this research. The reading test included 30 items. The FCE handbook (UCLES 2001) asserts that the focus of the FCE reading paper is to assess various reading skills and has shown its reliability and validity during its history and administrations.

2.2.3 Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS)

The term "burnout" was first used to describe a syndrome of mental weariness specifically observed among human service professionals because they were involved in emotionally demanding contacts with recipients such as clients and patients (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1982, both cited in Hu & Schaufeli, 2009). A brief self-report questionnaire-the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)-was developed to assess burnout amongst those who do "people work of some kind" (Maslach & Jackson, 1986, p. 1). The MBI includes three dimensions that constitute burnout: emotional exhaustion, which refers to feelings of being depleted of one's emotional resources, representing the basic individual stress component of the syndrome; depersonalization, which refers to negative, cynical, or excessively detached responses to other people at work, representing the interpersonal component of burnout; and reduced personal accomplishment, which refers to feelings of decline in one's competence and productivity and to a lowered sense of efficacy, representing the self-evaluation component of burnout (Maslach, 1993).

It is likely that burnout also occurs among students, although formally speaking, students are neither employed nor do they hold jobs. However, from a psychological perspective their core activities can be considered "work." Namely, they are engaged in structured, obligatory activities, e.g., attending classes and completing assignments, that are directed toward a specific goal, e.g., passing

examinations (Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). Cognitive (mental) burnout will be measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory- General Survey (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The 15 items included in this questionnaire are classified into three groups. Exhaustion is recognized via five items (1, 4, 7, 10, and 13) such as "I feel burned out from my studies". The cynicism scale is composed of four items (2, 5, 11, and 14), one of which is "I have become less enthusiastic about my studies". The remaining six items (3, 6, 8, 9, 12, and15) are related to the professional efficacy dimension. One such item is "During class I feel confident that I am effective in getting things done". All items are scored on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 ("never") to 6 ("every day").

2.2.4 Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is an introspective self-report questionnaire developed to indicate psychological preferences in how different persons perceive the world and make decisions. One of the most significant issues in one's life or work is getting tired of what they do and leaving the situation. This is technically called burn out, which as Pittenger (2005) discusses can be highly influenced by the individual's personality types or psychological and mental power. On the other hand, as Vahdat and Shooshtari (2016, p.13) assert, "Personality types significantly affect the cognitive strategies used for reading comprehension among EFL learners". The present study will use Al Shalabi's (2003) version of The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) published by University of Edinburgh, Moray House School of Education. The test includes 24 items as follows: Extraversion (E) and Introversion (I): 6 items, Sensing (S) and Intuition (N): 6 items, Thinking (T) and Feeling (F): 6 items, and Judging (J) and Perceiving (P): 6 items.

2.3 Procedure

In order to choose the needed participants for this study, Oxford Placement test version 2 was administered to 150 Iranian EFL learner studying English in Zaba Sara institute in Tehran. Then, 80 learners were placed at the intermediate level based on their gained score in the test. The learners were selected from each of the two genders and their age rang varied from 16 to 35. In the second phase of the study, the last version of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (2003) was administered to the 80 intermediate learners to determine their main personality factors:

Type 1: orientation to the world, *Extraverted or Introverted,* Type 2: take in information, *Sensing or intuition*

Type 3: make decisions, *Thinking or feeling,* Type 4: take in information or decide, *Perceiving or judging.*

In the third phase, a reading comprehension test including 6 passages with 30 items, which was suitable for intermediate learners, was given to the study participants. This reading test was chosen from FCE Reading Comprehension Test booklet. Then, Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) (2001) was given to the participants to measure their burnout.

2.4 Design

The present study was a non-experimental design which mainly relied on a descriptive, correlational, and ex post facto model. Ex post facto study or after-the-fact research is a kind of research design in which the investigation begins after the fact has occurred without interference, experiment, or manipulation from the researcher (Hatch & Lazartan, 1991). In the present investigation, the researcher did not have any control or manipulation over learners' personality types and their amount of metal burn-out after taking the reading comprehension test. The mainstream of social research, in contexts in which it is not possible or acceptable to manipulate the characteristics of human participants, is based on ex post facto research designs (Hatch & Farhady, 1995). None of the variables of the study were manipulated to cause changes, either. What was of paramount importance then was the type and strength of the connection between variables of the study; therefore, a non-experimental design was the appropriate design for the accomplishment of the purpose of the study (Field, 2009).

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

3.1.1 Checking Normality

The present data were analyzed using Pearson correlation which assumes normality of the data. As displayed in Table 1, the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their standard errors were lower than +/- 1.96, hence normality of the data was confirmed.

Table 1

Testing Normality Assumption

	N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Exhaustion	80	.076	.269	0.28	-.851	.532	-1.60
Cynicism	80	-.183	.269	-0.68	-.090	.532	-0.17
Academic-Efficacy	80	-.003	.269	-0.01	-.007	.532	-0.01
Introvert/extrovert	80	.119	.269	0.44	-.839	.532	-1.58
Sense/Intuition	80	.342	.269	1.27	-.481	.532	-0.90
Think/Feel	80	.056	.269	0.21	-.704	.532	-1.32
Judge/Perceive	80	-.110	.269	-0.41	-.747	.532	-1.40
OPT	80	-.174	.269	-0.65	-.627	.532	-1.18
Reading	80	-.167	.269	-0.62	-.847	.532	-1.59

3.1.2 Checking Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha reliability indices for the mental burnout and its three components of exhaustion, cynicism and academic efficacy were .91, .79, .70 and .83 respectively (Table 2).

Table 2

Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Exhaustion	.790	5
Cynicism	.707	4
Academic Efficacy	.833	6
Mental Burnout	.919	15
Introvert/Extrovert	.756	6
Sense/Intuition	.825	6
Think/Feel	.815	6
Judging/Perceiving	.899	6
Personality Trait	.948	24

The Cronbach's alpha reliability indices for the total personality trait and introvert/extrovert, sense/intuition, thinking/feeling and judging/perceiving were .94, .75, .82, .81 and .89 respectively (Table 2).

The KR-21 reliability indices for the OPT and reading comprehension tests were .75 and .79 (Table 3).

Table 3

KR-21 Reliability Indices

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	KR-21
OPT	80	37.88	5.927	35.123	.75
Reading	80	22.45	4.847	23.491	.79

3.2 Inferential Statistics

3.2.1 Research Question One

The first research question of the study aimed at investigating if there was any significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension and the amount of their cognitive

(mental) burnout. A Pearson correlation was run to find the proper answer to the first question. Based on the results displayed in Table 4, it was claimed that; reading comprehension had non-significant relationships with exhaustion (r (78) = .063, p = .581, representing a weak effect size), cynicism (r (78) = .055, p = .631, representing a weak effect size) and academic efficacy (r (78) = .138, p = .222, representing a weak effect size).

Table 4
Pearson Correlations; Mental Burnout with Reading Comprehension

		Reading
Exhaustion	Pearson Correlation	.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.581
	N	80
Cynicism	Pearson Correlation	.055
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.631
	N	80
Academic Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.222
	N	80

According to the results mentioned above the first null hypothesis as "there is not any significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension and the amount of their cognitive (mental) burnout", was supported.

3.2.2 Research Question Two

The second research question of the study aimed at finding out if there was any significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' personality types, their cognitive (mental) burnout, and L2 reading comprehension. A Pearson correlation coefficient was run to find the answer and based on the results displayed in Table 5, it was concluded that;

A: Personality trait of introvert/extrovert had significant relationships with exhaustion (r (78) = .550, p = .000, representing a large effect size), cynicism (r (78) = .538, p = .000, representing a large effect size) and academic efficacy (r (78) = .532, p = .000, representing a large effect size). However, it had a non-significant relationship with reading comprehension (r (78) = .166, p = .305, representing a weak effect size).

Table 5
Pearson Correlations; Personality Traits with Mental Burnout and Reading Comprehension

		Intrextro	SenseIntu	ThinkFeel	JudgePerc
Exhaustion	Pearson Correlation	.550**	.554**	.510**	.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
Cynicism	Pearson Correlation	.538**	.456**	.470**	.485**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
Academic Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.532**	.463**	.472**	.496**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
Reading	Pearson Correlation	.116	.052	.113	.079
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305	.649	.319	.485
	N	80	80	80	80

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

B: Personality trait of sensing/intuition had significant relationships with exhaustion (r (78) = .554, p = .000, representing a large effect size), cynicism (r (78) = .456, p = .000, representing an almost large

effect size) and academic efficacy (r (78) = .463, p = .000, representing an almost large effect size). However, it had a non-significant relationship with reading comprehension (r (78) = .052, p = .649, representing a weak effect size).
C: Personality trait of thinking/feeling had significant relationships with exhaustion (r (78) = .510, p = .000, representing a large effect size), cynicism (r (78) = .470, p = .000, representing an almost large effect size) and academic efficacy (r (78) = .472, p = .000, representing an almost large effect size). However, it had a non-significant relationship with reading comprehension (r (78) = .113, p = .319, representing a weak effect size).
D: Personality trait of judging/perceiving had significant relationships with exhaustion (r (78) = .475, p = .000, representing an almost large effect size), cynicism (r (78) = .485, p = .000, representing an almost large effect size) and academic efficacy (r (78) = .496, p = .000, representing an almost large effect size). However, it had a non-significant relationship with reading comprehension (r (78) = .079, p = .485, representing a weak effect size). Based on the above mentioned analysis the first part of the second null-hypothesis as "there is not any significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' personality types and their cognitive (mental) burnout", was rejected. However, the second part of this hypothesis as "there is not any significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' personality types, their cognitive (mental) burnout, and L2 reading comprehension", was supported. The reason lies in the fact that none of the two variables of personality types and cognitive (mental) burnout had a significant relationship with reading comprehension.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of data analysis firstly revealed that there was not any significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension and the amount of their cognitive (mental) burnout. Secondly, it was found out that there was a significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' personality types and their cognitive (mental) burnout. The reason is that all the personality traits of introvert/extrovert, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving had significant relationships with cognitive burnout factors of exhaustion, cynicism, and academic efficacy. However, there was not any significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' personality types, their cognitive (mental) burnout, and L2 reading comprehension as none of the two variables of personality types and cognitive (mental) burnout had a significant relationship with reading comprehension.

As the discussion of personality type and burnout for the Iranian EFL learners is almost a new topic, the present findings open a new horizon to this discussion. To the knowledge of the present researcher, no study has touched the issue of reading comprehension test and EFL learners' burnout either. Hence, the present findings are not in contrast with the research reviewed in the study. However, the studies done on the neighboring concepts such as willing ness to communicate, the relationship between personality traits and burn out, and personality traits and reading comprehension among Iranian EFL learners, could be focused on in the present analysis.

The findings of the present study revealed that personality traits of introvert/extrovert, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving had significant relationships with burnout factors of exhaustion, cynicism, and academic efficacy. These findings are in line with Davis's (2004) study on the relationship between learning style, personality types, and burnout of ESL learners in America asserting that extravert students are less likely to get tired of learning and feel less exhaustion. Thinking learners also proves to be more tolerant than their feeling peers in the language classroom. Cetinkaya's (2005) study on the burnout and willingness to communicate (WTC) of college students in Turkey can be taken as a support for the findings of the present study; as it showed a negative correlation between WTC and burnout among the EFL students. The reason might be sought in the fact that willingness to learning and enthusiasm to develop the second/ foreign language increases students' tolerance, reduces their anxiety, exhaustion, and cynicism, while it enhances their academic efficacy (Maslach, et al., 2001).

On the other hand previous research have shown that language learners with high motivation are less likely to experience burn out in the language skills and components: Chu (2008) found that EFL students with high motivation and willingness to communicate were less likely to experience anxiety in the language classroom. Sun (2008) who reports on the EFL learners' speaking

and Qomadrin (2010) who focuses on the learners' L2 writing have come up with similar results. Of course Qomadrin's study showed significant correlation between extraversion personality and writing skill of EFL learners.

Findings of the present study in terms of the relationship between personality traits and cognitive burnout among EFL learners are in line with Tahriri, et al.'s (2015) study which showed a significant relationship between EFL learners' personality types and their cognitive learning styles. The present study findings in terms the relationship between personality types and reading burnout, which showed no significant correlation, is in contrast with Erton's (2010) study in this regard; as he reported on the positive and significant relationship between personality types and success in foreign language achievement, while showing that less motivated students experienced burnout in reading and vocabulary expansion.

Though Reichl, et al. (2014) have mainly focused on burnout risk among first-year teacher students and ESL learners in the college level, their suggestions to reduce burn out could be used in the language classrooms. In this regard, they believe that detecting factors by which stress-related health problems among students can be predicted and prevented at an early stage is not only important for teachers, but also for their students and society in general. However, increasing motivation among the learners and reducing demotivating factors are accounted as prime significance in this regard.

The results of the present study showed no significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' personality types, their cognitive (mental) burnout, and their reading comprehension test. It means learners' personality styles have not affected their ability in answering reading comprehension. Neither have their burn out factors such as exhaustion, cynicism, nor academic efficacy correlated with their abilities in reading comprehension. These findings are not in line with the previous findings and research results in this research domain. Fadhili et al. (2012) found appositive relationship between personality traits and reading proficiency; something which was not found in the present study. Unlike the present findings, Hajimohammadi (2011) found that self-correction in EFL writing reduces EFL learners' burnout, though it was more evident among the extrovert students compared to introvert ones.

Iranian scholars focusing on the relationship between personality type and L2 development have all found a significant relationship between these variables: Bagheri and Faghih (2012)'s study showed a significant relationship between self-esteem, personality type, and reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students. Alemi, et al.'s (2012) study on WTC also found a significant relationship among motivation, communication anxiety, linguistic self-confidence, and attitude of EFL learners. Moreover, Mall-Amiri and Nakhaie's (2013) study found that performance of extrovert intermediate female EFL learners was far better than their and introvert peers in both listening and reading tasks.

Lack of any significant relationship between personality type and cognitive burnout factors with EFL students' reading compression might be sought in the nature of reading skill and its significance for the Iranian students. As Iranian students enjoy a lot of exposure to reading texts and translation, which is connected to reading, in their schools and even institutes where they learn English (Amiri & Maftoon, 2010), they might have accustomed to answering reading comprehension; that is why they showed no sign of burn out in this regard.

Another reason for the present findings might be fact that the participants taking part in the study were selected from among a specific institute where they study English. The ruling atmosphere of the institute and teachers' continuous encouragements might have reduced the anxiety and stress of the students and consequently their burnout factors. That is why they showed no sign of burn out in their reading tests. Another significant point worth noticing is that, we cannot ignore learners' burnout in the EFL classroom, though the present findings did not show a significant relationship between the variables under study in this research. It goes without saying that the curriculum of an EFL context is largely depended on the course book which contains carefully balanced and planned content. In this case, the course objectives would be identified and learning takes place within a particular framework. Learning course books with boring and old topics without any supplementary materials would lead to negative perceptions regarding the materials within the students, de-motivate them, and as a result, learners would experience burnout (Ghanizadeh & Rostami, 2015).

To sum up, the present study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between intermediate EFL learners' personality types and their cognitive (mental) burnout on L2 reading comprehension. The data analysis result revealed no significant relationship between learners' reading comprehension and the amount of their cognitive (mental) burnout. However, a significant relationship was found between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' personality types and their cognitive (mental) burnout. The reason is that all the personality traits of introvert/extrovert, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging / perceiving had significant relationships with cognitive burnout factors of exhaustion, cynicism, and academic efficacy.

Pedagogical Implications

Taken together, the findings of the current study put forward the prospect of developing a deeper understanding of EFL students' personality type, burn out and language skills and components; accordingly, the effect of personality factors on the learners' burnout and language achievement in general, and in relation to reading comprehension could be further discussed. According to the findings of the current research, it can be concluded that in vase de-motivating factors are reduced, students' motivation, achievement, and attitudes, and emotional states will be energized. This will have positive results and long-term learning outcomes for the learners. As the findings of the present study showed, classroom environment and educational atmosphere affects students' burnout. Hence, EFL teachers can encourage the use multimedia and technology for enhancing learning, utilize supplementary materials such as the computer, the internet, videos, CDs, etc., to make learning more enjoyable for students (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2016).

Authentic materials can also be used to motivate EFL learners to use the language in a more authentic way. This is in harmony with Garrett and McDaniel's (2001) contention that a supportive environment can reduce the amount of burnout among people cooperating in a social setting. As the study findings showed a significant relationship between personality traits and burnout factors of the learners, it is suggested that EFL teachers focus on the students' personality trait in their language classes and take preventive measures as not to let learners experience burn out.

Previous studies have highlighted the role of de-motivators in student's burnout and language achievement (Fadhili,et al, 2012; Gautheur, et al., 2012; Garrett & McDaniel, 2001; Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015 and 2016; Hakanen, et al., 2006; Javadi &Khatib, 2014). This in turn can have principal implications for EFL education and SLA research. In particular, teachers can re-motivate and develop the academic achievements of their students by promoting rapport between themselves and EFL learners, interacting with other teachers to adopt authentic and interesting materials, and providing a learning environment which incites learners and diminishes feelings of inefficacy.

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MJLTM

ENHANCING LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN AN EFL CONTEXT THROUGH INTERACTIONIST DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

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Abstract
This study meant to scrutinize the possible disparaties residing amongst static and dynamic assessment (da, henceforth) of listening comprehension and trace the qualitative changes of learners' listening abilities within a microgenetic framework in an efl context. The data were collected from the classroom context with 6 students of tefl at the university of yasouj. Based on the results, it was revealed that the learners benefitted from enrichment program and mediation offered during da-mp (mediated performance) and ta-mp (transfer assessment) as they outperformed in the post-test administrations. Moreover, it was concluded that the learners did not proceed with the assessment sessions at the identical pace of development. Finally, the results suggested that **replay** was the formost frequent mediational strategy employed by the mediator.

Key words: dynamic assessment, static assessment, microgenetic framework, listening comprehension, enrichment program, mediation.

1. introduction

The turn of century is characterized with a growing enthusiasm to embark on a comprehensive critical enquiry of testing and measuring. It has been asserted that psychometric principles were considered as the cornerstones of traditional testing (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Weir, 2005). In this sense that, in the traditional psychometric view, reliability and validity are the major criteria for high quality tests. Currently, a shift of interest has been witnessed from traditional testing which is marked with valid test scores indicative of learners' abilities and knowledge to critical theories of validity that oblige test developers to scrutinize the impacts of tests on education and societies (Hamp-Lyons, 1997; McNamara, 2000; Messick, 1996; Shohamy, 1998)

From another perspective, following the lines of DA researchers, generalizing the examinees' scores taken from their independent, unassisted performance in assessment tasks to a broader domain

at the absence of identifying the breadth and depth of the underlying constructs miscalculates learners' potential. This, in turn represents a crucial hazard to the construct validity identified as 'construct under-representation' (McNamara & Roever, 2006).

Put it differently, despite being regarded as complementary, dynamic assessment (DA) opens a qualitatively different window towards educational assessment compared with the traditional static one. While the former caters for both students' current ability and learning potential through providing them with due assistance, the latter pays exclusive attention to the measurement of students' present knowledge. Dynamic assessment is not a novel concept in educational settings; rather it dates back to the 1930s. Based on Kozulin and Garb (2002), "for a variety of social, political and scientific reasons the notion of dynamic assessment received relatively little attention in the period from 1930s to the 1960s" (p. 11).

In consistence with Hidri (2014) "mediation, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), contingency and scaffolding are cornerstones in dynamic assessment" (p.2). Gibbons (2003) defines ZPD as "the cognitive gap between what learners can do unaided and what they can do in collaboration with a more competent other" (p.249). Put it differently, learners can reach their learning potential via assistance of another competent communicative partner like a teacher. As Vygotsky puts it, abilities are not doomed to everlasting stability, in the sense that they are prone to change (Liz & Gindis, 2003). What is more, Vygotsky (1962) claims that in order to be internalized and flourished, any cognitive function has to be contextualized in a social milieu. In other words, social interaction with other capable engaging partners paves the way to internalize varied functions and skills; that is why sociocultural theory hinges on the vital role of mediation in internalization. In the same vein, Nassaji and Cumming (2000) are of the idea that the dialogic nature of teaching/learning processes has to be defined in sociocultural theory within the zone of proximal development.

Moreover, amongst the four skills in foreign language learning, listening comprehension can be considered as one of the most influential ones. Despite its utmost significance, listening has not enjoyed lots of popularity in the domains of acquisition, research, teaching and assessment. As Hidri (2014) holds, listening comprehension has been mainly assessed via static assessment. This way of assessment stands in sharp contrast with the way listening comprehension is taught in language classroom in which learners are to engage in joint activities in order to make sense of the listening text. Through such an approach to testing listening comprehension, the students are supposed to work on the tests individually in the absence of any kind of scaffolding on behalf of the mediators or test-takers. According to Lantolf and Poehner (2010), in large-scale situations, static assessment proves to be more feasible and convenient. According to Hidri (2014) "in static or traditional listening comprehension tests, there is no interest allocated to the joint interactions of the learners required for approaching the learning input" (p.2).

2. Objectives of the Study

It can be observed that an insufficient number of investigations have been conducted in the area of DA and in particular germane to listening comprehension skill. To fill this gap, the present study was an attempt to compare and contrast static and dynamic assessment of listening comprehension skill. Furthermore, in this line of research, the researcher aimed to ascertain if all learners moved through their ZPDs, passing the same stages and with the same pace. Finally, endeavor was made to find out if there existed any specific form of mediation during DA-based pedagogical interventions which best nurtured the development of listening skills of EFL language learners. In other words, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What type of assessment is more effective with respect to enhancing listening comprehension skill of EFL learners, static or dynamic?
2. Do all learners move through their ZPD, passing the same stages and with the same pace?
3. Does any specific form of mediation during DA-based pedagogical interventions best nourish the development of listening skills of EFL language learners?

3. Theoretical Framework

DA was born out of both Vygotsky's (1978) learning theory and Feuerstein's (1979) theory of mediated learning experience. As Vygotsky (1978) holds, the development process wins out product with respect to its being of utmost importance. From Lantolf and Thorne's (2006) standpoint, Vygotsky asserts that "the only appropriate way of understanding and explaining forms of human mental functions is by studying the process, and not the outcome of development" (p.25). That is where the difference lies between dynamic assessment and other forms of assessment.

Furthermore, this study endorses the microgenetic method as the general analytical framework. According to Karmiloff-Smith (1993, as cited in Calais, 2008), microgenetic designs loomed up at the time of Post-Piagetian studies since those scholars highlighted the importance of the strong affinities between micro-level changes (e.g., the processes utilized by a child during experimental sessions to solve a specific problem) and macro-level changes (e.g., an individual's general cognitive system used to encode reality).

Following the lines of a number of researchers (Lavelli, Pantoja, Hsu, Messinger, & Fogel, 2005; Siegler, 2006 as quoted in Calais, 2008), microgenetic analysis coincides on the microgenesis of learning; namely, on the moment-by-moment change scrutinized during a relatively short time in a number of occasions. Microgenetic analysis application in different experimental contexts lies on two justifications: First, obtaining microgenetic details of subjects' behavior in specific contexts brings about the kind of detailed information required for apprehending change processes. Second, the ability to grasp macro-level changes of developmental time hinges upon witnessing micro-level changes of real time (Lavelli, Pantoja, Hsu, Messinger, & Fogel, 2005).

Due to the aforementioned ideas, microgenetic design proved helpful in order to obtain accurate results for the present study. Consequently, following SCT methodological premises, this study investigates the microgenetic boosting of L2 listening ability through detecting the history of learners' text comprehension and recall over a two- month period of time.

4. Statement of the Problem

This study is situated in an interdisciplinary field of applied linguistics taking care of second language acquisition, language pedagogy and sociocultural theory of cognitive development according to the Russian psychologist Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. As such, it intends to scrutinize the so-called entrenched distinction between assessment and instruction particularly with respect to listening assessment. Based on Poehner (2005), previous considerations regarding "teaching to the test", "narrowing of the curriculum", and the "power " that the tests can exert on instructional practices are indicative of a clear-cut discrepancy between teaching and assessment (Shohamy, 1998, 2001; Moss 1996; McNamara 2001; Lynch 2001).

In spite of the significance of listening proficiency with respect to foreign language learning and teaching according to Ableeva (2010), some scholars contend that listening comprehension is often regarded as a Cinderella skill of L2 instruction (e.g. Nunan, 1997; Vandergrift, 1997) and that research in this domain is "still in its infancy" (Omaggio-Hadley, 2000, p.184). Moreover, a scarcity of L2 listening studies has been highlighted in many reviews of scholarship of the subject passing the years (e.g. Ur, 1984; Rubin, 1994; Vandergrift, 2007).

The previous studies cited in the literature according to Ableeva (2010), deal with product-oriented investigations of listening comprehension which make use of quantitative research methods to measure listening ability (e.g. Rubin, 1994; Rost, 2002; Vandergrift, 1998, 2007; Field, 2008). Vandergrift (2007) claims that quantitative approaches are able to "tell us something about the product, i.e. the level of listening success, [but they] tell us nothing about the process; i.e. how listeners arrive at the right answer or why comprehension breaks down" (p. 192). Vandergrift (2007) has also underscored the necessity of investigating listening comprehension qualitatively by asserting that "listening processes are complex and they interact with different knowledge sources, human characteristics and other contextual factors in complex ways. These processes and their interactions need to be explored using in-depth qualitative methods to better understand how L2 listeners attain successful comprehension" (p.206).

Not surprisingly, with respect to the assessment of listening ability, there exists a scarcity of studies to date (e.g. Ur, 1984, Buck, 2003; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Field, 2008). Alderson and Bachman assert that "the assessment of listening abilities is one of the least understood, least developed and yet one of the most important areas of language testing and assessment" (Series Editors' Preface in Buck, 2003, p, 50). As mentioned in Ableeva (2010), in concert with the discussion of different types and purposes of L2 listening tests (e.g. achievement, placement tests), Buck (2003) as well as Alderson (2005), highlighted the pressing need of orientation change in traditional listening assessment. That is, they were after devising some listening tests with diagnostic power in order for the tests to touch upon the areas of weaknesses in learners' listening abilities and reforming the instructional practices regarding the existing gaps. Buck (2003) claims " there are currently few diagnostic tests of listening, largely because we still do not fully understand what the important sub-skills of listening are; nor are we sure what information educators need to teach listening better" (p.97).

5. Method

5.1 Research Design

In order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the findings of the study and conduct a pedagogical experiment, a mixed-method research design (Qual+Quan) (Dornyei, 2007) was adopted. Furthermore, As for the quantitative side a quasi-experimental design was adopted.

5.2 Participants

The participants of this study were six intermediate junior BA students of TEFL. They were selected out of ten students who volunteered to enroll in an English Oral Communication and Reading Comprehension private course based on Preliminary English Test (PET). After obtaining the scores, the ones situated one standard deviation below and above the mean were considered and this guaranteed their being at the intermediate level of proficiency. All participants were Persian native speakers, ranging in age from 20 to 22. Initially, each participant was supposed to complete two questionnaires on her/his L2 profile and learning history.

5.3 Materials

5.3.1 Listening materials

Many scholars have advocated the worthwhile nature of authenticity as the best classroom assessment (e.g. Archbald & Newman, 1988; Bergen, 1993; Gronlund, 2003; Meyer, 1992; Newman, Brandt & Wiggins, 1998; Wiggins, 1989a, 1989b, as cited in Frey, Schmitt, and Allen, 2012). Wiggins was an early advocate in favor of using the term ***authentic***to describe assessment with real-world application (1989). "Authentic refers to the situational or contextual realism of the proposed tasks" he has asserted (Newman, Brandt & Wiggins, 1998, p.20, as cited in Frey, Schmitt, and Allen, 2012).

Consequently, following the manners of L2 educational researchers, the oral speech of native speakers should be represented in the form of audio/video recordings as the representative of authentic texts (e.g. Reboulet, 1979, Léon, 1979, Lèbre- Peytard, 1987; Malandain, 1991; Mohan, 1986; Valdman, 1992; Kramsch, 1985, 1993; Hall, 2001; Buck, 2003, Leontiev, 2003, etc.). Given that, the present study applied a number of President Obama's speeches on Iran Accord Statements regarding the nuclear program in audio format. Furthermore, a piece of news broadcast on the same topic in audio format and a visual one on the analysis of Obama's persuasion of the congress were utilized.

5.4 Instruments

5.4.1 Preliminary English Test

The Preliminary English Test (PET) is one of the Cambridge English exams. It is mostly recommended to be used for pinpointing the intermediate level of proficiency. It consists of four sections each one devoted to one skill including reading, writing, listening and speaking. There are two versions of the PET test: PET and PET for schools.Both versions have the same type of questions. The PET for schools test has content of interest to school-age learners. Due to its characteristics of this test, the listening section has been chosen as to fulfill the requirements of the present study.

5.4.2 Reliability and Validity of the instrument
Regarding a well-established test like PET, the reliability and validity indices have been estimated to be quite satisfactory. The reliability index has been reported to be .77 and SEM has been estimated as 2.14.

5.5 Procedures
The data required for this study were collected in 5 distinct phases:

Phase 1: Firstly, PET was administered to the 10 students enrolled for the intended course. This test was applied as the researcher aimed to investigate the impacts of DA on learners' listening comprehension ability at intermediate level of proficiency.

Phase 2: The data collection procedures commenced via two instruments: two open-ended questionnaires on students' demographical information and language learning history. These questionnaires were implemented with the purpose of acquiring more vivid perceptions of the participants' language learning background and contributed to better interpretations of data attained from the assessment sessions.

Phase 3: Replicating Poehner's (2005) and Ableeva's (2010) studies, the present investigation follows a pre-test/enrichment program/post-test design. The present study composed of three TA sessions; namely, very near transfer session (TA1), near transfer session (TA2), and far transfer session (TA3).

All assessment sessions and the enrichment program (EP) sessions occurred within an eight-week period. The assessment sessions were handled on an individual basis whereas the EP sessions were carried out in a group format. The study sessions were held as follows:

Week 1 – NDA1 → DA1
Week 2 - TA1
Weeks 3 – 6 – the enrichment program (4 week period)
Week 7 – NDA 2 → DA 2
Week 8 –TA 2 → TA 3

The study initiated with a set of the pre-test assessment sessions enclosing three types of assessment: non-dynamic assessment (NDA1), dynamic assessment (DA1) and transfer assessment (TA1). During these initial assessment sessions, participants listened to three similar excerpts from audio speeches of President Barack Obama on Iran Accord Statement with regard to nuclear energy. Scrutinizing the results from the pre-test assessment sessions the participants' difficulties at the time of recalling the selected texts were revealed. Needless to say, NDA1 which was based on independent performance was far more abstruse for pinpointing problematic areas than DA1 or TA1 that engaged flexible mediator-learner interactions. Consequently, the problem areas (phonology, cultural knowledge, vocabulary or grammar) were primarily identified based on learner's listening performance in the DA1 and TA1and partially in the NDA1. The delineated problem areas were applied to organize the enrichment program which was aimed to assist the learners to get rid of these problems.

The post-test assessment sessions (NDA2, DA2, and TA2) pursued the enrichment program and terminated the quantitative part of the study. The NDA2 and DA2 sessions were identical to the pre-test assessment sessions in terms of assessment procedure and text similarity (same topic and format). The learners listened to three audio texts in which the president Barack Obama demonstrated Iran' s current position with respect to nuclear energy.

Following post-test sessions, one transfer assessment (TA3) was then administered. During TA2 participants were equipped with an authentic audio text of a different genre (a segment from a

TV-news program) whereas in the course of TA3 they listened to an authentic video text (a TV-news program) which enjoyed more variety in terms of format.

The NDA1 and NDA2 sessions were administered to assess the participants' actual level of text comprehension. In the sense that, during these sessions participants listened to the selected speech segments, recalled the texts and received no mediation while completing these tasks.

The DA1 and DA2 sessions were after evaluating the potential level of the students' L2 listening abilities. The participants listened to speech segments that, in terms of topic, were similar to NDA1 and NDA2 speech segments, were involved in teacher-learner interaction and were provided with mediation in conformity with the interactionist approach to DA. Bearing that in mind, within DA, assessment and instruction are interlinked. In addition, participants were also furnished with hints, prompts or explicit explanations when required for better text comprehension.

The Enrichment Program Procedure

The enrichment program (EP) was convened for a period of four weeks and included three tutoring sessions per week. All the EP sessions were conducted in a group format. Similar to DA and TA sessions, the EP activities involved mediated interactions with the purpose of boosting learners'L2 development. In the course of the EP sessions, the participants listened to various segments (in audio format) amidst the same texts collected for the study. Commonly, the EP sessions involved researcher-learners and learner-learner collaborative dialoguing. During these sessions the learners normally listened to two texts and then reproduced text recalls.

EP sessions concentrated mainly on the participants' problem areas recognized during the pre-test sessions. These initial sessions, more specifically the first two mediation-driven sessions (DA1 and TA1), revealed that while listening to the texts, all the learners disclosed problems with the texts' cultural references, the linguistic features related to vocabulary, grammar, and above all, phonology. Obviously, vocabulary and grammar difficulties differed from participant to participant. Regarding phonology, however, all participants experienced almost identical difficulties and therefore this L2 area was in urgent need of focused instruction.

Due to the above justification, the chief objective of the EP sessions was to train the learners with respect to the problematic areas. This assistance was established through explicit instruction, practice, the researcher's immediate feedback or comments, and group discussions.

Phase 4: All study sessions, including the Enrichment Program sessions, were video- and audio recorded (approximately 80 hours of recordings). After the data collection, all recorded data were examined, transcribed verbatim (as needed) and analyzed.

Phase 5: The recorded data were transcribed using transcription conventions adapted from Johnson (1995).

5.6 Methods of Data Analysis

With the purpose of pinpointing the microgenetic development of L2 learners' listening comprehension, pausal unit analysis (PUA) proved to suit the intended objective at most. As Bernhardt (1991) holds, PUA identifies the number of propositions, or idea units, contained in a stretch of spoken language bounded by pauses in the stream of speech, which generally coincide with a 'syntactically related unit' such as 'The old man/ was happy/ above all/ about the information/ which he obtained/ recently' (209). Although Bernhardt and others have initially utilized PUA to measure reading recall, it seemed that the procedure was also applicable for measuring the number of idea units recalled from an aural text.

In order to ascertain the number of idea units embodied in the original texts used in the study, a PUA was conducted by two TEFL instructors beside the researcher. In accordance with the procedure outlined in Johnson (1970) and Bernhardt (1991), the raters worked autonomously as they segmented

the texts into propositions. There were a number of discrepancies with respect to the number of idea units; however, consensus was achieved through discussion.

Consequently, according to Bernhardt (1991), the raters weighted each proposition identified according to their importance in their contribution to the overall content of each text. They ranked the propositions into main ideas, supporting ideas and details, according to the idea unit analysis proposed by Lee and Riley (1990; Riley and Lee 1996). Again, at this level the raters resolved the inconsistencies through discussion.

Eventually, adhering to the principles of PUA, the oral recalls of the learners were analyzed in terms of the total number of idea units (IU) appropriately generated and subsequently for the number of main IUs, supporting IUs and details recalled. Following Lee and Riley (1990) and Riley and Lee (1996), the recalls were scored against the list of IUs produced by the instructors. In line with Ableeva and Lantolf (2011), only the information absolutely asserted in the aural text was treated as a correct IU. Namely, paraphrases were permitted because the recalls were produced in Persian. Nonetheless, the information that was not embedded in the text was considered as deviations from the original text content and was not taken into account in the recall scoring.

Considering the quantitative part both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied in the study. The descriptive statistics (the mean, median, standard deviation and range) was made use of in order to account for the total number of acceptable idea units (IUs) recalled independently per each assessment session. Moreover, inferential statistics, specifically ANOVA (Repeated Measures) was utilized with the purpose of finding out the differences between pre and post-tests sessions. This statistical technique was adopted for this task due to the fact that it allows the comparison of scores of each individual over a number of occasions and investigation of whether the means of the test results are significantly different from one another or not.

Finally, through qualitative scrutiny the recorded data were transcribed verbatim and the meditational strategies applied by the mediator were recognized.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 Preliminary analysis of central tendencies and variability in the independent recalls

The descriptive statistics (the mean, median, standard deviation and range) for total number ofacceptable idea units (IUs) recalled independently per each assessment session are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for independent recall of idea units during study sessions

	Pre-test			EP	Post-test			Transfer
Sessions	ND1	DA1	TA1	EP	ND2	DA2	TA2	TA3
# of IUs per text	31	42	34	EP	29	38	22	27
Mean	3	2.5	5.166	EP	4.833	6.333	6.666	4.500
Median	3	2.5	5	EP	5	5.5	6.5	5
Range	2	1	1	EP	7	9	3	8
SD	.8944	.5477	.4082	EP	2.639	3.265	1.211	3.016

Note: N = 6; IUs = idea units; NDA = non-dynamic assessment; DA = dynamic assessment; TA = transfer assessment; EP = enrichment program; IP = independent performance, e.g. DA1-IP = the first portion of dynamic assessment during which the learners produced an independent recall.

The independent L2 listening behavior of the learners can be interpreted as follows .Addressing the first research question, the comparison of means reveals that the number of idea units recalled during each of the post-test sessions and the TA2-IP session were generally higher than those recalled

during the first pre-test (NDA1 andDA1-IP) and the final (TA3-IP) sessions. Despite that, an increase in the number of IUs recalled was already witnessed at the outset of the study, during TA1-IP, the last pre-test session. From another perspective, TA3-IP, the final session of the study, displays a decrease in the learners' production of acceptable IUs.

The comparison of the medians and the number of IUs contained in each text may illustrate that the participants as intermediate learners of English as a foreign language were confronted with a difficult listening task, i.e. oral recalls of authentic aural language. This stems from the fact that, intermediate level learners have restricted experience with authentic aural texts, which leads to their low ability to apprehend the content of such texts in details. As represented in Table 1, the highest median is 6.5 (TA2-IP), which indicates only 29 % of the TA2 text. The data attained in this study are in line with the results of the study conducted by Ableeva (2010) with English native speakers learning L2 French.

The descriptive statistics are indicative of a boost in listening ability as estimated by a proliferation in the number of IUs independently recalled from the NDA1 and DA1-IP sessions to the TA1-IP, NDA2, DA2-IP, and TA2-IP sessions. This increase is mainly attributed to mediation and the enrichment program that was adapted to the learners' ZPDs. Interestingly, the quantitative data displays non-linear pattern in mean and SD scores. This phenomenon may point to the fact that the development of listening comprehension was not linear.

6.2 Analysis of the Pre-test Sessions

The pre-test sessions (NDA1, DA1-IP and TA1-IP) were administered in the course of the first two weeks of the study. These sessions were composed of three texts similar in genre (a segment from an authentic speech), format (audio) and topic (Barack Obama-Iran Accord Statement). Figure 1 graphically reproduces the pre-test mean raw scores for the total IUs recalled by the learners.

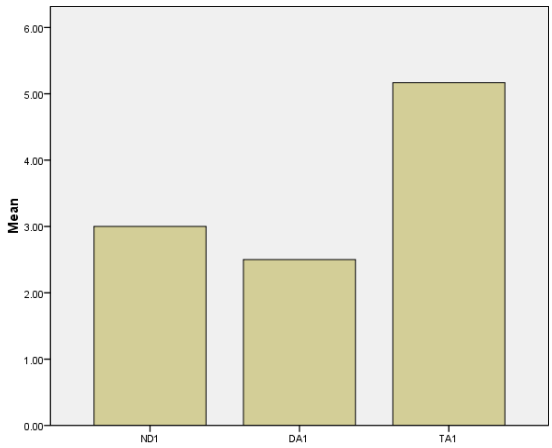

Figure 1: Mean (raw) scores for the total number of IUs produced independently during the NDA1, DA1-IP and TA1-IP sessions

As shown in Figure 1, the NDA1 and DA1-IP independent recalls were produced before providing learner with any mediation, while the TA1-IP recall took place after the first DA-based intervention (in DA1-MP). Therefore, the greater, almost doubled, number of the IUs recalled during the TA1-IP session can be allotted to mediation provided during the assisted segment of DA-MP.

6.3 Analysis of the Post-Test Sessions

The post-test sessions (NDA2, DA2-IP and TA2-IP) were conducted during weeks 7 and 8 of the study. That is, post-test sessions were carried out right after the enrichment program (EP) during which an intensive DA-based instructional intervention, fine-tuned to the learners' ZPD, was delivered. The texts which the learners listened to were similar in genre (speech) and format (audio) but not in topic. The topic of the texts for NDA2 and DA2 was the same (Iran AccordStatement), whereas the topic of TA2 text was slightly different with a similar format (audio) but a different genre (TV- news report). Afterwards, TA3 administration was carried out with a text of somehow similar topic but different genre (TV- news report) and format (video) with respect to the previous administrations.

Like pre-test sessions, during NDA2 and DA2-IP, TA2-IP and TA3-IP, the learners recalled the texts autonomously without mediation. Figure 2 graphically displays the raw mean scores of IUs recalled during the post-test stage.

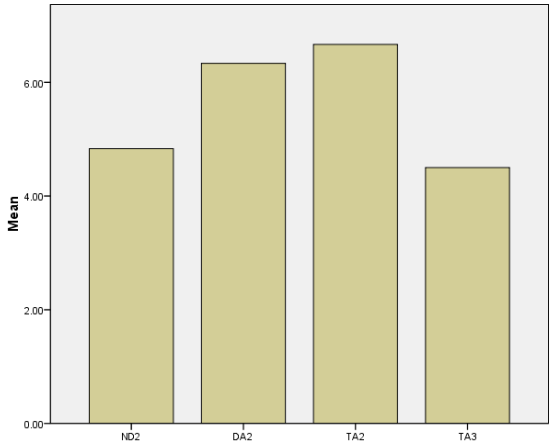

Figure 2: Mean (raw) scores for the total number of IUs produced independently during the NDA2, DA2-IP , TA2-IP and TA3-IP sessions

As indicated in Figure 2, the comparison of post-test mean scores displays an improvement in the production of IUs. Indeed, the findings from the post-test sessions confirm the results acquired in the pre-test stage and instantiates the typical tendency for a non-linear track of L2 listening microgenetic development. For example, the NDA2 mean score (4.83) seems to provide little confirmation for the positive impact of the EP instructional intervention and in fact represents a "back-sliding" as compared to the TA1-IP mean score (5.16) obtained before the EP. In spite of that, the increase in the IU production was taken up again during DA2-IP. In fact, the DA2-IP mean score (6.33) represents a substantial increase in the IUs recalled and TA2-IP mean score (6.66) represents the highest mean score obtained throughout all seven assessment sessions. In addition to mediation provided during the enrichment program, extra intervention during DA2 administration may have attributed to improved performance.

The mean score of TA2 (6.66) shows a slight increase in performance, which can be justified by the mediation provided during the DA2 administration. This, in fact confirms the effect of DA interventions and the enrichment program. Namely, the learners could prolong their independent performance over different administrations.

Needless to say; the means obtained during the post-test sessions are higher than those of the pre-test. Significantly, the fundamental factor which proliferated IU production may be accredited to the impacts of mediation offered throughout the enrichment program and mediated portions of the assessment sessions.

6.4 The Final Transfer Session

The final transfer session (TA3-IP) was conducted at the end of the study (the eighth week). This transfer task was devised to ascertain how far the learners could elongate their L2 listening ability elevated by DA-based interventions. In so doing, TA3 session relied on a more complex text. That is, TA3 was designed as a far transfer and included a text different in format (video) and in genre (TV-news report) but similar in topic as compared to the pre-test and post-test texts.

The listening performance of the learners during the final transfer assessment displays a new regression in their independent listening performance leading to the decrease of the IUs recalled. It can be concluded that the change of genre and format account for this abatement. The regression in listening performance can be absolved not only to diverse genre and format, but also to one of learners' zero IU production. Moreover, this decline also denotes the asymmetrical nature of L2 listening development.

The low pre-test SD scores reveal that learners functioned more harmoniously during the first phase of the study. Despite that, a slight increase in SDs is witnessed in TA1-IP. This increase may be ascribed to the learners' reaction to mediation provided during DA1-MP. In opposition, the larger post-test SDs and ranges illustrate the increment of variation in learners' SD scores and a decline in their consistency.

Despite the fact that the post-test means denote some progress in listening performance, which is most probably as a result of the overall influence of the enrichment program and DA interventions, the larger post-test SD dispersion shows that during the second stage of the study the learners were obviously heterogeneous with respect to comprehending authentic spoken texts. This was crystal clear during the final transfer session.

As was shown, the SD and range score of TA3-IP are larger than those of the previous sessions. This SD score certainly exhibits very little comparability and high variation amongst the learners which can be justified because of the change of genre and format of the TA3 text. This high variation also clarifies the discrepancies in learners' individual listening progress, in the sense that some of them profited more from the mediation provided throughout the study than others.

6.5 Inferential Statistics with Respect to L2 Listening Development

ANOVA (Repeated Measures) was utilized to ascertain the extent to which the learners enhanced their listening ability as the result of DA-interventions and the enrichment program. The two assessment conditions including NDA1 and DA1 are labeled as Pre-Mediated Condition (PMC). Consequently, the significance of the mean differences for the following three combinations was scrutinized:

1. Mean difference between PMC (NDA1-IP) and very near transfer (TA1-IP).
2. Mean difference between PMC (NDA1 -IP) and near transfer (TA2-IP).
3. Mean difference between PMC (NDA1 -IP) and far transfer (TA3-IP).

Needless to say, following the statistical principles put forward (Brown, 1998; Dornyei, 2007; Pallant, 2007; Mackey and Gass, 2007; Hatch and Farhady, 2007; Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen ,2010), since 3 tests were performed, it was compulsory to resort to a Bonferroni correction in order to guarantee against any possible misinterpretations.

It is also worth mentioning that according to rules of statistics (Brown, 1998; Dornyei, 2007; Pallant, 2007; Mackey and Gass, 2007; Hatch and Farhady, 2007; Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen ,2010), the following comparisons will be only valid if the p value obtained from **Mauchly's Test of Sphericity** is smaller than .05. Although ANOVA (Repeated Measures) is a parametric test, it can be applied when the sample size is small. This way meeting normality assumption does not matter as much as p value of **Mauchly's Test of Sphericity** does. In Tables2, 3, and 4, the results of the ANOVA (Repeated Measures) are displayed:

Table 2

Tests of within-subjects effects

Measure:MEASURE_1

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Sphericity Assumed	41.667	3	13.889	5.230	.011
	Sphericity Assumed	41.667	1.364	30.550	5.230	.050
	Huynh-Feldt	41.667	1.701	24.502	5.230	.037
	Lower-bound	41.667	1.000	41.667	5.230	.071
Error(factor1)	Sphericity Assumed	39.833	15	2.656		
	Greenhouse-Geisser	39.833	6.819	5.841		
	Huynh-Feldt	39.833	8.503	4.685		
	Lower-bound	39.833	5.000	7.967		

As displayed in the above table, p= .011 which is significant at p<.05. Needless to say, ANOVA (Repeated Measures) can be run.

Table 3

Post -hoc comparisons from one-way repeated measures effects ANOVA

Pairwise Comparisons

Measure:MEASURE_1

(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[a]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[a]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ND1	TA1	-2.167*	.477	.037	-4.180	-.153
	TA2	-3.667*	.494	.004	-5.753	-1.581
	TA3	-1.500	1.088	1.000	-6.090	3.090
TA1	ND1	2.167*	.477	.037	.153	4.180
	TA2	-1.500	.500	.181	-3.610	.610
	TA3	.667	1.358	1.000	-5.064	6.397
TA2	ND1	3.667*	.494	.004	1.581	5.753
	TA1	1.500	.500	.181	-.610	3.610
	TA3	2.167	1.249	.861	-3.105	7.438
TA3	ND1	1.500	1.088	1.000	-3.090	6.090
	TA1	-.667	1.358	1.000	-6.397	5.064
	TA2	-2.167	1.249	.861	-7.438	3.105

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Pairwise Comparisons

Measure:MEASURE_1

(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[a]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[a]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
ND1	TA1	-2.167*	.477	.037	-4.180	-.153
	TA2	-3.667*	.494	.004	-5.753	-1.581
	TA3	-1.500	1.088	1.000	-6.090	3.090
TA1	ND1	2.167*	.477	.037	.153	4.180
	TA2	-1.500	.500	.181	-3.610	.610
	TA3	.667	1.358	1.000	-5.064	6.397
TA2	ND1	3.667*	.494	.004	1.581	5.753
	TA1	1.500	.500	.181	-.610	3.610
	TA3	2.167	1.249	.861	-3.105	7.438
TA3	ND1	1.500	1.088	1.000	-3.090	6.090
	TA1	-.667	1.358	1.000	-6.397	5.064
	TA2	-2.167	1.249	.861	-7.438	3.105

Based on estimated marginal means

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Addressing the first research question, with regard to the efficiency of dynamic vs. static (non-dynamic) assessment of listening comprehension, a number of comparisons were made all instantiating the superiority of dynamic assessment in this case. There was a statistically significant increase in the number of IUs from NDA1 (M=3, SD=.89) to TA1 (M=5.16, SD=.40), at p<.05 level (Sig. value= .037). Namely, this result confirms that, on average, an improvement on independent listening performance may be attributed to the administration of DA-based intervention during DA1-MP, which was the second portion of DA1 session.

With the purpose of pinpointing the mean difference between NDA1-IP and TA2-IP , it can be observed that there is a statistically significant difference between NDA1-IP (M=3, SD=.89) and TA2-IP (M=6.66, SD=1.21), at p<.05 (Sig. value= .004). Therefore, it can be concluded that an average improvement of independent listening performance occurred after the administration of the enrichment program and three DA interventions offered during DA1-MP, DA2-MP and TA1-MP.

It should be also remembered that TA2 was designed as near transfer assessment and was based on a text similar in format (audio) but different in genre (TV-news report) and slightly different in topic. The mean difference obtained for the TA2-IP and NDA1 -IP combination suggests that on average the learners cope with the very near transfer (TA1) and near transfer (TA2) tasks, grounded in the same format, and slightly different in genre and topic.

Finally, hinging upon the results, it was revealed that the mean difference between NDA1-IP and TA3-IP was not statistically significant NDA1-IP (M=3, SD=.89) and TA3-IP (M=4.5, SD=3.01), at p<.05 (Sig. value= 1.000). Put it another way, it can be concluded that no improvement of independent listening performance occurred during the administration of far transfer assessment due to the difference in genre and format at the same time.

Obviously, the result of ANOVA (Repeated Measures) for TA3-IP and NDA1 -IP can be justified in light of the fact that this transfer task was beyond the learners' current listening potential (i.e., their ZPD). Nonetheless, the results obtained during TA3-IP are in accordance with the

observation made by Brown (1990): "one cannot study learning and transfer in a vacuum, [and] transfer propensity will be strongly influenced by that which is to be learned" (p.128). As the learners in this study listened mostly to segments of audio speeches (from the NDA1 to TA2 sessions), they could muster the command to comprehend this type of texts. This observation is confirmed by the results of ANOVA (Repeated Measures) for the TA1-IP – NDA1 -IP and the TA2-IP – NDA1 -IP combinations and partially by the results for the TA3-IP – NDA1 -IP combination (except for one learner who did not produce any acceptable IUs). Because the TA3-IP involved a new type of genre and format, but somehow similar topic, the level of learners' listening microgenetic development did not allow them to understand this text independently and led to an average poor IU production in comparison with the other transfer sessions; namely TA1-IP and TA2-IP.This finding is in line with the results of a number of studies which have found the interactionist DA to be quite compelling in enhancing EFL learners' skills in general and listening skill in particular (e.g., Ableeva, 2010; Shabani, 2014; Wang, 2015; Hashemi Shahraki , Ketabi & Barati, 2015; Birjandi & Azad, 2014; Jarrahzade & Tabatabaei, 2014; Alavi, Shabani & Kaivanpanah, 2012).

Addressing the second research question, after examining the SDs, it was revealed that the number of IUs recalled during the post-test sessions and the two final transfer sessions enjoy more variation as compared with the pre-test IUs. The apparent diversity in learners' performances throughout the study sessions may represent that some learners profited more from DA interventions and the enrichment program provided during the study. The variation of the ranges also reveals that generally the post-test, TA2-IP and TA3-IP range scores are more dispersed than those of the pre-test. The alternation in SDs and ranges following enrichment demonstrates that some learners enjoyed the propensity to enhance their listening skills more than others. In other words, they do not move through their ZPDs, passing the same stages and with the same pace.The findings were in line with Vygotsky (1978), Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995), Poehner (2009), Ableeva (2010), and Bavali, Yamini, and Sadighi (2011).

6.6 Investigating Mediator's Strategies towards Assessment within ZPD Framework

The mediator applied the following strategies in order to fulfill a couple of goals. That is, through employing such strategies, the mediator could pinpoint the areas of difficulty and causes of learners' poor performances. Consequently, the learners' listening abilities in conjunction with their general developments were enforced. Figure 3 distills the outlined mediational strategies.

1. Accepting Response
2 Structuring the text
3. Replay of a passage; Replay of a segment (from a passage); Replay of a detail (from a segment)
4. Asking the Words
5. Identifying a Problem Area
6. Metalinguistic Clues
7. Offering a Choice
8. Translation
9. Providing a Correct Pattern
10. Providing an Explicit Explanation

Figure 3: Typology of mediator's strategies occurring during Dynamic Assessment of L2 listening comprehension (Adopted from Ableeva 2010, p. 260).

As put forward earlier, this study complies with the interactionist approach to DA that appreciates mediation detected according to the mediated dialoguing between the teacher and the learner in the course of conducting dynamic assessments. Having adopted the aforementioned mediator's strategies classified hierarchically from implicit to explicit, the mediator didn't pre-

specify their utilization a priori. In due time, based on the demands of the learners and the quality of the interactions each one could be used.

It is worth mentioning that such strategies (adopted from Ableeva, 2010), were applied now and then during each dynamically conducted assessment and their use authenticated to be influential in enhancing learners' listening ability. In spite of the fact that the same strategies were practiced with every learner, they were not employed in exactly the same order. Indeed, the qualitative microgenetic analysis reveals that the identified strategies loomed up in response to individualdifficulties endured by the learners during mediated listening performance.

Table 4 displays the frequency of these strategies across different assessment sessions.

Table 4. Mediator's moves within the learners' ZPD (during DA1-MP, DA2-MP and TA3-MP).

Category	Zahra DA1 DA2 TA3	Ayda DA1 DA2 TA3	Sarah DA1 DA2 TA3	Reza DA1 DA2 TA3	Hamzeh DA1 DA2 TA3	Mohammad DA1 DA2 TA3
Accepting Response	22 8 17	20 10 21	20 14 18	25 7 27	23 13 16	22 12 21
Replay	**22 17 29**	**21 7 36**	**27 13 24**	**28 9 4 8**	**33 22 42**	**30 27 39**
Structuring the text	2 0 1	2 0 0	2 1 1	2 2 2	2 2 2	2 0 2
Asking the words	1 0 1	1 0 1	1 0 0	1 0 0	2 1 0	4 2 5
Identifying problem area	3 3 1	1 1 3	5 2 7	8 0 2	5 2 3	8 5 4
Metalinguistic Clues	7 0 1	3 1 2	6 0 2	5 1 2	6 3 0	6 1 6
Offering a Choice	6 0 5	7 0 5	2 0 4	6 2 5	5 1 1	1 3 2
Translation	12 3 3	8 1 3	7 0 3	10 2 5	10 2 3	9 2 6
Providing a corr.pattern	6 1 3	15 3 3	10 5 8	7 1 4	8 3 10	18 6 10
Providing Explanation	1 0 1	8 2 4	8 1 3	5 3 1	6 4 3	12 7 6
Total med. Strategies	82 32 62	86 25 78	83 22 70	97 27 69	100 53 80	110 65 101

Addressing the third research question, based on Table 4, the most frequent strategy practiced by the mediator throughout the assessment sessions was **Replay**. That is, this medational strategy has indicated to be the most fruitful in enhancing learners' listening skill.Surprisingly, this finding is in line with that of Ableeva (2010) with respect to the frequency of meditational strategies exercised by the mediator.

In what follows, three of the most frequent ones, beside replay, with their associated protocols are delineated.

Accepting response

The researcher (R) practiced this mediational strategy to ascertain the aptness of idea units (IU) recalled by the learner in the course of MP-DA and MP-TA sessions. Mainly, R offered this strategy to exhort the learners whenever they recalled or responded appropriately. The excerpt below is taken from Zahra's (Z) TA1-MP session and concentrates on Zahra's recall of the following segment from the TA1 text:

Extract 1 (from the TA1 text):

The speaker (President Obama) said:

Iran cannot use its next generation centrifuges which are used for enriching uranium…Iran cannot install or start up …new centrifuges… and its production of centrifuges … will be limited…

During her TA1-IP, after listening twice to the text, Zahra recalled the above extract as follows:

Iran cannot use or start centrifuges ...and Iran cannot use plutonium reactor...

In Protocol 1, Zahra appears to produce an acceptable recall of the segment in question (line 1) following two additional listenings that occurred during the mediated portion of her TA1.

Protocol 1

1. Z. Iran cannot use its next generation centrifuges…
2. R. Very good...that's…ok
3. Z. Yeah…I remember he spoke about next generation centrifuges…
4. R. Yes next generation centrifuges but also we need to figure out if he refers
5.to Uranium or Plutonium…
6. Z. right…

Protocol 1 is indicative of the mediator's stating the appropriateness of the learner's response (**line 2**). In addition, R displays the desirability of Zahra's recall twice: in line 2 she offers inspiration and, in line 4, she highlights the significance of this part as it encompasses the speaker's mentioning of a clue that can contribute to the comprehension of the entire text. Furthermore, Protocol 1 clarifies the effectiveness of replay as a type of mediation.

Replay

By and large, this mediational strategy was identified as R's invitation to re-listen to a text, or a segment of it. It was applied in cases when the learners produced poor independent recalls and R had to replay portions of a text in order to speed up text comprehension. This strategy was practiced when it was evident to R that the learners' text comprehension was hindered by recognition of certain lexical items or grammatical structures included in a particular passage. Protocol 4 from Mohammad's (M) TA1-MP illuminates this strategy.

Extract 3 (from the TA1 text):

The speaker said:

Iran will halt work at its…plutonium reactor…and new inspections will provide extensive access to Iran's nuclear facilities… and allow the international community to verify…whether Iran is keeping its commitments…

Protocol 4

Listening to the segment from the passage of the TA1 text

1. R. so… (rising intonation)
2. M. Iran will halt work at its Plutonium reactor…

3. uh…that …new inspections will provide extensive access to Iran's nuclear facilities
4. to verify…uh …whether Iran is keeping its commitments…
5. R. so…Iran is keeping what= (rising intonation)
6. M = commitments =
7. R. = absolutely...

According to Protocol 4, the less implicit strategy, i.e. replay of a segment, exercised by R provokes Mohammad's proper recall of the segment that he in fact produces on his own, with no assistance on the part of R. Mohammad's recall in lines 2-4 offers confirmation that with regard to lexis, the segment is available to him and he could produce it properly. This way, the identification of notable words was promoted by less implicit mediation in the form of segment replay.

Translation

This mediational technique proved to be helpful when R discovered that the learner did not know a particular lexical item or grammatical structure. This strategy cropped up solely when other, less explicit forms of mediation, did not work. The following protocol provides an example of R's translation of a grammar structure for the learner which has been taken from Ayda' (A) DA1-MP:

Protocol 10

1. A. I don't know the word "***secure*"...**
2. R. you don't know?... are you sure?... what is the word ***"amniyat"***in English?
3. A. security...
4. R. right security... (pause)
5. A. [no response]
6. R. …and when you want to say ***"imen"***= (rising intonation)
7. A. = is it **secur**e?
8. R. exactly...

In line 1 Ayda arranges for indication that she hears correctly the word **secure** uttered by the speaker and explicitly claims that this item is not included in her vocabulary repertoire. Prior to translating the word **secure** for Ayda, R asks her if she knows the word **security**, with the prediction that this governing question would expedite Ayda's guessing the word meaning autonomously (line 2). R awaits her translation (line 4), and when she does not respond, R switches to a more explicit clue and offers a translation implied in a semi-question (line 6). Forthwith, Ayda properly translates it but R's rising intonation in line 7 elucidates that she still depends on R's support to ensure that she is doing well and R responds emphatically to her question (line 8).

Providing a correct pattern

In case other forms of mediation were not helpful, this mediational strategy was typically employed to help learners amend their text comprehension. The provision of a correct pattern was the most explicit mediational technique as it was practiced when the learners were absolutely unequipped to figure out aural forms of familiar or unfamiliar words and R had to provide them with a correct pattern. In terms of unknown words, R usually wrote down the words for the learners so that they formed correct graphic and aural representations of the lexical item in question. Consider the following extract from Zahra's first DA session.

Protocol 11

1. Z.: ok... I suppose he was talking about building a nuclear open?...
2. R.: ... open? ... and do you know the word **weapon**?
3. Z.: ... weapon?
4. R.: (uses a shooting gesture)
5. Z.: ... umm!... machine or gun? ... is it machine or gun? =
6. R.: = gun (R writes down the word **weapon** for Zahra)

In this example R was obliged to inclement the level of explicitness of her mediation in order to modify a faulty form of the word **weapon** produced by Zahra in the first line. Positively, as observed in protocol 11, Zahra experienced a two-sided difficulty in terms of the word **weapon** (gun): she was not prepared to decode this word properly (line 1) and also, due to her questions in line 5, this word was not present in her vocabulary knowledge repertoire.

According to the analysis displayed above, **Replay**was the most recurring strategy practiced by the mediator throughout all DA- based portions of sessions. Surprisingly, this finding is in line with that of Ableeva (2010) with respect to the frequency of meditational strategies exercised by the mediator.

In the same vein, having scrutinized Table 4-1, some other pieces of information loomed up. As is clear, the number of meditational strategies demanded by the learners has undergone a noticeable decrease from DA1-MP to DA2-MP. This phenomenon can be duly justified by the fact that from pre- test to post-test, learners' listening abilities have improved. Consequently, their reliance on the mediator has decreased and they were able to deal with the texts more autonomously. Despite that, as for the TA3-MP assessment session, an increase in the number of strategies has occurred. This can also be validated due to the difference in genre (TV-news report) and format (video) of TA3 texts from previous ones.

7. Conclusion

This article accommodated a concentrated scrutiny of L2 listening processes and development amongst intermediate university learners of TEFL. For this to occur, the study faithfully exercised the tenets of DA, founded on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development. In so doing, the learners were involved in a learning activity oriented towards their ZPD. As put forth previously, the learners' ability to understand authentic spoken English independently was quite restricted. In spite of that, when assisted through appropriate mediational interactions, the learners represented their hidden potential and were able to obtain a superior understanding of the texts. Moreover, according to the findings of the study, it was revealed that all learners did not move through their ZPDs passing the same stages and with the same pace. Finally, the results suggested that Replay was the most prevalent mediational strategy employed by the mediator.

Consequently, taking the tenets of DA into consideration would prove to be beneficial for EFL teachers and learners alike. That is, process-oriented assessment and the unification of assessment and instruction can lead to both diagnosing the learners' weaknesses and enhancing their learning potential.

In a similar vein, from a pedagogical viewpoint, the study accommodates additional intuition into the significance of the role of dynamic assessment of listening comprehension, which might be regarded as essential and practical for language practitioners and might provoke some to redesign traditional modes of assessment in favor of current tendencies. Nonetheless, the fact that the L2 learners benefited from the ZPD-based social mediations which result in their development of listening comprehension may be considered as some sort of motivator for the formation of a theoretical rationale for L2 curriculum development, syllabus design and methodology on the one hand and assessment procedures on the other.

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THE EFFECT OF STRUCTURE-BASED INTERACTIVE TASK ON IRANIAN PRE-INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE OF GRAMMAR

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Abstract
The present study aims at investigating the effect of structure-bsed interactive task on iranian pre-intermediate efl learners kowlefge of grammr. To tht end, 40 pre-intermedite students were selected out of a pool of 90 students based on their result of opt test. They were divided into experimental and control group, each group contained 20 learners. Then a test of grammar which was taken from opt test was administered to both groups s pre- test to take their initial knowledge of grammar. The experimental group received treatment in structure based interactive task in twenty sessions. The control group received no treatment. Finally both groups sat for the post-test for grammar. An independent sample t-test was also conducted to see if males and females had different performances. The results were computed and analyzed through spss (ancova) and it was explored that structure-based interactive task had a positive effect on iranian efl learners knowledge of grammar. The results also indicated that there ws no significnt difference between males and females in this reserch.

Keywords: task, grammar, interctional feedback, direct feedback.

INTRODUCTION
The term task can mean different things to different people (Leaver and Willis, 2004). Just as there are weak and strong forms of communicative language teaching, there are different definitions of the word 'task'. Most of the definitions include mention of achieving or arriving at an outcome, or attaining an objective. The definitions also show that tasks are meaning focused. In other words, learners are free to use whateverlanguage they want in order to convey their intended meaning and to sustain the interaction. Prabhu (1987:2) defines a task as "an activity which requires learners to arrive to an outcome from given information through some processes of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process was regarded as a task". Nunan (1999: 10)

defines task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form". Willis (1996:53) asserted that task is a goal-oriented activity with real outcome; this implies that a task is "a goal- oriented activity which learners use language to achieve a real outcome. In other words, learners use whatever target language resources they have in order to solve aproblem, do a puzzle, play a game or share and compare experiences". Skehan (1998:95) says that task is "an activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some communication problem to solve; there is some sort of relationship to comparable real world activities; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome".

Ellis (2003:16) mentioned six criterial features of a task:

- A task is a workplan. A task constitutes a plan for learning activity.

This workplan takes the form of teaching materials. The actual activity that results may or may not match that intended by the plan. A task involves a primary focus on meaning. A task seeks to engage learners in using language pragmatically rather than displaying language. It seeks to develop L2 proficiency through communicating. Thus, it requires a primary focus on meaning.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Grammar is fundamental to language. Without grammar, language does not exist. However, noting in the field of language pedagogy has been as controversial as the role of grammar teaching. The controversy has always been whether grammar should be taught explicitly through a formal presentation of grammatical rules or implicitly through natural exposure to meaningful language use. Recent research in second language acquisition (SLA) , however, has led to a reconsideration of the importance of grammar. Many researchers now believe that grammar teaching should not be ignored in second language classrooms. Interactional feedback is one of technique to draw learners' attention to grammatical forms in communicative contexts. Interactional feedback is a reaction which reveals during negotiation.

Significance of the study

The issue of grammar is being studied with increasing frequency in recent years because of the influence it can have on second language learning, performance and ultimate achievement. This study will be of considerable interest to language educators and students because of the potentially negative impact of first language interference with the foreign language structure.

This study is also significant with respect to its implication for foreign or second language pedagogy. The investigation of the factors that arise while learning to communicate in the target language will hopefully broaden the insight into the issue of language learning and will help language teachers in making the classroom environment more fruitful.

Review of the Related Literature

Task-based language teaching is not a new concept. Prabhu (1987) used a task-based approach with secondary school classes in Bengalore, India, in his Communicational Teaching Project, beginning in 1979. American Government Language institutions switched to task-based instruction (TBI) for foreign language for adults in the early 1980s. Other teachers and institutions throughout the world are following the TBLT (Shehadeh, 2005). Why, then, are teachers making this change to TBLT?

Shehadeh believed that the answer to this question is often because they realize that most language learners taught through methods that emphasize mastery of grammar do not achieve an acceptable level of competency in the target language. Language learning in the classroom is usually based upon the belief that language is a system of wordings governed by a grammar and a lexicon. However, it is more productive to see language primarily as a meaning system. Halliday's (1975) description of his young son's acquisition of his first language is significantly entitled 'learning how to mean'.

Apart from highly gifted and motivated students, most learners working within a structure-based approach fail to attain a useable level of fluency and proficiency in second language (L2) even after years of instruction (Skehan,1996). In India, Prabhu (1987: 11) notes that the structure-based courses required "a good deal of remedial re-teaching which, in turn, led to similarly unsatisfactory results".

American government language institutions found that with task-based instruction and authentic material, learners made far more rapid progress and were able to use their new foreign language in real-world circumstances with a reasonable level of efficiency after quite short courses. They were able to operate an effective meaning system, i.e. to express what they wanted to say, even though their grammar and lexicon were often far from perfect (Lever and Willis, 2004). Ellis (2003) asserted that the design of a task-based lesson involves consideration of the stages or components of a lesson that has a task as its principal component. Various designs have been proposed (for example, Prabhu,

1987; Skehan 1996). However, they all have in common three principal phases, these phases reflected the chronology of a task-based lesson. Thus the first phase is 'pre-task' and concerns the various activities that teachers and students can undertake before they start the task; such as whether students are given time to plan the performance of the task. The

second phase, the 'during task' phase, centers on the task itself and affords various instructional options, including whether students are required to operate under time pressure. The final 'post-task' phase involves procedures for following up on the task performance.

Cathcart in Chaudrun (1988: 98) was one of the language oriented researchers who performed TBLT with empirical examinations. After observing eight Spanish-speaking kindergarten children in various activities for a year, Cathcart pointed out that "an increase in utterance length or complexity was found in those peer-peer interactions". The results of a study conducted by Rulon and McCreary's (1986), which compared between teacher-fronted and group work negotiation for meaning also endorse the reliability of TBLT. The point they made was that through group work focused on meaning, interaction is promoted, and, eventually L2 learning ensues. Fotos and Ellis (1991) demonstrated that the adoption of "task-based language teaching" to communicate about grammar is conducive to both learning and communication. They also found that communicative grammar-based tasks helped Japanese college-level EFL learners increase their knowledge of difficult grammatical rules.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted with 40 Iranian EFL students who are studying English at different institutes in Iran. Researcher tried to have the same number of female and male participants in both experimental and control group.

Data Analysis Procedure

The results of post test were analyzed for further discussion via ANCOVA on the scores obtained from experimental and control group to see whether teaching of structure based interactive task had any effects on EFL learners' knowledge of grammar.

Results

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of OPT (Oxford Placement Test) test. The results are shown in Table (4-1).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

N	Mean	SD
90	32	10.32

This table shows the result obtained from the proficiency test, OPT. The mean and standard deviation are presented.

Table (4-2) shows the number of students who took the pre-test and post-test. It should be mentioned that no one excluded.

Table 2: Number of Students Participated in Pre-test and Post-test Cases

	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Pre-test*group	40	100%	0	0%	40	100%
Post-test*group	40	100%	0	0%	40	100%

Forty participants were selected for this study. They were divided into two groups, experimental and control.

The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in table (4-3).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-test and Post-test

Group	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental	39.9	48.4
N	20	20
SD	4.8	4.7
Control Mean	38.45	48.1
N	20	20
SD	5.64	5.2
Total Mean	39.15	43.25
N	40	40
SD	5.216	7.121

Interpretive Statistics

The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in the table 3. The mean and standard deviation of each group are included.

In this study , in order to investigate the research hypothesis "structure-based interactive task has no statistically significant effects on Iranian EFL learner's knowledge of grammar", the differences between mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the control and the experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA.

Table 5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type lll Sum of Square	df	Mean Score	F	Sig
Corrected Model	**1879.82**	**3**	**626.61**	**230.93.00**	
Group (a)	**17.86**	**1**	**17.86**	**6.6**	**.015**
Pretest (b)	**802.97**	**1**	**802**	**295.95**	**.00**
Group*pretest(a*b)	**.41**	**1**	**.41**	**.15**	**.7**
Error	**97.68**	**36**	**2.71**		
Total	**46200**	**40**			

As table (4.6) shows, between –subjects effect (a*b) is not significant (F=0.15 , Sig=0.7). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between –subjects effect of post-test and group to show whether mean scores of two groups are the same or not. The results of this analysis are demonstrated in table (6).

Table 4.5: Test of between – subjects' effects

Source	Type III sum of	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Corrected model	1879.82	3	626.61	230.95	.00
Group (a)	17.86	1	17.86	6.6	.015
Pretest (b)	802.94	1	802.97	95.95	.00
Group pretest (a b)	.41	1	.41	.15	.7
Error	97.68	36	2.71		
Total	46200	40			

As table 5 shows, between subjects effect (a, b) is not significant (F=0.15, sig=0.7). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between – subjects effect of post-test and the group to show whether mean scores of the two groups are the same or not. The result of this analysis is demonstrated in table 6.

Table 4.6: Mean of grammar

Source	Post-test		mean	
	M	SD	M	SE
Experimental	37.44.7		38.77	.37
Control	27.15.11		29.72.37	

Table 6 shows the means of dependent variable of grammar. The data demonstrate that the means of the experimental group are upper than the control group. Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of grammar in the experimental and the control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in table 4-7.

Table 4.7: Sum of Analysis of Covariance Source Type III Sum of Squares

Source Type III	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Score	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1879.415	2	939.71	354.48	.00	.95
Pre-test	818.52	1	818.52	308.76	.00	.89
Group	805.48	1	805.48	303.84	.00	.89

Error	98.08	37	2.65
Total	46200	40	

As it can be seen, the corrected model (F = .00, F = 354.48) is statistically significant. The results (F = 303.84, sig = .00, Eta = .89) show that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is a significant difference between the experimental and the control group.

Conclusion

The term task can mean different things to different people (Leaver and Willis, 2004). Just as there are weak and strong forms of communicative language teaching, there are different definitions of the word 'task'. Most of the definitions include mention of achieving or arriving at an outcome, or attaining an objective. The definitions also show that tasks are meaning focused. In other words, learners are free to use whatever language they want in order to convey their intended meaning and to sustain the interaction. Prabhu (1987:2) defines a task as "an activity which requires learners to arrive to an outcome from given information through some processes of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process was regarded as a task". Nunan (1999: 10) defines task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form". Willis (1996:53) asserted that task is a goal-oriented activity with real outcome; this implies that a task is "a goal- oriented activity which learners use language to achieve a real outcome. In other words, learners use whatever target language resources they have in order to solve a problem, do a puzzle, play a game or share and compare experiences". Skehan (1998:95) says that task is "an activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some communication problem to solve; there is some sort of relationship to comparable real world activities; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome".

Several studies have proved the effectiveness of using tasks in teaching Al Nashash (2006) Lochana and Deb (2006) Muller (2005). Al Nashash (2006) investigated the effect of a task-based program for teaching English language productive skills on the development of first-year secondary grade female students' oral and written skills at a secondary school in Amman. The results showed that task-based language teaching through the designed program based on the procedures and principles of TBLT improved the learning of communicative speaking and writing skills somewhat better than the conventional method of teaching. Based on the information in table 4-7, the findings of the present study also support the previous studies. The results (F = 303.84, sig = .00, Eta = .89) show that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is a significant difference between the experimental and the control group.

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FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION AND LEXICAL DEVELOPMENT OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract

The present study provided an investigation into the impact of proactive intensive form-focused instruction on the lexical development of intermediate and advanced Iranian EFL learners. More precisely, the purpose of this study was to uncover (a) whether the lexical knowledge of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels improved after being exposed to proactive intensive FFI (b) whether the lexical knowledge of the learners at the two proficiency levels improved to an equal extent or not, and (c) whether an interaction effect affecting the lexical development of the learners was observed between the FFI and the proficiency level. To this end, a total aggregate of 119 intermediate and advanced EFL learners at Sadr Institute of Higher Education in Isfahan, Iran were selected to serve as the participants of the study. To ensure the homogeneity of the participants, a placement test was given to them. The learners at each proficiency level were placed in a control group and an experimental one and they then took a vocabulary pretest. Thereafter, the learners in the experimental groups were experienced proactive intensive FFI (metalinguistic explanations along with repeated form-focused tasks and explicit corrective feedback on form) in their free discussion classes, whereas those in the control groups were taught without any recourse to FFI. After instructional period which lasted for 9 sessions, the learners were asked to take a posttest. Statistical tests including paired sample *t* test and two-way ANOVA were deployed for the purpose of data analysis and the ensuing results were found: (a) learners in the intermediate and advanced groups both took full advantage of the treatment and managed to significantly improve their lexical knowledge (b) proactive intensive FFI proved to be of a roughly equal efficiency as far the intermediate and advanced learners' lexical knowledge, (c) learners' lexical knowledge was susceptible to FFI; however, level of proficiency and the interaction effect of the two independent variables could not impact the participants' lexical knowledge. The study bears implications for EFL practitioners as presented at the end of the paper.

Key Words: Lexical Development , Proactive Intensive FFI, Iranian EFL Learners, Proficiency Level

1. Introduction

Lexical items are purported to be the building blocks of any language. L2 learners start learning their second language by assimilating vocabulary items. As such, they do not hesitate to recognize the significance of lexical items to which they are exposed. As stated by Meara (1980), L2 learners concede that they encounter immense difficulty with vocabulary even when progressing from the incipient stage of second language acquisition to an advanced grade in learning a second language. Language practitioners, likewise, are certain about the preponderance of vocabulary. In his study, Macaro (2003) has pinpointed that language teachers see vocabulary as a topic which calls for research to enhance the pedagogy and practice of learning vocabulary in their classrooms. Consequently, it may be hard to escape the contention that the role of learning L2 vocabulary is urgently recognized and in turn implications for teaching from substantial research are in great demand.

In this study, the development of vocabulary was examined within the pedagogical framework of form-focused instruction (FFI). It is an approach to achieving the integration of content and language by calling attention to language form in meaning-focused language teaching (Spada, 1997). A central principle underlying FFI is the claim that noticing language forms is crucial for language acquisition (Schmidt, 1990). In practice, FFI is implemented via a wide range of pedagogical options from the very implicit, with unobtrusive exposure to language form, to very explicit instruction encompassing metalinguistic explanations of grammar or vocabulary. The uniting feature is that both are aimed at integrating form with meaning. Several publications have recently appeared documenting the overall efficacy of FFI and it is widely admitted that instruction forging a link between form and meaning in instructed SLA is more advantageous than instruction that solely underlining meaning (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Lyster, 2007; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Spada, 1997; Swain, 2000). Nevertheless, findings have been contradictory and a plethora of questions pertinent to FFI have merited attention. These include (though are not limited to) what types of FFI are most conducive to learning vocabulary; which linguistic forms can be learned best through FFI; and to what degree should focus on form be integrated with instruction in which meaning is the point of departure (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Spada, 1997; Spada & Lightbown, 2008; Williams, 2005).

Researchers and educators have developed the general interest for exploring the techniques that facilitate learning vocabulary of second language. One such technique that has recently caught the attention in the area of SLA research is digital games. In most countries, wide range of games can be used as a tool for learning. There are many games that can be applied by L2 teachers concerning how to improve the acquisition, such as alphabet game, puzzles, word guessing game, board game and so on. The Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) is one of the most effective games which facilitate learning L2 for children. Kirriemuir (2003) believes that computers have changed people's lives, and video games have been part of that revolution. The video-game phenomenon has recently caught the attention of researchers from varied disciplines (psychology and education) who have sought to utilize it as a tool for advancement and improvement. Most of the studies have resulted in positive and beneficial findings. Video games are another avenue for experimentation in a safe virtual environment.

2. Review of the Literature

Long (1991) introduced the term focus on form and used it to describe instruction whose main objective is to "overtly draw students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning" (p. 47). He used this term to distinguish it from *focus on forms,* including approaches in which teaching is perceived as organized around a pre-planned syllabus of forms. For Long, the distinctive qualities of focus on form were closely associated with a primary focus on meaning, and attention to form that was spontaneous, surfacing during instruction. However, a good number of other scholars have since employed the term *form-focused instruction* (Ellis, 2001; Spada, 1997) to refer to a wider range of application of a focus on form. Ellis (2001), for instance, uses this term to include efforts to attract attention to form within any teaching

approach, entailing educational programs that are premised upon linguistic units. Spada (1997) places FFI within meaning-focused instruction and proposes a definition compliant with content-based language instruction: "any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly" and "occurs within meaning-based approaches to L2 instruction" (Spada, 1997, p. 73). In the present study, the term FFI was applied to show instruction devised to call attention to lexical form in communicative classrooms. More precisely, the usefulness of a particular type of FFI, i.e. proactive intensive FFI, in the lexical development of Iranian EFL learners was under investigation. By proactive intensive FFI, it's meant that prior to the commencement of instruction the teacher has preselected a limited number of lexical items to be taught in a preplanned explicit fashion (Williams, 2005). In the following paragraphs, a number of studies germane to the application of FFI fro the purpose of vocabulary instruction are reviewed.

De la Fuente (2006) explored the L2 vocabulary learning of 30 English native-born learners acquiring Spanish as a second language. To pinpoint the most effectual condition under which L2 vocabulary acquisition could take place, three vocabulary learning settings were compared: (1) Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP); (2) task-based instruction without explicit FFI (TBNEF); and (3) task-based instruction with explicit FFI (TB-EF). What made instructional treatment different was the absence or presence of explicit FFI and task-based activities. For instance, the TB-NEF group and TB-EF group learned the L2 vocabulary with a task-based activity, which was meant to be communicative and meaning-driven; thus, they were exposed to contextualized L2 vocabulary. the PPP group, on the other hand, experienced second language vocabulary learning via mechanical exercises, and thus was presented with only decontextualized vocabulary. Regarding the explicit FFI, the PPP group and the TB-EF group encountered explicit FFI focusing on morphemes, phonemes, and spellings of the vocabulary while the TB-NEF group did not receive such a treatment. Learning outcomes were gauged both through an immediate and a delayed posttest. While all the three groups were found to perform equally well on the immediate posttest, a significant difference was found among the groups on the delayed posttest when the task based groups, TB-NEF and TB-EF, significantly outdid the traditional PPP group. No significant difference was observed between the TB-NEF and TB-EF groups; however, the mean scores revealed that the TB-EF learners scored better than the TB-NEF learners. premised on these results, de la Fuente concluded that task-based instruction "with a built-in, planned focus on form seems to be more effective than PPP lessons, due to the fewer opportunities for targeted output production and retrieval that PPP lessons offer, and to its inability to effectively focus students' attention on target forms" (De la Fuente, 2006, p. 286). furthermore, it turned out that task-based vocabulary lessons could gain more benefit from an explicit FFI component as it renders possible the noticing of important formal/morphological aspects of words.

Given the merits of different types of FFI in vocabulary learning, Laufer (2006) carried out a study in which differential effects of two types of FFI on English L2 vocabulary learning were compared: FonFs by means of decontextualized vocabulary with translations and explanations in English versus FonF by means of contextualized vocabulary in text and comprehension questions on the content of the text. The participants of the study were assigned to two groups, each containing 79 students. Subsequently, each group was exposed to its relevant treatment. The analysis of the data obtained from the posttest unearthed that the FonFs group accomplished significantly higher accuracy rates compared to the FonF group immediately after the completion of the experiment, leading to the conclusion that explicit FFI (FonFs, in this study) is relatively more beneficial than less explicit FFI (FonF, in this study) as far as the acquisition of L2 vocabulary is concerned.

In a different study, Laufer and Girsai (2008) further examined how effective the explicit FFI was in taking in L2 single words and collocations while manipulating the extent of explicitness of FFI. In their study, three learning conditions with differing degrees of explicitness were utilized: (1) FFI with contrastive analysis and translation (CAT); (2) FFI without contrastive analysis; and (3) MFI. Regarding CAT, it involved the highest degree of explicitness. The MFI task on the other hand was specifically devised to go without any explicit instruction. An aggregate of 75 students learning English were selected to serve as the participants of the study. The results of a vocabulary test administered at the end of the experiment revealed that the CAT group learners significantly

outperformed the two other groups on all tests for words and collocations. The MFI group did not perform well at all, leading to the conclusion that no learning of L2 vocabulary happened for this group.

To recap, research examining the overall efficacy of FFI has yielded promising results, however in the present study the aim was to explore the effectiveness of proactive intensive FFI in boosting the lexical knowledge of Iranian EFL learners at intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency. That is why the present study embarked on an investigation to seek answers to the following research propositions:

Research Question 1: Does the lexical knowledge of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels improve significantly as a result of exposure to proactive intensive FFI?

Research Question 2: Does proactive intensive FFI affect the lexical knowledge of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels equally?

Research Question 3: Do input delivery method (i.e. with or without FFI) and level of proficiency influence Iranian EFL Learners' lexical knowledge? Is there an interaction effect for FFI and proficiency level in this regard?

3. Methodology

The design of the present study was quasi-experimental using pretest and posttest and was carried out over a 4-week period. The study was implemented in free discussion classes at Sadr Institute of Higher Education (SIHE), Isfahan, Iran.

3.1. Participants

English learners studying at SIHE who enrolled in a free discussion course were selected to attend the study. Overall, the sample accounted for a total of 119 male and female students, all native speakers of Persian aged between 18 and 34. To ensure the homogeneity of the participants in each group, a Quick Placement Test (QPT) was administered to them so that those whose language abilities exceeded or fell short of the average were excluded from the analysis of the study students in each group. The ultimate sample (i.e. an aggregate of 110) were assigned to four groups: intermediate experimental group (IEG), intermediate control group (ICG), advanced experimental group (AEG), and advanced control group (ACG).

3.2. Materials

The instructional materials employed for intermediate learners were elicited from *English Vocabulary in Use* (Intermediate, 2nd ed.)by Redman and Zwier (2010), *English Collocations in Use* (Intermediate) by McCarthy and O'Dell (2005), and *Intermediate Keywords for Fluency* by Woolard (2005). As an illustration, some of the vocabulary items presented for the topic "How did you spend your summer vacations as a child?", include *take a break, vacationer,* and *campsite.* The above-mentioned books were opted for on the grounds of their popularity and their widespread use by EFL teachers.

As to the materials for the advanced learners, *English Vocabulary in Use (Advanced, 2nd ed.)* by MaCarthy and O'Dell (2013), *English Collocations in Use (Advanced)* by O'Dell and McCarthy (2008), and *Upper-Intermediate Keywords for Fluency* by Woolard (2004) were employed to select the vocabulary items needed for the advanced groups. For example, some of the vocabulary items presented for the topic, "How did you spend your summer vacations as a child?", included *take time off, honeymooner,* and *get away from it all.* It is noteworthy to mention that these three books were also selected for the same reasons their intermediate counterparts were deployed.

3.3. Instruments

Three measurement instruments were used in this study. To ascertain the homogeneity of the participants of this study in terms of language proficiency, a general language proficiency test named Quick Placement Test (version 1) was deployed at the outset of the experiment. The other two instruments were pretest and posttest prepared by the researcher based on the materials used in the free discussion program. The intermediate and advanced vocabulary pretests consisted of multiple-choice questions, gauging the vocabulary knowledge of the learners. Each vocabulary measure was a 20-item researcher-made test, the reliability and validity of which were established through KR-21 and content analysis procedures, respectively. It should be noted that the same questions as the pretests, though with different item and choice arrangements, constituted the intermediate and advanced vocabulary posttests. The reliability indexes for the intermediate pretest, intermediate posttest and advanced posttest were respectively .94, .86, .85 and .96.

3.4. Procedure

A QPT was administered to the learners in the first session of the term. After the researchers obtained the scores, they chose 110 out of 119 intermediate and advanced learners as the participants of the study and assigned them to the experimental and control groups. The following session the learners took the pretest, which was intended to gauge their lexical knowledge. Likewise, the posttest was given during a separate session after the completion of the experiment. The instruction took place throughout the sessions between the pretest and the posttest.

The FFI groups under investigation went through the same syllabus over a period of four weeks of instruction, though with two distinct instructional packages commensurate with their proficiency level. The control groups, on the other hand, were exposed to the input which was bereft of any FFI. The treatment consisted of (a) metalinguistic explanations, i.e. explicit explanations of the lexical items, (b) repeated form-focused tasks, i.e. several tasks used to direct learners' attention to the importance of lexical knowledge, and (c) explicit corrective feedback on form, where the teacher corrected the learners' errors by explicitly stating that they were incorrect and asking learners to explain the error and correct it.

The control groups, on the other hand, received (a) no explicit metalinguistic explanations with reference to vocabulary (b) meaning-focused communicative tasks with no reference to explicit lexical explanations, in which learners were asked to complete tasks by providing the correct words, and (c) implicit corrective feedback through recasts, where the teacher responded primarily to learners' errors in content. In sum, after the placement test and pretest sessions, there were nine instructional sessions, followed by a posttest session, which formed a 12-session experiment.

4. Results

4.1. The Answer to the First Research Question

The first research question posed in this study was: "Does the lexical knowledge of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels improve significantly as a result of exposure to proactive intensive FFI?" Its corresponding null hypothesis would assume that the lexical knowledge of learners at different levels of proficiency would not improve significantly as a result of exposure to proactive intensive FFI. To test this hypothesis, the pretest and posttest vocabulary scores of IEG learners were compared via a paired-samples *t* test. The same statistical procedure was also used to compare the pretest and posttest vocabulary scores of the learners in AEG.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics Results Comparing Pretest and Posttest Vocabulary Scores of the IEG and AEG

Groups	Tests	*N*	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*Std.* Mean	Error

IEG	Pretest	29	13.75	1.50	.27
	Posttest	29	16.96	1.17	.21
AEG	Pretest	28	14.89	1.77	.33
	Posttest	28	17.28	1.32	.25

Comparing the vocabulary mean scores of the pretest and the posttest, it could be seen that for the two groups, the posttest mean scores exceeded their pretest counterparts. That is, IEG members managed to achieve a mean score of 16.96 on the posttest, while their pretest mean score was 13.75. Likewise, for AEG learners, the posttest mean score (*M* = 17.28) was far greater than their pretest mean score (*M* = 14.89). The significance or insignificance of these differences between the pretest and posttest scores of the two groups could be determined in the *t* test table below (Table 2).

Table 2
Paired-Samples t Test Results Comparing Pretest and Posttest Vocabulary Scores of the IEG and AEG

	Mean	*Std.* Deviation.	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
IEG Pretest-Posttest	-3.20	.72	-23.78	28	.000	-3.48	-2.93
AEG Pretest-Posttest	-2.39	.68	-18.47	27	.000	-2.65	-2.12

The *Sig.* (2-tailed) value represents a *p* value lower than the significance level (.000 < .05) for the IEG, indicating that the difference between the pretest and posttest vocabulary scores of the IEG members had been statistically significant. The same also held true for the pretest and posttest vocabulary scores of the AEG. This means that for both intermediate and advanced groupers, the lexical knowledge of the learners improved significantly as a result of exposure to proactive intensive FFI. This is also graphically shown in the bar chart below (Figure 1).

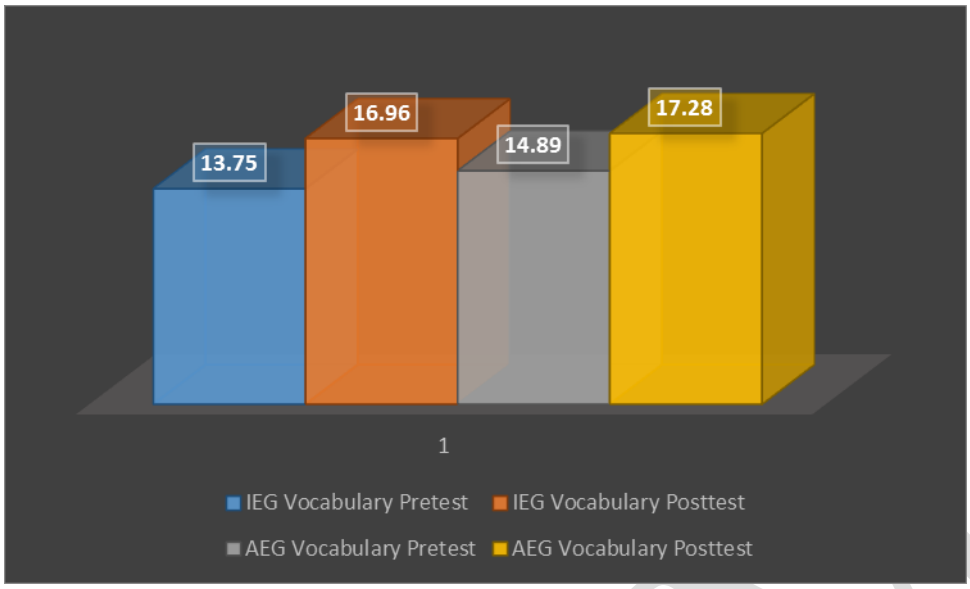

Figure 1: Vocabulary mean scores of IEG and AEG on the pretest and posttest

As it could be seen in Figure 1, the vocabulary posttest scores of both IEG and AEG were significantly higher than their pretest scores. Consequently, the first null hypothesis of the study was rejected.

4.2. The Answer to the Second Research Question

In response to the second research question of the study, which was "Does proactive intensive FFI affect the lexical knowledge of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels equally?", the researchers had to compare the vocabulary posttest scores of IEG and AEG. Since this type of comparison is essentially like comparing apples with oranges (due to the fact that the two groups came from different levels of proficiency and thus must have had preexisting differences in terms of language proficiency), the researchers opted for making such a comparison by means of one-way ANCOVA. This statistical tool controls for the preexisting differences between two groups through their pretest scores, and adjusts their posttest mean scores accordingly, thereby making the posttest mean scores comparable. The results of one-way ANCOVA used for the purpose of comparing vocabulary posttest scores of IEG and AEG ensue.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the Vocabulary Posttest Scores of the IEG and AEG

	N	Mean	*Std.* Deviation
IEG	29	16.96	1.17
AEG	28	17.28	1.32

Such descriptive statistics as mean and standard deviation are shown for both IEG and AEG learners in Table 3. The vocabulary posttest mean score of the IEG (M = 16.96) was less than the vocabulary posttest mean score of the AEG (M = 17.28). This difference does not seem to be a significant one; however, to ascertain whether it is or not, one needs to look down the *Sig* (2-tailed) column across the row in which Proficiency Level (PL) is placed in the ANCOVA table below.

Table 4

Results of One-Way ANCOVA for Comparing Vocabulary Posttest Scores of the IEG and AEG

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	74.01	3	24.67	92.58	.000	.840
Intercept	35.57	1	35.57	133.49	.000	.716
PL	.086	1	.086	.321	.573	.006
Pretest	70.80	1	70.80	265.70	.000	.834
PL*Pretest	.009	1	.009	.034	.855	.001
Error	14.12	53	.266			
Total	16800.00	57				
Corrected Total	88.140	56				

In Table 4, if you find PL in the leftmost column and read across this row, under *Sig.* column, you can find the *p* value, which should be compared against the significance level. The *p* value here was greater than the specified level of significance (.573 > .05), indicating that proficiency level failed to affect the vocabulary posttest scores of the IEG and AEG.

Under Partial Eta Squared, the relevant value was .006, which shows that proficiency level accounted for only .6% of the variance in the vocabulary posttest scores of the IEG and AEG. Another noteworthy piece of information in Table 4.8 concerns the influence of the covariate (i.e. the pretest). If you find the line in the table that corresponds to the covariate (i.e. the pretest), and read across to the *Sig.* level, you can see that the *p* value here was .000, which was lower than the significance level, meaning that the covariate was significant. In fact, it explained 83% of the variance in the vocabulary posttest scores of the learners. Last but not least, the *Sig.* value in front PL*Pretest was greater than the alpha level (i.e. .855 > .05), which means that the interaction between the covariate and the proficiency level of the learners could not affect their posttest scores significantly. The conclusion now is that there was no statistically significant difference between IEG and AEG learners with regard to their vocabulary posttest scores. That is, proactive intensive FFI affected both intermediate and advanced group learners' lexical development equally. Consequently, the third null hypothesis of the study was retained.

4.3. The Answer to the Third Research Question

The third research question of the study was "Do input delivery method (i.e. with or without proactive intensive FFI) and level of proficiency influence Iranian EFL Learners' lexical knowledge? If so, is there an interaction effect for FFI and proficiency level in this regard?" Two-Way ANOVA was conducted in order to find an answer to this research question.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Comparing FFI vs. No-FFI Groups' Lexical Knowledge at Intermediate and Advanced Levels

Proficiency Level	Groups	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*N*
Intermediate	EG	16.96	1.17	29
	CG	14.84	1.84	26
	Total	15.96	1.85	55
Advanced	EG	17.28	1.32	28
	CG	15.62	1.30	27

	Total	16.47	1.54	55
Total	EG	17.12	1.25	57
	CG	15.24	1.62	53
	Total	16.21	1.72	110

It can be observed in Table 5 that for both intermediate and advanced levels, the experimental groups (EG) outperformed the control groups (CG), and that the total mean score of advanced learners (*M* = 16.47) was greater than that of intermediate learners (*M* = 15.96). To find out whether the differences between EG and CG at each level, and the differences emanating from proficiency levels were of statistical significance, one needs to check the *p* value in the two-way ANOVA table which follows (Table 4.16).

Table 6
Results of Two-Way ANOVA for Comparing FFI vs. No-FFI Groups' Lexical Knowledge at Intermediate and Advanced Levels

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	106.40	3	35.46	17.37	.000	.330
Intercept	28755.74	1	28755.74	14088.09	.000	.993
PL	8.36	1	8.36	4.09	.046	.037
Groups	97.83	1	97.83	47.93	.000	.311
PL*Groups	1.47	1	1.47	.72	.397	.007
Error	216.36	106	2.04			
Total	29256.00	110				
Corrected Total	322.76	109				

Reading across proficiency level (PL) under the *Sig.* column, one could find the *p* value of .046, which is lower than the significance level, indicating that FFI worked differently for the two proficiency levels as far as their lexical knowledge was concerned. In addition, the *p* value corresponding to Groups (which represented experimental vs. control groups) was less than the significance level (i.e. .000 < .05), which means that those who received FFI performed differently (in terms of vocabulary) from those who did not. Finally, the *p* value in front of PL*Groups, was greater than the alpha level (.037 > .05). This means that the interaction of the two independent variables under investigation here did not have a significant effect on the learners' performance on the tests of lexical knowledge.

5. Discussion

5.1. Discussing the First Research Question

The first research question was whether the lexical knowledge, upon being exposed to proactive intensive FFI of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels, ameliorated significantly. The results gained for this research question revealed that both intermediate and advanced group learners experienced a boost in their lexical knowledge in the wake of exposure to proactive intensive FFI. Owing to the fact that a multitudinous array of researchers (Da La Fuente, 2006; Laufer, 2006; Laufer

& Girsai, 2008) have pointed to the fact that FFI could be instrumental in the development of lexical knowledge of L2 learners, it is hardly surprising that the participants in the current study could fully cash in on the instruction to which they were exposed and they managed to enrich their knowledge of English vocabulary. The results of the present study are thus compatible with those of previous studies referred to above.

5.2. Discussing the Second Research Question

The second research question examined whether proactive intensive FFI exerted equal extent of influence upon the lexical knowledge of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels. The results showed proactive intensive FFI affected the learners' lexical knowledge at differing levels of proficiency equally. Not unlike the results deliberated for the first research question, the attained results for this question points to the efficacy of FFI, and thereby lending further credence to studies by Laufer and Girasi (2008), De la Fuente (2006), and Laufer (2006). This equal degree of influence can probably be attributed to the fact that the scope of vocabulary knowledge is not assumed to be as restricted as that of grammatical structures is. This means there seems to be no limit to the acquisition of L2 vocabulary for most (if not all) L2 learners at different levels of proficiency. A further assumption could be that FFI is found to be effective provided that a threshold level of L2 proficiency has been attained (Iwashita, 2003). The immediate corollary of this could be that FFI might not have been effective had the learners' level of proficiency been pitched elementary; Now that the present participants of the current study had reached a threshold level of language proficiency, FFI was shown to be effectual, and interestingly, the degree of effectiveness was not significantly different for the learners in the two proficiency levels under investigation.

5.3. Discussing the Third Research Question

In response to the third research question which was an attempt to examine whether input delivery method and level of proficiency impacted Iranian EFL Learners' lexical knowledge, and to further explore if there was an interaction effect for FFI and proficiency level in this respect, two-way ANOVA was conducted and the results revealed that EG learners significantly outperformed CG learners, that FFI exerted varying degrees of influence on the lexical competence of the learners at different proficiency levels, and that the interaction of the two knowledge of Iranian EFL learners, and that the interaction between FFI and proficiency level failed to exert a significant influence upon the vocabulary knowledge of the learners under investigation. As pointed out in the preceding sections, FFI has been shown to be conducive to the vocabulary development and this result was proved through within group comparison in the first research question, and the answer to the third research question attested to the same findings through between-group comparisons. The studies conducted by Laufer and Girasi (2008), De la Fuente (2006), and Laufer (2006) lend further weight to the findings of our current study.

6. Conclusion and Implications

Despite a colossal body of research conducted on FFI, scant attention has been paid to the investigation of the effects of proactive intensive FFI on EFL learners' lexical development at different levels of proficiency. Having taken this into account, the present study employed a quasi-experimental design to unearth the effects of proactive intensive FFI on the development vocabulary knowledge of learners at both intermediate and advanced levels. The results of the study demonstrated the remarkable effects of FFI on lexical knowledge of L2 learners. What makes the present study distinctly different from other pertinent studies is that proactive intensive FFI exerted the same extent of beneficial influence upon the lexical knowledge of both intermediate and advanced learners. Accordingly,the present study yielded a number of pedagogical implications for researchers, material developers, syllabus designers, and language teachers, which are delineated below.

With regard to SLA, the findings of the study can deepen the insight into effectiveness of FFI for the purpose of lexical development. Syllabus designers and material developers can also benefit from the findings of this study by incorporating the principles of FFI into their instructional materials designed

for particular levels of proficiency. In fact, they would be well advised to include explicit metalinguistic explanation in the materials they develop, or in the supplementary materials like teachers' books.

As to language practitioners, the findings of the present study are prone to pave the way to choose the best putative pedagogical options. Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that a thoroughly informed instruction of vocabulary through FFI be incorporated in EFL classes. Before the commencement of instruction, teachers are recommended to be armed with adequate repertoire of explicit metalinguistic knowledge of such different aspects of vocabulary, and also be aware of various pedagogical options of FFI in order to opt for the right input through the most appropriate methods of instruction.

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING STYLE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE READING OF IRANIAN MALE/ FEMALE EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract

In the past few decades, research on language learning styles and academic achievement across various efl/esl contexts has received remarkable attention. Hence, the present study attempted to explore the relationship between iranian efl students' learning styles and reading comprehension. The study also examined the differences of learning styles used by iranian male and female learners. The data for this study were gathered through two questionnaires. The first was joy reid's (1987) perceptual learning style preference questionnaire (plspq). And the second was a toefl (the reading section) which consists of five reading comprehension passages. The participants of this study consisted of 100 high school students studying at two high schools in the city of isfahan. The results show that there is a positive relationship between visual learning style and academic achievement of iranian efl male learners. Besides, there is a positive relationship between visual, auditory and individual learning style and academic achievement of iranian efl female learners. In line with the results, male learners prefer tactile, kinaesthetic, and group learning style more than female learners.these findings can contribute to the efl teachers' understanding of their students' llss and can aid in serving essential strategies and teaching methods while confronting students' problems in efl classes.

Keywords: learning style, academic achievement, gender, efl learners

1. Introduction

Research shows that there is no general consensus on why some students are not successful in learning a foreign language. Sparks and Ganschow (1995) claim that learners may have deficits in either the phonological, semantic or syntactic systems in their native language, and that this can affect how well they can master a foreign language. In a similar vein, Downey, Snyder and Hill (2000) found a correlation between phonological processing difficulties and learning problems that foreign language learners face. However, Castro and Peck (2005) state that even students who do not appear to have any language-learning deficits, such as those who score highly on the Modern Language Aptitude Test, encounterdifficulties in the foreign language classroom. This finding seems to indicate that factors other than language-learning deficits may affect one's ability to learn a foreign language.

It is both an accepted andwell-documented fact that people learn, or perhaps more accurately put; prefer to learn in different ways. Matthews (1995) points out that, "As educators, we have all faced the realization that individuals learn differently. The simple fact that many instructors teach different groups in the same manner, but that student success varies, provides credence to this hypothesis. One concept that may shed light on differences in students' success learning a foreign language, and which is being investigated for its role in academic achievement in general, is learning style"(p.250).Moreover, learning styles have a real effect on the achievement of students. If learning styles are neglected, this may lead to a slowing in their educational improvement (Hilgerson-Volk, 1987).

According to Haggart (2003), students with different sensory learning styles have distinct ways they prefer to learn and areas where they will have difficulty learning. The bulleted statements below define some of those areas:

•Visual learners tend to like to read for pleasure, but they will have trouble working in an environment with noise and distractions.

•Auditory learners tend to like to read plays and dialogues, but they will have trouble reading silently and with speed when not allowed to vocalize.

•Kinesthetic learners tend to like to read how-to books and action-oriented books, but they will have trouble sitting still or listening for more than four minutes.

•Tactile learners tend to like to read historical novels or biographies, but they will have trouble succeeding without lots of sensory stimuli.

2.Statement of the Problem

Some studies have determined that there is a difference between learning style preferences in terms of gender (e.g., Dobson, 2009; Lincoln & Rademacher, 2006; Loo, 2002; Wehrwein, Lujan & DiCarlo, 2007). A study by Wehrwein et al. (2007) showed that across four ethnic groups, female students have a higher preference for the kinesthetic learning style, while male students were more tactile than female students. In contrast with these findings, Lincoln et al. (2006) revealed that female learners preferred to learn using their auditory senses, while male learners learn best when taking notes. While Dobson (2009) and Kia, Aliapour and Ghaderi (2009) suggested that there is a relationship between gender and learning styles, certain researchers noted that there was no significant difference according to gender and learning styles performance (Cezair, 2005; Cornu, 1999; Slater, Lujan & DeCarlo, 2007; Sizemore & Schultz, 2005). Consequently, both the learning style and gender of a student must be taken into consideration in conducting further research into reading. Moreover, Learning styles seem to play a major role in academic achievements. Nolting (2002) emphasized that students' academic achievement positively increases if they are aware of their learning style and how they learn best.

In the Iranian context, several studies can be found with a focus on learning styles and their eminence in teaching English as a foreign language (Riazi & Riasati, 2007; Noora, 2008; Soltani, 2008; Zamanzade, Valizade, Fathi Azar & Aminaie, 2008). However, despite the crucial role of learners' learning styles awareness in providing a successful instruction, little if any attention has been paid to the gender differences of learning styles in designing syllabi and EFL courses for the students studying English as a foreign language. This can be deemed as one of the factors hindering ultimate goals of TEFL in Iran. Moreover, the researcher found that studies focusing on L2 reading comprehension by examining reading and learning styles are lacking. Since L2 learners may have different responses on their reading comprehension because of their diverse learning experiences, a study focusing on the relationship between learners' reading and their learning styles in L2 learning is necessary.

Having this in mind and considering the significance of LSPs, the present research sought to investigate the learning style preferences among male and female Iranian EFL learners and its relationship to reading. The findings of this study can assist course developers and syllabi designers to base their work on the individual differences of the learners in order to meet the requirements of all learners as much as possible.

On the basis of recent high rates of reading problems reported amongst school students, and the presumed influence between learning styles, grade, gender, and reading achievements, the purpose of the current research is summarized below.

3.Literature Review

There are a variety of learning styles and models available which have been developed during the past few decades. Reid (1995) divided learning styles research into three major categories: cognitive learning styles, sensory learning styles and personality learning styles. Felder (1996) differentiates between learning styles as follows: "Students have different learning styles – characteristic strengths and preferences in the ways they take in and process information. Some students tend to focus on facts, data, and algorithms; others are more comfortable with theories and mathematical models. Some respond strongly to visual forms of information, like pictures, diagrams and schematics; others get more from verbal form- written and spoken explanation. Some prefer to learn actively and interactively; others function more introspectively and individually" (p, 18).

Some of the ways that educators can identify students' learning style preferences are by listening to them talk, watching them work, and having them takes an assessment (Wayman, 2003). Students will often use verbs that indicate their preferred learning style (Timmins, 2008). A person who prefers a kinesthetic learning style uses many actions, touching, or feeling words. This child might say, "That touched me," "That moved me," or "That doesn't feel right." A person who prefers a tactile learning style also uses touching and feeling words, but they are more likely to involve the hands. This child might say, "I can grasp that," "I can wrap my hands around that," or "That feels cold." A person with a verbal learning style will use auditory type words. She might say, "I hear you," "That sounds good to me," or "That clicked." A person who prefers a visual learning style uses camera type words that create a visual picture. This child might say, "I'm looking for answers," "I get the picture," or "I see." Listening to the types of verbs a child uses can tell an educator what type of learner a particular person is. Likewise, watching students can help educators determine learning style. A student who is always wiggling in his or her seat and who uses many gestures when speaking might be a kinesthetic learner. A student who interrupts class with little comments and has trouble being silent might be an auditory learner. A student who is always nicely dressed and has trouble remembering verbal directions might be a visual learner.

Visual learners: Visual learners prefer to learn by seeing and watching demonstrations (Haggart, 2002). Thus, observations, examinations, and reviews are their favorite learning approaches (Haggart, 2003). When engaged in learning, visual learners tend to work quietly but intensely. Highlighting, creating graphs, and drawing pictures are some of their preferred learning activities (Fleming, N., 2009). Visual learners typically get in trouble in class because they use visual, non-verbal expressions and passive-aggressive behavior (Haggart, 2003). Sometimes, visual learners favour sitting in the front of the classroom. They also take descriptive notes over the material being presented (Ldpride,n.d.). Mayzler and McGann(2010) explained that the visual learner is the person who learns best when she or he is seeing the information - the brain absorbs the information best when the information is delivered through the eyes. Visual learners tend to be organized and noticed detail (Hutton, 2006a). Visual disorder and movement easily distract visual learners (Haggart, 2002).

Auditory learners: Auditory learnersdiscover information through listening and interpreting information by the means of pitch, emphasis and speed (Ldpride, 2009). Auditory learners prefer to learn by verbal instructions from themselves or others (Haggart, 2002). Thus, discussions, "thinking out loud," and listening are their favorite learning approaches (Haggart, 2003). Phonics is often a

good method to teach auditory beginning readers (Dunn, 2006). When engaged in learning, auditory learners tend to use animated voices. Having some white noise or quiet music playing helps auditory learners concentrate (Freitas, 2006). When using imagery, they tend to subvocalize and think in sounds. The specific details are not important (Barbe & Swassing, 1979). Sounds easily distract auditory learners (Hutton, 2006b).

Tactile learners. Tactile learners prefer to learn by touching and by converting physical inputs into emotions (Dybvig, 2005; Haggart, 2002). Tactile learners learn best when they incorporate their sense of touch and when they involve their emotions and feelings (Keys Learning, 1993). They want to explore subtle physical and emotional distinction in their learning. When engaged in learning, tactile learners use excited facial expressions as they mirror the students around them. Tactile learners will learn vocabulary best if teachers introduce it to them with tactile resources before reading (Carbo et al., 1998; Dunn, 2006).When using imagery, tactile learners tend to prefer imagery related to emotions, colors, and moods instead of sights and sounds. Tactile learners typically get in trouble in class because they withdraw or complain about what is unfair (Haggart, 2003). Emotional conflicts, temperature changes, and changes in moods easily distract tactile learners (Haggart, 2002).

Kinesthetic learners: Kinesthetic learners prefer to learn by doing and direct involvement (Haggart, 2002; Hutton, 2006c). Kinesthetic learners learn best when they incorporate movements using their large or gross motor muscles (Keys Learning, 1993).This type of learner is always moving, often prefers to learn in a single style, and struggles to convert what he or she has learned into writing (Wayman, 2003). Exploring, manipulating items, building and playing games are their favorite learning approaches (Haggart, 2003). Kinesthetic learners have a hard time making pictures in their minds as they tend to think that imagery is not important unless action is involved (Barbe & Swassing, 1979; Haggart, 2002; Wayman, 2003). Kinesthetic learners typically get in trouble in class because they act out physically through body movements and gestures, and they are often mislabeled as having ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) (Fliess, 2006; Haggart, 2003). Because they are not interested in visual or auditory presentations, kinesthetic learners often seem distracted (Haggart, 2002).

4.Research Questions

This study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there any relationship between using different learning styles and academic achievement of Iranian EFL male/female learners?

2. To what extent do Iranian male and female EFL learners differ as far as use of learning style is concerned?

5.Methodology

This study used a descriptive –comparative research design because this design provided the researcher with the ability to compare two variables with one another (Cozby, 2001). This study is a comparative study because the variables in the study are categorical (ordinal or nominal). The comparative design allowed the researcher to compare one group of participants with another group of participants to determine whether there was a difference between the two with respect to certain measurements or characteristics. Variables examined in this study included students' learning styles and English as a foreign language in reading achievement. The dependent variable was the reading ability of the participants, and the independent variables for this study were the learning styles of the participants and gender

5.1.Participants

This study was confined to a sample of participants from two high schools of Isfahan, (High school A & High school B). The participants were randomly selected for this study. The participants in the

present study consist of 100 EFL students .Participants' fields of study were Mathematics, Literature and Natural sciences. The participants were 100 students in grades two and three. The age ranged for the whole sample was 16 to18. Of all the 100 participants, 50 were male (Group 1) and 50 were female (Group 2).

5.2.Materials

There were two instruments used as the materials of this study. The first was the Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed by Reid (1987) which consists of five statements on each of the six learning style preference to be measured: *visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group learning and individual learning*. The first four categories constitute the perceptual learning style and the remaining two make up the social category. The participants responded on the basis of a five point Likert scale, ranging from "*strongly agree* to "*strongly disagree*. According to Reid the validation of the questionnaire was done by the split half method.

The second instrument was a TOEFL (the reading section) which consists of five reading comprehension passages and fifty multiple-choice questions. Based on the results, the researcher investigated the relationship between learning styles and reading comprehension of students.

5.3.Data Collection Procedure

This phase of the data collection involved the learning style preference questionnaire. The data

collection instrument was given to the students during the class time . Since the participants of this study were high school students and none of them had ever been taught learning styles, they were not familiar with the notion of learning style. So the researcher spent about five minutes at the beginning of the class time to explain learning styles for the students. Then Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed by Reid (1987) was filled by the participants. The instrument used to determine the participants' reading comprehension was 5 TOEFL reading passages. The reading section contains 5 passages on a variety of subjects, followed by several questions. Test takers were to answer fifty questions on the answer sheet, and they had 60 to 100 minutes to read the passages and answer the questions.

6.Results

Results for the First Research Question

The first research question of the study asked "Is there any relationship between using different learning styles and academic achievement of Iranian EFL male/female learners?" Since learning style could be considered to be a composite variable (consisting of visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, individual, and group subcomponents), the correlation coefficient between this composite variable and reading comprehension was investigated through multiple regression analysis. This statistical procedure was once conducted for male learners and once for female EFL learners. The results of these analyses are shown in what follows.

Table 1 .*Correlation Coefficients for the Relationship between Learning Style Components and Reading Comprehension of Male EFL Learners*

		Reading	Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Kinesthetic	Individual	Group
Pearson Correlation	Reading	1.00	.97*	-.74*	-.63*	-.83*	-.56*	-.86*
	Visual	.97*	1.00	-.79*	-.58*	-.85*	-.65*	-.88*
	Auditory	-74*	-.79*	1.00	.19	.66*	.53*	.72*
	Tactile	-.63*	-.58*	.19	1.00	.36*	.04	.48*
	Kinesthetic	-.83*	-.85*	.66*	.36*	1.00	.52*	.64*
	Individual	-.56*	-.65*	.53*	.04	.52*	1.00	.53*

	Group	-.86*	-.88*	.72*	.48*	.64*	53*	1.00

Note: * means a significant relationship

The relationship between reading and visual style was a strong positive one (*r* = .97), and this relationship was of statistical significance. However, reading comprehension was negatively and significantly correlated with auditory style (*r* = -.74), tactile style (*r* = -.63), kinesthetic style (*r* = -.83), individual learning style (*r* = -.56), and group learning style (*r* = -.86).To examine the statistical significance of this result, Table 4.3 should be consulted.

Table 2. *Statistical Significance of the Multiple Regression Results for Male Learners*

	Sum of Squares	*Df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*
Regression	384.46	6	58.07	145.87	.000
Residual	17.12	43	.39		
Total	365.58	49			

In Table 2. *Sig.* equalled .000, which is smaller than the alpha level ($p = .000 < 0.05$), indicating that the model reached a statistical significance. In other words, learning style (as a composite variable) could significantly predict reading comprehension of male EFL learners.

Table 3. *Correlation Coefficients for the Relationship between Learning Style Components and Reading Comprehension of Female EFL Learners*

		Reading	Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Kinesthetic	Individual	Group
Pearson Correlation	Reading	1.00	.93*	.81*	-.93*	-.90*	.27*	-.46*
	Visual	.93*	1.00	.72*	-.97*	-.95*	.27*	-.45*
	Auditory	.81*	.72*	1.00	-.76*	-.78*	-.004	-.24*
	Tactile	-.93*	-.97*	-.76*	1.00	.96*	-.37*	.36*
	Kinesthetic	-.90*	-.95*	-.78*	.96*	1.00	-.34*	.29*
	Individual	.27	.27	-.004	-.37	-.34	* 1.00	-.18
	Group	-.46*	-.45*	-.24*	.36*	.29*	-.18	1.00

Note: * means a significant relationship

The relationship between reading comprehension and visual style was a strong positive relationship (*r* =.93), which was statistically significant. The same was true for the relationship between reading comprehension and auditory style of the female learners (*r* =.81). Additionally, the relationship between reading comprehension and individual learning style of females was weak (though significant) positive one (*r* =.27). On the other hand, reading comprehension was negatively correlated with tactile (*r* = -.93), kinesthetic (*r* = -.90), and group (*r* = -.46) learning styles. All these three correlations were also statistically significant. Table 4.examines the statistical significance of this result.

Table 4. *Statistical Significance of the Multiple Regression Results for Female Learners*

	Sum of Squares	*Df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*
Regression	280.58	6	46.76	93.52	.000

Residual	21.50	43	.50
Total	302.08	49	

The *Sig.* value in Table 4.was .000, which is smaller than the level of significance (p = .000 < 0.05). This would mean that learning style (as a composite variable) could significantly predict female learners' reading comprehension.

Results for the Second Research Question

The second research question in hand asked "To what extent do Iranian male and female EFL learners differ as far as use of learning style is concerned?" To compare male and female learners' visual learning style, an independent samples *t* test was employed.

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics for Comparing Male and Female Learners' Learning Styles' Components*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Visual	Male	50	23.80	6.54	.92
	Female	50	26.80	5.37	.76
Auditory	Male	50	10.76	1.28	.18
	Female	50	18.96	2.58	.36
Tactile	Male	50	21.72	1.88	.26
	Female	50	13.38	3.59	.50
Kinesthetic	Male	50	23.10	2.09	.29
	Female	50	14.24	4.09	.57
Individual	Male	50	8.82	1.38	.19
	Female	50	15.10	1.58	.22
Group	Male	50	11.80	1.90	.26
	Female	50	11.10	1.11	.15

Such descriptive statistics as mean scores and standard deviations of male and female EFL learners for visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, individual, and group learning styles are shown in Table 5. There were differences in the mean scores of males and females for these six variables. The relevant values of p under the *Sig.* (2-tailed) column in Table 6.determine whether these differences between the mean scores of males and females were statistically significant or not.

Table 6. *Results of the Independent-Samples t Test for Comparing Male and Female Learners' Learning Styles' Components*

	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

Visual	7.94	.006	-2.50	98	.01	-3.00	1.19	-5.37	-.62
Auditory	24.57	.000	-20.06	98	.000	-8.20	.40	-9.01	-7.38
Tactile	15.99	.000	14.54	98	.000	8.34	.57	7.19	9.47
Kinesthetic	16.69	.000	13.62	98	.000	8.86	.65	7.56	10.15
Individual	.31	.575	-21.15	98	.000	-6.28	.29	-6.86	-5.69
Group	21.47	.000	2.24	98	.02	7.00	.31	.07	1.32

According to Table 6, there was a statistically significant difference in visual learning style scores for males (M = 23.80) and females (M = 26.80), t (25) = -2.50, p = .01 (two-tailed). This is so because the p value is less than the specified level of significance (i.e. .05). Thus, females had significantly better visual scores than did male learners.

Actually, for all other learning styles, the differences between males and females were found to be statistically significant. With regard to auditory learning style, the difference between males (M = 10.76) and females (M = 18.96) reached statistical significance (p = .000 < .05), with females significantly outperforming males in this aspect of learning style.

As for the tactile learning style, male learners (M = 21.72) significantly outperformed their female counterparts (M = 13.38), p = .000. The same result was obtained for kinesthetic learning style, i.e. male learners (M = 23.10) performed significantly better than female learners (M = 14.24), p = .000. This result also held true for group learning style, with males (M = 11.80) outperforming females (M = 11.10), p = .02.

However, female learners (M = 15.10) once again could gain higher scores than male learners (M = 8.82), this time for their individual learning style, p = .000. The results of the t test analyses are also graphically shown in Figure 1.

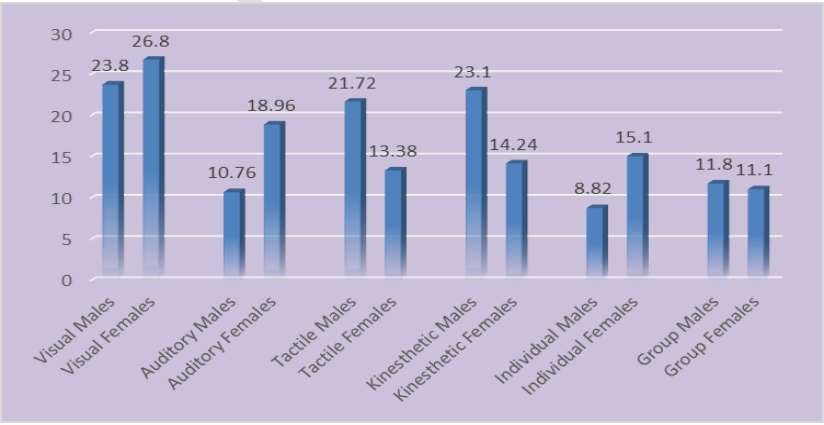

Figure 1. Mean scores of Male and Female Learners for Different Learning Styles

As it could be observed in Figure 4.1, the mean scores of male and female learners were substantially different for each and every type of learning style.

7.Discussion

Reading is a basic skill and comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand the meaning, they are not really reading. Studies (H. D. Brown, 2007; Sarasin, 1999) have shown that students respond differently in reading based on their learning styles. Therefore, the relationship between reading comprehension and learning styles is important to be studied, and this study will fill a need in this research. Perceptual learning styles (kinesthetic, tactile, auditory, and visual) affect the way that students prefer to learn and the areas in which they will have difficulty.

As for Question # 1 and as a result, there is a positive relationship between visual learning style and academic achievement of Iranian EFL male learners.A **positive correlation** means that both variables move in the same direction - as visual learning styles increase, reading scores increase, too. Moreover, there is a negative relationship between auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic, individual, and group learning and academic achievement of Iranian EFL male learners. A **negative correlation** means that the two variables move in the opposite direction from each other – as auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic, individual, and group learning increase, reading scores decrease or vice versa. In addition, as for Question # 1 and as a result, there is a positive relationship between visual, auditory and individual learning style and academic achievement of Iranian EFL female learners.

As for Question # 2 and as a result, there is a difference between Iranian male and female EFL learner as far as use of learning style is concerned. In line with the results, both male and female students prefer visual as their major learning style and male learners prefer tactile, kinaesthetic, and group learning style more than female learners.

8.Conclusion

This study concludes that learning style is one of many factors that affect students' academic achievement. The visual learning style was the main preference style for both, male and female students. The interaction between gender and learning styles had a significant effect on reading achievement. Gender was the common factor that affected reading achievement in general. Visual male students scored better in reading than students with other style preferences. On the other hand, visual and auditory female students scored better in reading than students with other style preferences.

An important conclusion of the study was that gender and learning styles are two factors that can influence reading achievement. The results showed that female students scored significantly higher than male students on reading achievement. In addition, the results show that auditory and individual learning styles were the least preferred for male students and tactile and kinesthetic learning styles were the least preferred for female students. This result is consistent with Slater et al. (2007) who reported that the auditory learning style preference was selected as the last preferred learning styles for male students in the first year of medical school.

Moreover, teaching each student according to his or her specific learning style is an unfeasible goal for schools in the light of curriculum requirements and limitations regarding the time available for subjects within school timetables. As a result, the Iranian education system (General and Higher) should adopt a schooling program which educates students based on their learning styles. This type of program could include workshops that encourage students to receive the information and modify the information to meet their strongest style. The program would aid in the preparation of students to deal with information which is mismatched to their learning style. For example, the visual learner,

when receiving verbal information, should be able to alter this information to create an image in their mind or draw the information on paper.

Without the ability to comprehend what he or she is reading, a person is in danger of dropping out of school, having lower paying jobs, and repeating the cycle with the next generation (Kutner et al., 2007). Thus, finding ways to help students who are struggling readers break the cycle of reading failure is vital. There is no simple, one-dimensional, causal relationship to explain students' reading struggles (Manuel, 2003). This research suggests that learning styles could be one factor affecting students' reading comprehension level. Moreover, learning styles should be taken into consideration when assessing progress in the development of students' reading skills. As a result, reading assessment tools should be varied and designed on the basis of learning style theories. These various reading assessment tools will give teachers an opportunity to select the assessment tool which best fits students learning styles, and that helps them to understand the question and, therefore, reflect their real achievement. The results could encourage educational companies to develop multisensory reading programs for female learners and visual learning style for male learners.

Educators could also use this study to justify exploring ways to help students learn to adapt their learning styles to allow them to succeed when taught or tested in ways that favor other styles. It is very important to understand and explore each individual's learning style. Analyzing one's own particular learning style can be very helpful and beneficial to the student by aiding them in becoming more focused on an attentive learner, which ultimately will increase educational success.

Discovering this learning style will allow the student to determine his or her own personal strengths and weaknesses and learn from them. Teachers can incorporate learning styles into their classroom by identifying the learning styles of each of their students, matching teaching style to learning style for difficult tasks, strengthening weaker learning styles through easier tasks and drill, and teaching students, learning-style selection strategies. It is important for students to have multiple learning opportunities and "learning style-shift" and teachers should achieve a match between teaching strategies and the students' unique learning styles.

Accommodating teaching to learning styles improves students' overall learning results, increases both motivation and efficiency and enables a positive attitude towards the language being learned. The purpose of using learning styles is to find the best ways for both students to learn effectively and teachers to teach efficiently.

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INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENTS' TRAINING WITH ADLER'S APPROACH ON REDUCTION OF IMPULSIVENESS AND IMPROVING SOCIAL PROBLEMS SOLVING SKILLS IN STUDENTS AFFLICTED WITH MATHEMATICAL DISORDER

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Abstract

The present research seeks to study the issue of parents‟ training with Adler's approach on reduction of impulsiveness and improving social problem solving skills in student afflicted with mathematical disorder. This study includes an experiment conducted by the pretest and posttest on the control group. The study population of this research included al the male students of Koohdasht city afflicted with mathematical disorder in the school year 2012-13. The participants in this study were 40 parents with mathematical disorder children chosen randomly among the parents of such students of 7 junior high schools in Koohdasht and put in the experiment and control (15 people for each group) groups. The impulsiveness and social problem solving questionnaires were used to collect data. The results of covariance analysis (MANCOVA) indicated that the treatment program of training parents with Adler's approach has some influence on reduction of impulsiveness and promoting social problem solving skills (P0.001). It reduces impulsiveness and promotes social problem solving skills in students afflicted with mathematical disorder. We can conclude that Adlerian therapy is an efficient method in promoting the behavioral signs of students afflicted with disorder and it is necessary to investigate its difference in other variables associated with students afflicted with mathematical disorder.

Keywords: parents‟ training, Adler's approach, impulsiveness, social problem solving, mathematical disorder.

Introduction

Based on the definition of individuals with disabilities education act, learning disability is a disorder in one or several basic psychological procedures which include comprehension of language or its application. This disorder is manifested in the form of disability in listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, or mathematical calculations. However, it does not include those learning problems caused as the result of visual, audio, or motor disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disorders, environmental, cultural or economical inappropriate conditions (Mcquillan, Coleman, Tucker & Thompson, 2011). The prevalence level of mathematical disability has been estimated between 5 to 8 percent (Shalev, Rauerbach, Manor & GrossTsur, 2000, Ramaa & Gowramma, 2002, Hale, Fiorello, Bertin & Sherman, 2003). In the cognitive patterns of mathematical problem solving proposed by

Mantago (2007), solving mathematical problems is considered to be a complex interplay between cognitive, hyper-cognitive, emotional and motivational components (Montaco, 2010; Stacy, 2008). Students afflicted with mathematical disability have a lot of problems in different fields such as solving oral problems and the skills associated with them, identifying the obvious information in problems, utilizing self-adjusting and self-observing strategies in the process of doing homework and concentrating attention till the end of homework (Pedrotty, 2010).

Problem solving ability is one of the variables whose investigation in students afflicted with mathematical disorders is of great importance. Problem solving and social problem solving abilities are vital life skills in the contemporary era. This skill plays a vital role in promoting the mental health (Tissdelle & Lawrence, 1986). Problem solving inabilities are associated with some emotional problems (Chang et al., 2004). The literature of the study has proved a relationship between effective problem solving ability and social and psychological merits (Tisdell and Lawrence, 1986). As a matter of fact, deficiencies in problem solving ability has been reported in disorders such as anxiety (Dugas et al., 1998) and depression (Watkins & Baracaia, 2002). In many definitions, social problem solving is considered to be a purposeful and conscious activity, and also a cognitive, purposeful and effective consequence (Nezu et al., 2005). D, Zurrila et al (2002) developed a pattern of social problem solving which consists of 5 dimensions.

Positive problem orientation and negative problem orientation are among orientation variables and the

remaining 3 dimensions are concerned with problem solving styles and patterns including rational problem solving, impulsivity/carelessness problem solving style, and avoidance problem solving style. Another factor which can influence the educational trend of students with mathematical disorders is impulsiveness. The impulsive behaviors are sometimes referred to as adventuresome behaviors which include a large set of actions upon which little thought has been devoted. They take place instantaneously and immaturely in the absence of an appropriate planning without concentration on a special task and possess high degree of risk and danger (Muller et al., 2001; Waxman, 2011). A review of the previous studies conducted on impulsiveness shows that impulsive behaviors are the main cause of many mental disorders such as hyperactivity/attention deficit, conduct disorder, impulse control disorder, drug abuse, Bulimia, suicidal behavior, personality disorders, and learning disorders (Doran, McCharge & Cohen, 2006; Fossati, Barratt, Borroni, Villa, Grazioli & Maffei, 2007; Ray Li, Chen, Lin & Yang, 2009). Today, impulsiveness is conceptualized in the form of a cognitive dimension, i.e. impulsiveness is accompanied with cognitive disinhibition, the slow and deficit trend of decision making and emotional instabilities (Dawe, Gullo & Loxton, 2012). One of the treatments which can have a good influence on reduction of the behavioral disorders in students afflicted with mathematical disorders is Adlerian therapy. Adlerian therapy is some sort of psychological-educational, present-future based and short term approach which is theoretically congenial, integrated and combined and clearly integrates all cognitive and systematic comprehensions (Mosak & Maniancci, 1999). As a matter of fact, the Adlerian approach is an introduced cognitive – behavioral and analytical approach (Mosak & Maniancci, 1999). Its psychological hypotheses and features have a great capability for application in various cultural populations (Wattes & Piterzak, 2000). The Adlerian therapist views his subjects as discourage people, not patients (Kanz, 2001). Thus, Adlerian do not seek to cure anything, but they consider treatment as an encouragement process (Wattes, 2008). According to Adler's approach, encouragement reinforces one's confidence, feeling and self-realization and can be considered as a key for self-development and education. Encouragement is a key concept in promoting and activating social desire of people (Evans, 2005). There are also various dimensions for encouragement and positive attitude and view, sense of belonging, and incompleteness courage are some of its very important dimensions (Dagley, Camphell, Kulic & Dagley, 2008). Thus, encouragement is not a special kind of language, but it is some sort of basic attitude based upon human nature (Evans, 2005).

The research results indicate that anger and impulsiveness can weaken cognitive performance and judgment and create controversies and, finally, prevent problem solving (Bodenhausen, 1993). Kopp

(2007) realized in one of his studies that educating parents with the Adlerian approach can help reduce the destructive behavior in aggressive children. Bradley (2003) trained 222 parents with the abovementioned method in a comprehensive study and realized that application of such method can significantly decrease the behavioral problems in children afflicted with learning disabilities. In another study, Gutierrez (2006) compared the Adlerian and behavioral approaches in reduction of behavioral disorders in Hispanic families of United States and realized that Adlerian and behavioral therapy had equally positive influences on improving the interfamily relationships and child rearing skills. Dagley, Camphell, Kulic & Dagley (2008) realized in their study that group education of parents based upon the Adlerian approach can promote positive self-view, sense of belonging, and educational self efficiency in students afflicted with learning disability. Messer (2006) realized that impulsive students have a poorer performance than reflective children in solving their mathematical homework and are incapable of preserving and retaining their attention while doing cognitive and emotional homework. The results also indicated that due to particular complexities of mathematics, impulsive students face more emotional and sentimental problems in solving mathematical problems. Liz Hartz &Lynette Thick (2011) showed in one of their studies that an Adlerian-based educational program can help reduce negative emotions and promote the social participation among aggressive students.

Overall, the results of the previous studies indicate that educating parents based upon the Adlerian approach as education method can have a great influence on reforming the cognitive and educational processes of children afflicted with learning disorders. On the other hand, if we take into consideration the long term consequences of mathematical disorder and its increasing prevalence among students and the vital role of mathematics in today's modern life, appropriate planning for rehabilitating such students and correction of their learning problems are quite necessary. Conducting several researches in this field and the absence of any researches about the effectiveness of this method on the emotional and social problems of students afflicted with learning disabilities, utilizing the results of this study in therapeutic and consulting environments and paving the way for future researches are issues that add credence to its novelty. Thus the goal of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of parents" training with the Adlerian approach on reduction of impulsiveness and promotion of social problem solving skills of students afflicted with mathematical disorders.

Methodology

This study includes an experiment conducted by the pretest and posttest on the control group in which the effectiveness of an independent variable (parents' education with Adlerian approach) on dependent variables (impulsiveness and social problem solving among the students afflicted with mathematical disorder) was investigated. An image of this plan is presented in table 1.

Table 1) the experiment plan with pretest-posttest with the control group

posttest	intervention	pretest	group	Sampling
20	X	10	E	R
50	-	40	C	R

The study population of this research included all parents of the male junior high school students of Koohdasht afflicted with mathematical disorder in the school year 2012-13. The research sample included 40 parents with mathematical disorder children chosen randomly among the parents of such students of 7 junior high schools in Koohdasht after interview and identification through Keymath test in 2012. Concerning the sample selection, we must remember that each sub-group must include at least 15 people. Should the selected sample be the real representative of society and the research have high external validity, the sample was assumed to consist of 40 people (20 for each group) (Delavar, 2011). The following tools were used to collect data in the present research:

Structural clinical interview for DSM-IV disorders: SCID is a semi-structural clinical interview used to identify disorders based on DSM. In a study conducted by Besco et al, the potential procedure

of SCID for use in mental health clinic was tested and the results indicated that it can be used to guarantee a valid and precise diagnosis (Mohammad Khani, Tabesh & Tamannaifar, 2005).

Keymath mathematical test: this test was normalized by Cornoli, Natchman & Pritchet in 1976. This test is used to determine the points of weakness and strength of students in various modules of mathematics. The validity coefficient of this test was calculated to be 0.80 based on Cronbach's alpha (Mohammad Ismail & Hooman, 2002). This test is used to identify students with mathematical disorders.

The impulsiveness scale: this scale was developed by Barrette (1994). This scale consists of 30 items and the respondents answer these items based on four degrees (never, sometimes, often, nearly and always). This scale measure three components of chaos, motor and cognitive impulsiveness (Besharat, 2007). In a pilot research, Poorkord (2009) reported the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the retest validity coefficient (after one month) of this scale as 0.87 and 0.79 respectively. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale was calculated to be 0.80.

Dizorilla's social problem solving revised questionnaire: Dizorilla et al (1999) have developed this questionnaire based on the empirical studies conducted in Spain (quoted by Abolghasemi and Narimani, 2005). This questionnaire consists of 52 items and the respondents answer the questions by a 5-degree Likert scale (completely wrong, completely right, moderately right, quite right, and nearly right). This questionnaire is organized in five scales of positive problem orientation, negative problem orientation, rational problem solving, the carless- impulsive style and organizational avoidant style. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for its scales in the American sample was reported to be between 45 to 91 percent, while in the Spanish sample it was reported to be between 46 to 85 percent. This questionnaire is translated to Persian and validated by Hedayati, Salehi, and Abolghasemi (2005).

Administration method: after making the arrangement with the Bureau of Education and Training and obeying the ethical considerations and stating the goals of the study, parents and teachers were informed about the research and the consent of parents was gained for participation in this study. In addition to justifying the parents who were the sample of the research and stating the goals of the study, the participants were asked to take part in the whole length of this educational period. Prior to starting the educational method, the pretest was administered for both groups and they were asked to answer the questionnaires according to their features. The test group undertook parents" training with Adlerian approach. The educational period consisted of 10 75-minute sessions held every week in the bureau of education and training. During these sessions and two weeks after the end of training, both groups took the posttest and the data collected were analyzed by multi-variable covariance analysis test method.

The educational sessions plan based on Adler's training plan (quoted from Ismaili Nasab, Alizadeh, Ahadi, Delavar & Eskandari, 2010): 10 educational sessions were organized based on the specific 6-step structure. The first step includes a tranquilizing exercise to help the participants get rid of their daily anxieties. During the tranquilizing exercises, the consultant gives those encouraging ideas and thoughts. Then, participants will be given time to discuss the feedback of the previous session's training and everyone is given one minute to tell the rest of the group something about his experience and assignment. Then, information concerning the particular topic which is the focus of that session will be taken into consideration. The fourth step consists of an exercise associated with this information. After the assignment for the next session is specified, the session ends with another tranquilizing exercise titled "the future step". During this exercise, the consultant asks the participants to think of methods by which they can apply the new skills and information of that session in their daily life. They are asked to imagine such situations. The titles for these ten sessions are:

First session: communication and emotional challenges. The participants also discuss and learn about encouraging behaviors and qualities;

Second session: teaching child rearing methods, the incorrect goals of the child; exploring the individual's quest and education of the concept of individual psychology consequentialism to the participants.

Third session: getting to know and challenge the life assignments and encouraging others and admitting your mistakes.

Fourth session: identifying the personal priorities and basic life mistakes, learning affectionate thinking and encouraging yourself and others.

Fifth session: exploring one's quest and gaining insight, learning cooperation skills, identifying and rebuilding the initial memories. This session also focuses on the influence of gossiping and backbiting on relationships and the integrity and unity.

Sixth session: it focuses on methods for creating positive relationships; this session also encourages individuals to know themselves, gain insight, evaluate the goals of life, and challenge themselves with a private logic.

Seventh session: gaining insight, encouragement and lionizing (steps taken to lionize yourself) and explaining and extending the sixth session.

Eighth session: investigating the role of yourself in tough situations and knowing the impediments on the path to gaining your goals, changing the role of emotions.

Ninth session: investigating self-image.

Tenth session: finally in the tenth session, there will be an evaluation of the previous sessions.

Results

The average and the standard deviation of the age of the students afflicted with mathematical disorders in the experiment and control groups were respectively 15.17 (and 3.28) and 14.45 (and 2.37). As for the fathers of the sample in the experiment and (control) group, the following results were reported about the number of their kids: 23.33 (and 21.36) with one kid, 22.15 (and 34.45) with two kids, 30.63 (and 28.25) with three kids, and 23.89 (and 15.94) with four kids and more. The following results were also reported about the educational level of fathers (and mothers) in the experiment group: 65 (and 59) percent below high school diploma, 25 (and 31) percent with high school diploma, 7 (and 7) percent with college diploma, 3 (and 3) percent undergraduate, and 7 (and 4) percent with post graduate degrees. As for the occupational status of fathers in the experiment (and control) group, 25 (and 33) percent of them were employees and 75 (and 67) percent of them were self- employed.

As it is seen in table 2, the average (and standard deviation) of the respondents" pretest score in the experiment group is 120.63 (and 13.89) in social problem solving and 82.36 (and 7.41) in impulsiveness. The posttest score of the respondents is 137.54 (and 16.47) in social problem solving and 65.39 (and 4.58) in impulsiveness. The average (and standard deviation) of the respondents" pretest score in the experimental group is 119.74 (and 13.58) in social problem solving and 81.36 (and 5.15) in impulsiveness. The posttest score of the respondents in control group is 122.65 (and 14.1) in social problem solving and 77.46 (and 5.89) in impulsiveness.

Table 2. the average and standard deviation of impulsiveness and social problem solving in the parents of students afflicted with mathematical disorder in both control and experiment groups

variable situation		experiment				Control			
		Pretest		posttest		pretest		Posttest	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD

social problem	120.63	13.89	137.54	16.47	119.74	13.58	122.65	12.1
impulsiveness	82.36	7.41	65.39	4.58	81.36	5.15	77.46	5.89

Table 3. Information concerning the credit indicators of multivariable covariance analysis test

influence	test	value	F	DF	DF error	P	Eta
	Pillai's	0.653	3.143	2	32	p≤0.001	0.653
group	Wilks	0.048	3.143	2	32	p≤0.001	0.653
	Hotelling	19.643	3.143	2	32	p≤0.001	0.653
	the largest	19.643	3.143	2	32	p≤0.001	0.653

The results of Wilks lambda test indicated that the majority of the group was significant in terms of combination of impulsiveness and social problem solving [Wilks, F (3,143) =0.048 , p≤0.001]. The above test has considered the capability of using multivariable covariance analysis (MANCOVA) acceptable. The results indicated a significant difference between at least one of the variables studied between the two groups studied. Prior to using multivariable covariance analysis parametric test in order to follow its hypotheses, we used Box and Lawn's tests. Based on the Box test which was not significant for any of the variables, the condition of homogeneity for variance/covariance matrixes was correctly observed (BOX=82.703 and F=1.323, P=0.27). Based on the Lawn's test and its insignificance for all variables, the condition of intergroup variances equality has been observed.

Table 4. Multivariable covariance analysis test results on the scores of impulsiveness and social problem solving components in the two groups of parents" training with the Adler's approach and control group

y-intercept							
	social problem	18213/410	2	6071.137	92.467	p≤0.001	0.894
group							
	social problem	7765.739	1	7765.739	118.276	p≤0.001	0.782
error							
	social problem	2166.698	33	65.658			
total							
	social problem	378084.000	37				

The results in table 4 indicate that there is a significant difference between the average scores of social problem solving (F=118.276) and impulsiveness (F=341.558) between parents education groups with Adler's approach and the control group (p≤0.001). In other words, these results indicates the promotion of social problem solving and reduction of impulsiveness in the test group that the control group.

Discussion and conclusion

The general purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of parents" training with Adlerian approach on reduction of impulsiveness and promotion of social problem solving in

students afflicted with mathematical disorder. Based on the results of this study, we may conclude that Adlerian therapy based on the compound pattern is effective in controlling the impulsiveness of parents of students with learning disorders, it has changed the parent- child relationships, and it has promoted the social problem solving skills and the psychological compliance of such students. Since no previous researches have been done on this issue, these results can be in line with other studies (for example Bradley, 2003; Dagley et al, 2007; Kopp, 2008). In describing these results, we can say that when people are confronted with stressful situations (such as scolding and humiliation by others), the show complicated responses. Some of these responses are irregular behavior and impulsiveness. As a matter of fact, the pressures put on parents with exceptional children reduces their tolerance of having such a child and result in their aggressive behavior. The external pressure can directly and indirectly influence the individual's health. By educating the parents and informing them, the pressure imposed upon them but the outdoor environment can be returned to the families. Various compound methods such as tranquilization, sympathy, encouragement and mixing them with the cognitive-behavioral approach like fighting off the negative thoughts can help people react against external pressures with greater compatibilities so that no irregular and impulsive behaviors may be shown (Zanganeh et al, 2010). In another description of these results, we can say that the relationships between parents and children can have a significant influence on the mental, physical, social and economic health of the child (Kazdin & Whitely, 2009). In fact, weak family interactions based on unstable child rearing based on punishment, cold or rejecting approach of parents, harsh and unstable discipline rules, unsafe emotional attachment, the insufficient control or observation of parents and devoting little time to the child and lack of positive relationship (Lango, Marki-dadz & Turner, 2003; Lango, Honorado & Bauhaus, 2007) are considered as dangerous and predictive factors which put these kids in the danger of showing aggressive behaviors (Webster-Strauten, 2005). On the other hand due to the emphasis of Adler's approach on responsibility, attempts for gaining superiority, searching for value and meaning in life, this approach teaches a development pattern to these parents in their interaction with kids. This approach is mostly concerned with teaching better ways to participants and emphasizing the problem-based approaches to education.

The results of this study also indicated that Adlerian therapeutic methods help increase social problem solving skills level in parents with students afflicted with mathematical disorder. In addition to confirming the results of the previous studies, these results are also in line with the results of the studies conducted by Gootierz (2006); Dagley, Campbell, Gleich and Dagley, (2008); and Lizharter and Lint Think, (2011). In justifying the effectiveness of Adlerian intervention in promoting problem solving skills, we can say it is quite possible that attending training sessions and getting to know other parents with children afflicted with learning disorders can make such a problem for the student and his family something quite usual and reduce their mental pressures, because only one student is usually diagnosed formally with learning disorders in a school and this sense of loneliness is troublesome for both the individual and his family. Thus, attending the sessions seems to inform parents of their kid's problem, help them admit it and deal rationally with this problem, and also identify their false believes and thoughts. On the other hand, as this approach is an eclectic approach, the importance of utilizing positive self-expression cannot be simply ignored. A mixture of cognitive-behavioral, systematic and analytical interventions for the first time gives the parents of these children the opportunity to assume the problem separated from their kid. They will also realize that apart from educational problems, their kids can have good and joyful relationships with others (Oslon, 1996). In another analysis of these results we can say that as children with learning disabilities are not able to meet the performance criteria of themselves, parents and teacher and experience repetitive failures, they usually utilize impulsive carelessness approach or negative orientation in dealing with a problem and this leads to self-humiliation, scolding and repetitive failures. By teaching the Adlerian approach, the expectations of the parents will be exactly matched with their kids" capabilities and this level of awareness of their kids' abilities helps parents to unanimously accept their kid. By teaching the encouragement approach, parents will have some sense of comfort and the cognitive-behavioral approach reduces paying attention to negative thoughts and scolding and humiliation of kids. This helps improve the educational, emotional and social effectiveness of

these students (Mercer, 2004). Of the limitations of this study we may refer to selection of students from kohdasht which limits the generalization of results to other cities. The sample of the study included just the male students of junior high school and this makes generalization of the results to female students difficult. Considering the prevalence of this disorder in childhood and adolescence and the growing number of cases reported in therapeutic centers, conducting psychological researches associated with this social problem can help identify and solve the psychological problems of these people. It is recommended that parents‟ educational programs with the Adlerian approach for promoting social problem solving and identifying and expressing the emotions in schools and families be taken into consideration by psychologists and consultants. This method can also be applied to disorders that simultaneously take place with learning skills such as conduct disorder, comparative disobedience disorder and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and consulting centers can also utilize these results.

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THE IMPACT OF USING TEACHER SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUES ON SPEAKING ABILITY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract

Both psychologists and educationalists have recently preferred to use the concept of "scaffolding" to describe the sensitive and active support provided by teachers during the process of learning. This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of teacher scaffolding on promoting the speaking skills by iranian efl learners. The researchers chose a total number of 60 male and female intermediate efl learners studying at a language institute in the wake of administering a general english placement test (oqpt). The participants were randomly assigned to two groups, 30 each. A speaking test was administered on the whole sample as the pretest. Hogan and pressley's (1997) guidelines were used in order to incorporate scaffolding techniques throughout the course. In fact, the experimental group was exposed to the guidelines which included items such as pre-engagement with the student and the curriculum, establishing a shared goal, actively diagnosing student needs and understandings, providing tailored assistance, maintaining pursuit of the goal, giving feedback and controlling for frustration and risk. The participants in the control group, however, did not receive any of these guidelines. Independent samples t test was used to analyze the data. The results confirmed the significant impact of teacher scaffolding on speaking proficiency in male and female efl learners.

Keywords: efl, scaffolding techniques, speaking proficiency, zpd

1. Introduction

The term scaffolding which was devised by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) is an important sociocultural concept. According to Wood et al., scaffolding "enables a novice to solve a problem, to carry out a task or to achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). They also stated that scaffolding may end in "development of task competence by the learner at a pace that would outstrip his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). A plethora of research has shown that language learning is not an individual process since in the presence of teachers and peers who support language learners, more success is gained (Cagiltay, 2006). In learning environments, support must be provided for the language learners in order for them to experience learning in meaningful contexts. Such kind of support is scaffolding. Scaffolding tasks can be provided along with the materials in order to enhance speaking ability of language learners. Language learners should be given the opportunity to criticize their speaking processes and practices. The teacher has a very crucial part, as the teacher not only guides the students through the stages of speaking, but also by scaffolding techniques motivates them to feel autonomous in learning. Scaffolding rooted from the Vygotsky's psychology in which he focused on the concept of zone of proximal development which is elaborated on in the next section, after which detailed explanation of scaffolding is presented.

1.1. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Mercer (1995) states that most probably learning occurs in a domain which is called the Zone of Proximal Development (or ZPD). Accordingly, it can be understood that there are two developmental levels within the learner: the actual developmental level, which is the learner's independent capability, and the potential level of development, which is the learner's capability with the help or support of others. These two levels are explained via ZPD as follows:

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"The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

Vygotsky's (1938/1978, as cited in Mercer, 1995) theory of individuals' capability for learning is put in the "zone of proximal development." ZPD shows the domain which the learner is ready to discover; however, in order for this to happen, some help from a more experienced partner is needed (Briner, 1999). The word "teacher" is used in the present study to refer to the more knowledgeable person.

According to Vygotsky (1987, as cited in Mercer, 1995), good learning involves the mastering of some skills which are beyond the student's capability. Such learning occurs through interaction within the student's zone of proximal development.

The concept of ZPD has a number of implications for teachers and learners. An important implication is that learning has a special social nature through which learners get involved into the intellectual life of others (Vygotsky, 1978). As far as language learning is concerned, the validity of the learning environment and the similarity between its participants cause the learner to associate with this environment. In typical classrooms, these kinds of interactions are less observed.

1.2. Scaffolding

Maybin, Mercer and Stierer (1992) state that scaffolding is a help or assistance that provides a child with the capability to do a task which they cannot do by themselves. According to Mercer (1995, p. 74) scaffolding is the special kind of support that teachers provide during the process of learning. In fact, scaffolding is a technique in teaching that helps students in doing a task with less intervention from the teacher. Evans and Green (2007, p. 3) believe that "scaffolding enables a learner to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted effort." Kim (2006, p. 43) claims that "Support activities are called scaffolding because they provide support for learning that can be taken down and removed as learners are able to demonstrate strategic behaviors in their own learning activities". ZPD is based on Vygotsky's (1978) focus on the importance of learning aid that is adjusted to the learner's potential development (Harris & Hodges, 1995). The degree of support changes over time; for example, as Berk and Winsler (1995, p. 171) state "More support is offered when a task is new; less is provided as the child's competence increases, thereby fostering the child's autonomy and independent mastery.

Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) believe that scaffolding serves the following purposes:

"1. Recruiting interest in the task;

2. Simplifying the task;

3. Maintaining pursuit of the goal;

4. Marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution;

5. Controlling frustration during problem-solving; and

6. Demonstrating an idealized version of the act to be performed" (p.56)

Scaffolding can be applied to different contexts and for different language skills. In Iranian EFL context, it seems that the speaking skill is paid inadequate attention to by teachers, and scaffolding techniques should be called upon in order to improve this skill. Despite the fact that textbooks contain a good degree of conversation and speaking exercises, still teachers make their own decision as to what to cover or what to emphasize in classroom. As a result, there is a need for greater emphasis on how to support students by teacher as a capable source of support that provides different scaffolding

in speaking classes, and even how to engage learners directly in improving their speaking through scaffolding techniques. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate speaking improvement with regard to teacher's scaffolding. To this end, the focus of this study was to investigate the impact of teacher's scaffolding on speaking skill of EFL learners in Iran.

Recently, instructional methods try to engage learners in knowledge construction in order to solve their problems (Reiser, 2004). In order for meaningful learning to happen, a suitable strategy should be utilized like self-questioning, semantic mapping, and summary writing. If, students get help, they can reach a goal that is beyond their reach. Reiser (2004) states that in scaffolding, learners receive support and help to do a special task. Without this help, these tasks are over the learners' head; therefore, students can improve their performance this way. Vacca (2008) believes that as guidance and help is provided for students, they become more successful.

It has been noticed that teaching the speaking skill has attracted the attention of many researchers and course designers. The present researchers think that applying scaffolding techniques in teaching speaking might be helpful in the area of L2 instruction in general and speaking instruction in particular.

Therefore, the present researchers tried to adopt some scaffolding techniques to reveal if these techniques could improve the speaking ability of Iranian language learners. In Iranian context, most of the EFL learners usually are not competent enough in the speaking ability, even after they graduate. The researchers believe that if the language teachers try harder in speaking classes, this problem can be obviated. The problems with which foreign language learners encounter urged the researchers to investigate the impact of teacher scaffolding and different supports during speaking classes to enhance the speaking ability of the learners. In fact, the researchers thinks that with some support on the part of the language teachers in speaking classes, the EFL learners can be more competent in speaking ability.

1.3. Research Question and Hypothesis

The present study sought to answer the following research question: Does using scaffolding techniques in English speaking classes have any statistically significant effect on speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners?

Due to the nature of the research question of this study, the formal statements of the hypothesis was provided as the following: H0: Using scaffolding techniques in English classes does not have any statistically significant effect on speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners.

2. Review of the Literature

A number of studies in the literature have investigated characteristics of oral proficiency. Some studies have tried to explore the problems of oral proficiency in EFL and/or ESL contexts. For example, Gan (2013) investigated the problems with oral English skills of ESL students at a teacher training institution in Hong Kong. He used semi-structured interviews to address the gap in our understanding of the difficulties ESL students encountered in their oral production. It was found that insufficient opportunities to speak English in lectures, lack of a focus on language improvement in the curriculum, and the input-poor environment for spoken communication in English outside class were considered as the problems which language learners were faced with in oral production.

In another study on speaking, Bashir (2011) showed the features of a successful class and noted that language learners need to recognize that speaking involves the following areas of knowledge: 1) mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): Using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation, 2) functions (transaction and interaction): Knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relationship building).

A brief review of the existing literature on the impact of scaffolding on speaking proficiency reveals that not much research has been done in this area; however, peer scaffolding in writing in EFL contexts forms the largest volume of research in the area of scaffolding in L2 learning (Storch, 2002, 2005, 2007; Shehadeh, 2011).

As with the present study, Bruch (2007) used teacher scaffolding techniques to study the effects of scaffolding of ten students on their reading and writing. Developmental Reading Assessment, checklists, observational data, writing samples, and running records were used. Teachers' scaffolding techniques included specific prompts, guided reading and writing groups, direct and explicit teaching. It was shown that scaffolding was very important and effective. The reason that this researcher provided was that scaffolding caused the learners to become more confident and independent. A progress was seen when students were supported and scaffolded.

In another study, Anthony (2007) studied the effects of scaffolding on reading comprehension of language learners using higher order questions. The results showed that students' writing has statistically improved in response to reading, and these writings revealed higher order understanding of text, while reading comprehension advancement was questionable when scaffolding was used.

In another study, Mehdian (2009) used scaffolding strategies on reading ability of Iranian EFL learners. The students made use of the second level of apprenticeship by working together and thinking together. Data were collected using observation field notes and students' reflections. He found that the scaffolding provided was effective in terms of building self-confidence, better students' reflections, and better reading and comprehension of the written text.

A more recent work on scaffolding and its relationship with students' performance in reading comprehension is that of Pishghadam and Ghardiri (2011). They compared the effect of Symmetrical (S) and Asymmetrical (AS) scaffolding on reading comprehension of adult learners of English as a foreign language. The results of the study revealed that the groups' performance varied on reading comprehension and results indicated better performance of students who received instruction through the AS scaffolding strategy, whereas the students of the S group had the lower mean on the posttest.

All of Iranian EFL learners start learning English at junior high school, and some attend university to follow the carrier of mastering English as a foreign language, yet the problem is that most are far from attaining the desired level of proficiency in the target language, especially in productive skills. Despite being exposed to English instruction for a long time at different levels, the reasons for the poor foreign language skills of students have long been a matter of discussion among educators. This is the case of EFL students, whose level in speaking proficiency is very low. Although a huge amount of time and effort is spent, students cannot go beyond the basics, and have difficulty in developing their target language speaking proficiency unless they are supported.

Students majoring in English at English language colleges encounter many challenges, which require investigation. Examples of these challenges include the gap between what level of English they have after graduation and what level they should be in. Differently stated, most of the Iranian EFL graduates are not at the level to write and speak in English legibly, and at the same time, there is a great gap between their oral production in English and their writing ability. This made conducting the present study a worthwhile endeavor.

The relevant review of the researches shows that not much research exists on the effect of scaffolding on oral proficiency of EFL learners. Therefore, the study is hoped to shed more light on this topic by investigating the effects of teacher scaffolding on speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

A sample of 60 male and female intermediate EFL students studying at a language institute were selected non-randomly by applying a general English placement test, namely Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT, hereafter). The participants' age ranged from 15-25, with a mean age of 23. To assure the homogeneity of the participants considering their language proficiency, OQPT (version 2001) was run among all the intermediate students, and a truly homogeneous sample (i.e., those students with a score 1*SD* above or below the mean) was selected. Their homogeneity in terms of speaking was established using an oral test as well. The participants were then divided into experimental and control groups, 30 each.

3.2. Instruments and Materials

The instruments in the current study included:

(a) Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) to identify the general proficiency level of the participants. This an internationally-known, widely-used test to place the learners at the right level of English proficiency, and includes 60 multiple-choice questions on vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension.

(b) An oral proficiency test, used as the pretest, to identify the homogeneity of the participants in terms of their speaking ability, and as the posttest, to understand whether changes could be observed between the two groups or not.

The materials used in the experiemental group classes included Hogan and Pressely's (1997) guidelines for teacher scaffolding. Hogan and Pressley stated eight essential elements of scaffolding instruction that teachers can use as general guidelines:

- Pre-engagement with the student and the curriculum. The teacher considers curriculum goals and the students' needs to select appropriate tasks.
- Establishing a shared goal. The students may become more motivated and invested in the learning process when the teacher works with each student to plan instructional goals.
- Actively diagnosing student needs and understandings. The teacher must be knowledgeable of content and sensitive to the students (e.g., aware of the students' background knowledge and misconceptions) to determine if they are making progress.
- Providing tailored assistance. This may include cueing or prompting, questioning, modeling, telling, or discussing. The teacher uses these as needed and adjusts them to meet the students' needs.
- Maintaining pursuit of the goal. The teacher can ask questions and request clarification as well as offer praise and encouragement to help students remain focused on their goals.
- Giving feedback. To help students learn to monitor their own progress, the teacher can summarize current progress and explicitly note behaviors that contributed to each student's success.
- Controling for frustration and risk. The teacher can create an environment in which the students feel free to take risks with learning by encouraging them to try alternatives.
- Assisting internalization, independence, and generalization to other contexts. This means that the teacher helps the students to be less dependent on the teacher's extrinsic signals to begin or complete a task and also provides the opportunity to practice the task in a variety of contexts.

In addition to the Hogan and Pressely's scaffolding guidelines, some other techniques were used to implement the scaffolding properly in experimental group. They are explained in the procedure section.

3.3. Procedures

After establishing the homogeneity of the participants in terms of their language proficiency through the OQPT, they were divided into two groups namely experimental and control groups. An oral test then was applied as the pretest to assure the homogeneity of the learners in terms of their speaking ability. Based on Hogan and Pressley's (1997) model, the following points were used as guidelines when implementing instructional scaffolding to the experimental groupers.

Advance organizers: Tools used to introduce new content and tasks to help students learn about the topic; Venn diagrams to compare and contrast information; flow charts to illustrate processes; organizational charts to illustrate hierarchies, and outlines that represented content were used. The researchers provided the participants with some charts and diagrams and supported the learners to speak about them. The charts and diagrams were mainly those used in the IELTS tests.

Cue Cards: These are prepared cards given to individual or groups of students to assist in their discussion about a particular topic or content area: Vocabulary items to prepare for exams; content-specific stem sentences to complete; formulae to associate with a problem; concepts to define. These cards were prepared in advance and some of them were those cards used in the IELTS speaking test.

Concept and mind maps (Maps that show relationships): Partially completed maps were prepared either on cards or on the board for students to complete or the students created their own maps based on their knowledge of the task or concept.

Examples: Samples, specimens, illustrations, problems and real objects were used to represent something about which the students were talking.

Question cards: Prepared cards with content- and task-specific questions were given to individuals or groups of students to ask each other relevant questions about a particular topic or content area.

Question Stems: Incomplete sentences which students completed encouraged deep thinking among them. Therefore, the researchers gave the learners some incomplete sentences based on the content and the tasks of the course book and they were asked to complete them.

Stories: Stories relate complex and abstract material to situations more familiar with students. The researchers recited stories to inspire and motivate learners.

Visual Scaffolds: Pointing (call attention to an object); representational gestures (holding curved hands apart to illustrate roundness; moving rigid hands diagonally upward to illustrate steps or process), diagrams such as charts and graphs; methods of highlighting visual information were applied in speaking classes to encourage learners express their knowledge. In addition to the above, the following points were considered too:

Suitable tasks that matched curriculum goals and students' needs were selected. The students were allowed to help create instructional goals (this can increase students' motivation and their commitment to learning).

The students' backgrounds and prior knowledge were considered to assess their progress (materials that were too easy quickly bored students and reduced motivation. On the other hand, materials that were too difficult could turn off students' interest levels).

Encouragement and praise were provided and the students were asked to explain their progress to help them stay focused on the goal.

The students' progress was monitored through feedback (in addition to instructor feedback, the students were asked to summarize what they had accomplished so they were aware of their progress).

It was tried to provide a welcoming, safe, and supportive learning environment that encourages students to take risks and try alternatives (everyone should feel comfortable expressing their thoughts without fear of negative responses).

For the participants in control group no scaffolding technique like the techniques proposed by Hogan and Pressely (1997) was utilized and they were exposed to the traditional method of teaching speaking and regular exercises were applied on them. The exercises used in control group included items like group discussion, introducing new words, asking and questions by the teacher.

4. Results

At the outset of the study, a speaking pretest was administered on the participants of the two groups. However, before further analysis of the scores, it was necessary to make sure that the conditions of running a parametric test (i.e. *t* test) were met. Normality of distribution is an important criterion before running *t* test. To test normality of the distribution of the scores, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was run on the scores of control and experimental groups. Tables 1 and Table 2 show the results of analyzing the normality of distribution of the scores of speaking pretest of the experimental and control group.

Table 1

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Experimental Group Pretest

		Pretest
N		30
Normal Parameters	*M*	25.73
	SD	3.89
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.12
	Positive	.09
	Negative	-.12
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.69
Asymp. *Sig.* (2-tailed)		.71

As Table 1 shows, the significance level is .71 which is higher than the specified level of significance (.71 > .05), so it was concluded that the distribution of the scores in the pretest of experimental group was normal. The same procedure was followed for the control group, the results of which are presented below.

Table 2

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Control Group Pretest

		Pretest
N		30
Normal Parameters[a]	*M*	24.20
	SD	3.75
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.12
	Positive	.12
	Negative	-.09
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.66
Asymp. *Sig.* (2-tailed)		.77

According to Table 2, the significance level was .77, which is higher than the specified level of significance (.77 >.05), so it can be claimed that the distribution of the scores of the control group in the pretest was normal. Having ensured the normality of the distribution of the pretest scores, the performance of the participants were compared. In the following section, the results are analyzed, and Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of The Speaking Pretest of Experimental and Control Groups

	Groups	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Std. Error Mean
Pretest scores	Control Group	30	25.73	3.89	.71
	Experimental Group	30	24.20	3.75	.68

As the results in Table 4.3 show, the mean score of the experimental group was 24.20, and that of the control group was 25.73. This shows a mean difference of 1.53 which seems not to be significant. However, to ensure the lack of significance of the mean difference, an independent-samples *t* test was run the results of which are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Results of the Independent Samples Test of the Scores of the Speaking Pretest

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	*t* test for Equality of Means

									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	*Sig.*	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.34	.55	1.55	58	.12	1.53	.98	-.44	3.51
	Equal variances not assumed			1.55	57.92	.12	1.53	.98	-.44	3.51

Based on the results given in Table 4, the significance value was .12, which is higher than the identified level of significance (.12 > .05). Thus, it could be concluded that there was no significant difference between the performance of experimental and control groups at the beginning of the study.

After the treatment was conducted, the participants sat for a speaking posttest; then, the results were compared. In order to find out which statistical procedure suited the analysis, at first the scores of each group were exposed to tests of normality of distribution. Table 5 illustrates the results of distribution normality of the control group in posttest.

Table 5

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Experimental Group Posttest

		Posttest
N		30
Normal Parameters	*M*	37.30
	SD	4.79
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.14
	Positive	.14
	Negative	-.10
Kolmogorov-Smirnov *Z*		.76
Asymp. *Sig.* (2-tailed)		.59

Based on the results shown in Table 5, the significance value was .59, which is higher than the identified level of significance (.59 > 0.05); therefore, it can be said that the scores were normally distributed. The same test was conducted for the control group, the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Control Group Posttest

		Posttest
N		29
Normal Parameters	*M*	28.72
	SD	4.78
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.15
	Positive	.15
	Negative	-.11
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.82
Asymp. *Sig.* (2-tailed)		.50

According to Table 6, the significance value was .50, which is higher than .05, so it can be claimed that the scores are normally distributed. Having set the distribution normality of the posttest scores, the mean scores of the experimental and control group were compared. Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of the Speaking Posttest of Experimental and Control Groups

	Groups	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Std. Error Mean
Scores	Control Group	30	29.23	3.72	.68
	Experimental Group	30	37.30	4.79	.87

As it can be seen in Table 7, the mean difference of the experimental and control group in the posttest was 8.07, with the mean score of experimental group being 37.30 and that of control group being 29.23. The difference between the two groups is likely to be shown to be statistically significant. Figure 1 shows the differences in pictorial format.

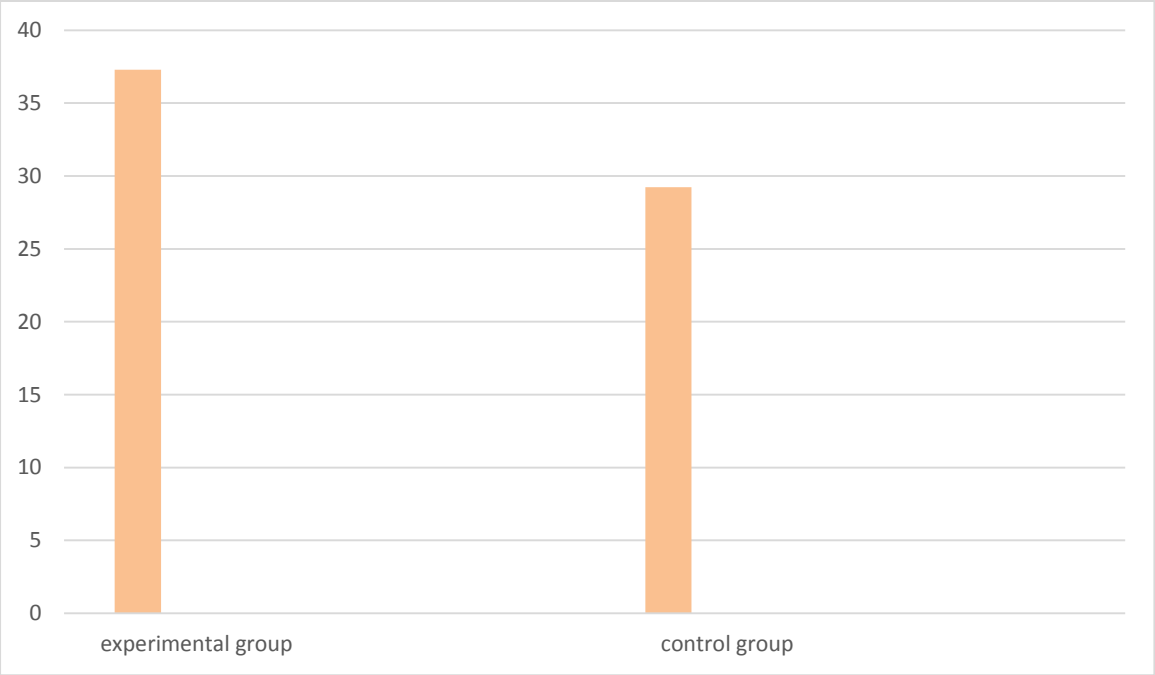

Figure 1. The Mean Difference Between the Performance of the Experimental and Control Groups in Posttest

The difference between the performances of the two groups is crystal clear in Figure 1. The left bar, representing the experimental group was taller than the one on the right, which shows the control group. To be more objective for this claim an independent samples *t* test was run on the mean scores of the two groups. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

The Results of the Independent Samples Test of the Scores of the Speaking Posttest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	*Sig.*	*T*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
scores	Equal variances assumed	2.14	.149	-7.27	58	.000	-8.06	1.10	-10.28	-5.84
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.2	54.69	.000	-8.06	1.10	-10.28	-5.84

The significance level in Table 8 is .000, which is smaller than the identified level of significance (.000 < .05). This expresses the fact that the difference between the performance of the experimental and control groups was statistically significant. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis of the research. Differently stated, when the teacher scaffolding techniques are planted in speaking classes, this leads to more desirable outcomes.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the data gained from this study and the statistics presented above, it seems that teaching speaking via teacher scaffolding techniques has a significant positive effect on enhancing speaking proficiency of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The reason for such findings may be due to the fact that scaffolding requires 1) the teacher's involvement in the learner's learning, 2) an active learner, and 3) a challenging learning task which requires particular support from the teacher in order for the learner to complete the task. The essence of scaffolding is that when pupils are learning new skills, they are given more assistance. As they begin to demonstrate more developing levels, the assistance or support is decreased gradually in order to shift the responsibility of learning from the teacher to the pupil.

Such a concept of scaffolding is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978), who proposed that with the assistance of an adult, learners could accomplish tasks that they ordinarily could not perform independently. More active language teachers in class lead the learners to get along better in language learning classes. While it comes to a productive language skill such as speaking, the influence becomes more obvious.

However, there is a more recent tendency to broaden the field of scaffolding, referring to it as the support the teacher gives to the pupil in any number of ways, ranging from hints or feedback to doing the task for the pupil as demonstration (Stager & Harman, 2002).

In general, it should be said that scaffolding is a supportive activity, and planting such activities in EFL classrooms will enhance the performance of language learners. EFL classrooms in Iran will benefit more of the scaffolding techniques. This may be due to the fact that English is taught in Iran as a foreign language and the language learners are exposed to language only inside classroom. Therefore, the Iranian EFL learners mostly rely on their teacher, and they will take advantage of the teacher's behavior. The results of this study support the study by O'Malley et al. (1985), in which high school ESL students were randomly assigned to receive learning strategy training on vocabulary, listening, and speaking tasks. Results indicated that strategy support techniques can be effective for integrative language tasks.

The results of the present research also are in line with a study that was run by Mehdian (2009) in which he exposed the participants to eight-week intervention (35 hours) after which they all sat for a posttest. The participant teacher used modeling and carefully prepared scaffolding strategies. He offered personalized scaffolding, in addition to guided practice for pair and group work. The students made use of the second level of apprenticeship by working together, thinking together and by making their thinking process visible to themselves and to the other students as well. Think-aloud process, cueing, prompting, and group discussions were also applied. Gradually, the students were offered more reading tasks and were asked to try their best to perform them independently. Data were collected using observation field notes, students' reflections, insights from the final interview and the overall feedback obtained from the peer observation sessions. The comparison between the pre and posttest scores of all students revealed better performance on the posttest. It was also found that the scaffolding provided was effective in terms of building self-confidence, better students' reflections, and better reading and comprehension of the written text.

Moreover, the results of the current study lend credit to the studies by Storch (2002, 2005, 2007) and Shehadeh (2011), who showed the contributory role of scaffolding in L2 writing, and Bruch (2007) who used teacher scaffolding techniques and witnessed their positive effects on the reading comprehension of L2 learners.

Implications of the current study are, hence, quite straightforward and predictable: L2 teachers are recommended to utilize scaffolding techniques if they long for their learners' improvement in L2 learning in general, and speaking improvement in particular. Moreover, materials developers are advised to design learning activities so that they lend themselves to teacher/peer scaffolding.

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INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATING COGNITIVE PROCESSING-BASED SOCIAL SKILLS ONIMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS AND LIFE QUALITY IN STUDENTS AFFLICTED WITH DYSLEXIA

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Abstract
This study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of educating cognitive processing based social skills on improvement of social skills and life quality in students afflicted with dyslexia. This test was administered in a quasi-experimental method through pretests and post-test on the control group. The study population included all the male students of Kohhdasht city in the academic year 2014-15 aging 12 to 16. The research sample included 30 dyslexic male students chosen among dyslexic students after structural clinical interview and teacher's reports and placed randomly in the experiment and witness groups. Mathson's social skills scale (1983) and social life (SF-36) were used to sum up the data. The results of the multivariable covariance analysis (MANCOVA) shows that teaching cognitive processing based social skills has a positive effect on the improvement of the social skills and life quality in the dyslexic students ($P<0.001$). Since dyslexic students experience depression and loneliness in addition to educational problems and show lower levels of social interaction compared to the normal students, this intervention can help improve their social skills.

Keywords: cognitive processing-based social skills, social skills, life quality, learning disorders, students

Introduction

All the students in literate societies have the right to literacy and according to the system of training and education, students are expected to be able to read fluently and comprehend what they have read

by the end of the elementary level, thus they must be able to read in order to learn (Education for all, 2011). As a result, there are great concerns about students who have reading (and writing) problems in the school. So, it must be noted that reading problems are associated with the educational system and guarantee no position in psychology. However, dyslexia is usually associated with other neuro-developmental disorders such as disruptive behavioral disorders and anxiety increases in the people afflicted with dyslexia (Karl & Iles, 2006; quoted by Margaret, Snowling and Hulme, 2012). Thus, dyslexia must also be considered from a psychological point of view: decoding problems (dyslexia) and comprehension disorders (Kine, 2010 and Hulme and Snowling, 2009; [4]. These 2 different types of dyslexia have 2 different reasons and require different treatments. In the fifth edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental disorders (DSM-5), the term dyslexia is not used and neuro-psychological disorders category is used in its place. Of all different disorders whose beginning dates back to pre-schools stage or before that, this category only includes learningdisorders and communication disorders. Thereare 3 different forms of dyslexia and 7 different forms of communication disorders, but what is vague in DSM-5 list is the internal relationship between different disorders.

Dyslexia is damage that influences the decoding skill and is replaced by the "reading disorder" in DSM-5. The recommended definitions of DSM-5 of dyslexia generally has the following features:

1- Problems in the accuracy and eloquent reading which are not compatible with educational opportunities or intelligence skills. 2- Disorder in criteria 1without the matching power of the eye shows a significant intervention with educational development and daily life activities which require these reading skills. Spelling problems are not included in (DSM-5), while dyslexic people have problems in spelling and writing which are usually more severe and lasting than their other reading problems (Brook, 1990; Magan, 2009[4] . Contrary to reading disorders which take place in decoding skill in the level of the word, poor comprehenders perform a satisfactory decoding, yet they have problems understanding what they have read (Hulme et al.,2011; quoted by Margarit et al., 2012).

One of the possible problems in people with learning disorders is the problems associated with social skills. Social skills is a set of acquired behaviors which enable an individual to establish an effective relationship with others and refrain from unwise social reactions. Cooperation, participation, giving help, starting a relationship, asking for help, complementing and appreciating others are examples of such behaviors. Learning these behaviors and establishing an effective relationship with others are some of the most important achievements of childhood period. Unfortunately, not all children manage to acquire such skills [18], thus they usually face negative reactions from their peers. Those children who have acquired sufficient social skills are more successful than those without such skills in establishing a relationship with their peers [8], DeRosier, 2010) and learning in educational environment [37], [19]. Slow Mouski & Dann (1996; [21], describe cognition and social skill as a process which enables kids and adolescents to predict and understand others' behaviors, control their own behavior and regulate their social interactions. The research results indicate that children with learning disorders have problems in interpersonal skills [25], Wienner, 2004), depression and other disorders associated with mood [39], [31], social information processing [11]. More problems in social interactions and social skills [2], high levels of social rejection and loneliness [16], and adjustment problems [7], [30], Weiner, 2004; [9]. One of the variables which can influence different aspects of the life of the students with dyslexia is the quality of life. Life quality is a range of the objective needs of each individual which are acquired is relationship with his individual understanding of the sense of goodness. The favorable quality of life does not necessarily mean absence of disease; it means the sense of wellness in various mental, social, performance and spiritual terrains (Zhang, Wisniewski & Bauer, 2006). As the quality of life is not a concerned with quantity and has different definitions and connotations for various individuals, World Health Organization (WHO) considers quality of life as a multidimensional concept and defines it as each individual's understanding of his life, values, goals, standards and personal interests. Sense of security, emotional conflicts, personal believes, the goals and levels of tolerating failures influence the way an individual perceives himself (the sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction) (WHO, 2007).

Today, new educational methods are used in the field of psychology to treat people with certain learning disabilities, one of which is education of cognitive processing-based social skills. Over the recent years, cognitive processing or, in other words, problem solving in education of social skills has gained greater acceptance [5]. As this approach makes people think, it will be much easier to generalize the social skills trained and people start learning skills more actively in comparison with the direct education approach. Instead of teaching social skills individually to each person, we tried to teach them problem solving skills based on their social conditions. Attempts were made to improve social problem solving skills in such a way that the individuals may pass different social conditions successfully (Veber & Strawton, 1998; quoted by Tekin Arsalan & SucoGlu, 2007). These skills help individuals gain a positive feedback in social environments, prevents them from encountering negative feedbacks, and facilitate interpersonal relationships for them [36].

After extensive researches, Addpow (2005; [36]. concludes that elementary students with abnormal behavior are capable of successfully acquiring social skills (quoted by Karimi et al.

2009). Jane [22] arrived at the conclusion that students afflicted with dyscalculia which have undergone trainings about cognitive processing- based social skills showed a higher level of social adjustment in their interpersonal relationships as compared to their peers in the control group. Bajanli (2008; quoted by Brian, 2010) showed in his research that teaching social skills improves interpersonal relationships, emotional, social and educational efficiency. Curtis & Elliot [13] arrived at the conclusion that teaching the cognitive processing-based social skills results in welfare, social, emotional and psychological improvement in mentally retarded students. The results of their researches showed that students in the experiment group benefited from a higher level of social adjustment as compared with students in the witness group. [28], [23] in their research titled "Investigating the effectiveness of educating social skills on the improvement of social and emotional skills in the students afflicted with dyscalculia" realized that such education helps improve the social and emotional skills of the students in the experiment group as compared to the witness group. In a research titled "The effectiveness of teaching cognitive processing-based social skills in improving the quality of interpersonal relationships in the students afflicted with special learning disabilities", Norimaki, Bagian Kooleh Marz and Abbasi [5] realized that teaching such skills results in the improvement of the interpersonal relationship of the students afflicted with special learning disabilities.

On the whole, considering the psychological properties, behavioral problems, mood states (anxiety and stress), limited interpersonal relationships, experiencing negative emotions by these students [23], comorbidity of dyslexia with other mental disorders of the childhood period, high prevalence of this disorder among students and the role of teaching social skills as key factors in success; thus improving the health and reduction of psychological problems of such students and the research gaps in this field and using the results of this research for pathology and treatment of those suffering from learning disabilities are important necessities of this study. Thus, the goal of the present research is to investigate the effectiveness of teaching cognitive processing-based social skills on improvement of social skills and life quality of dyslexic students.

Methodology

Research design: in this study, we used semi- experimental research design. The experiment design of the current research includes a pretest – posttest design with the witness group and consisted the following executive stages: 1- accidental replacement of the participants; 2- administering the pretest and collecting data; 3- administering the independent variable (teaching the cognitive processing-based social skills) on the experiment group, and 4- administering the posttest and collecting the data.

Community, sample and sampling method: the study population of this research included all the dyslexic male students of the junior high school level in Koohdasht in the academic year

2014-15 who were introduced as dyslexic students based on their teachers' diagnosis. Available sampling method was utilized in this research. 10 junior high schools were selected among all the junior high schools of Koohdasht. Then, interviews were held with the teachers of these schools and students suspected of dyslexia (numbering 40) were introduced based on the criteria of DSM-IV-TR. As the study population was limited, the research sample also formed the study population based upon which, 40 dyslexic students were selected according to the diagnostic criteria of this research and placed in the experiment and witness groups (15 people each group). Concerning the choice of sample, we must point to the fact that in the experimental method, each subgroup must include at least 15 people and if the selected sample is to be a real representative of the population and if the research is to have a high level of external validity, the number of participants in the sample is to be equal to the number of those in population [1] .Through application based upon the reports recorded in the student's file (intelligence and diagnosis tests and teachers' reports) and the structural clinical interview based on DSM-IV-TR; the entrance and exit criteria of the participants' homogeneity standards were observed: A- entrance criteria which include receiving dyslexia diagnosis, aging

12 to 16 years old; having the average IQ in Raven's colorful progressive matrix test (Abedi et al., 2011) and absence of sensual, neurological disability; B- exit criteria including severe accompanying disorders such as attention defect/hyperactivity, oppositional defiance disorder (ODD) and depression and having an IQ level below 85 in Raven's progressive matrices test. Considering the morality standards, all the respondents and their parents were asked to fill the moral form of agreement for participating in the research. The researchers also guaranteed to teach the cognitive processing-based social skills to the witness group, too. The following tools were utilized to collect data in the present research:

1- Structural clinical interview for DSM-IV disorders: SCID is a semi-structural clinical interview which is used for diagnosis of axis one disorders based on DSM. In a research conducted by Besco et al, the potential uses of SCID for use in mental health clinic were tested and the final conclusion was that SCID can be used to guarantee an accurate and valid diagnosis (Mohammad Khani, Tabesh & Tamanaieefar,

2005).

2-Raven's intelligence test: this test was designed by Raven (1962; quoted by Seyed Abbas Zadeh, Ganji & Shirzad, 2003) in England to measure the intelligence in the age group of 9 to 18 and includes 60 items (5 series, each including 12 items). The internal consistency coefficient and the retest validity coefficient were respectively reported as 0.90 and 0.82. The correlation of this test with intelligence tests of Veksler, Stanford-Bineh, mazes of Proteos and Goodinov's Homunculus were in the range of 0.40 to 0.75. This correlation has been reported to be higher in non-verbal tests. The criteria for choosing the individuals is having an IQ of at least 90 or above.

3- Mathson's social skills scale: the social skills measurement scale developed by Mathson et al. in 1983 to measure the social skills of people aging 4 to 18 was used to measure the social skills of the students. The initial form of this scale included 62 statements which was later reduced to 56 statements after the agent analysis by Yousefi&Kheyr which described the social skills of individuals. To answer it, the participant must read each statement and choose his answer based on a 5-degree Likert type scale which ranges from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Questions 7-

8-10-11-14-17-20-21-24-27-28-30-36-38-39-41-

42-45-47-50-51-54 are exceptional and they are valued in a reverse format. The tool marks range from 56 to 280 where adolescents are divided to three groups with low (56 to 130), average (131 to 205) and high (206 to 280) social skills. The validity of this tool in the research conducted by Yousefi and Khayer [41] was measured around a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86. The validity coefficient of this scale in the present research was calculated to be around 0.84.

3- Life quality scale (SF-36): this questionnaire is a useful tool to help people know their health. This questionnaire includes 36 questions which measure the 8 micro scales associated with health: physical performance, physical role, physical pain, social performance, emotional role, general health, freshness and mental health. What's more, SF-36 also provides 2 general measurements of the performance: the total score of physical health scale (PCS) which measures the physical dimension of health and the total score of mental-social scale (MCS) which measures the mental-social dimension of health. The participant's score ranges from 0 to 100 where higher scores indicate a better quality of life. Researches on the quality of life show that this questionnaire has a high level of validity and reliability (Mac Horney, Ware & Raczek, 1993; Grat, 1997). In Iran, the validity and reliability of this questionnaire (SF-36) was first measured by Iran Montazeri et al. [29] on 4163 people within the age range of 15 years and above most of whom were married. The validity coefficient in 8 dimensions ranged from 0.77 to 0.95, while this coefficient was 0.65 in freshness. On the whole, the results indicated that the Iranian version of this questionnaire with a high level of validity and reliability can be an appropriate tool for measuring the quality of life [29].

The process of conducting the research: after making the arrangements and getting permission from the bureau of education and training of Koohdasht and complying with the moral considerations and stating the research goals, parents and teachers were informed about the goals of the research and the consent of the parents and research sample students was achieved for their participation in the project. Then students with dyslexia were diagnosed and underwent clinical interviews. In addition to justifying the students and stating the goals of this research, students were asked to take part in the treatment period of this disorder. Then, both experiment groups received trainings on cognitive processing-based social skills while the witness group received no intervention (during the administration of educational intervention, the witness group merely received the usual class trainings). The treatment sessions included 8 classes each 45 minutes held in a place specified by the bureau of training and education of Koohdasht. During these sessions and after the end of training, students in both groups took the posttest. Finally, the data collected was analyzed by the single-variable covariance analysis (MANCOVA) test. Assuring the students about the secrecy of the information and preparing them mentally and psychologically for participating in the research were some of the ethical points complied with in this research. Meanwhile, no reduction of the participants was observed in any of the control and experiment groups. Intervention of the cognitive processing-based social skills was administered over 10 sessions by 2 master holders in clinical psychology in the place specified by the bureau of training and education of Koohdasht city. Having made the arrangements with parents, the trainings were scheduled to be held on Fridays when schools were close.

The therapeutic program of teaching cognitiveprocessing-based social skills based upon

Teki nArs al an et al .'s approach h [36]

"The program of teaching cognitive processing- based social skills" is a plan devised by the researcher by considering the educational approach of TekinArsalan et al [36] for intervention in the students' special learning disabilities. In the program, the stages of social decoding, social decision, social performance, and social evaluation of cognitive comprehension approach during education of social skills were pursued.

First and second sessions: introduction and identification of the general situation; this session was held with the purpose of familiarizing students with the researcher and providing mutual understanding and stating what the researcher expects from students. Teaching the five skills of social decoding, social decision, social performance, and social evaluation of cognitive comprehension approach during education of social skills were pursued. At the beginning of each training session, some information and explanations were given to the students with especial learning disabilities about the necessity of acquiring the social skill in question.

Third and fourth sessions: in each session of teaching five skills of social decoding, social decision, social performance and social evaluation of cognitive comprehension approach; then the picture drawn for the first story was presented to the students and the story was read to them. Following the presentation of each stage of skills, the researcher used to ask the questions of this stage from himself loudly and provided the expected answers loudly, too (model making). Then the researcher would tell the student "it is your turn now". The student was asked to ask himself the questions of education stages and display the behaviors he has observed.

Fifth and sixth session: different methods were used in teaching cognitive processing-based social skills such as active discussion, brainstorming, feedback, half-finished stories and solving hypothetical problems. This program evolves around education of social skills through the structure of story's frame along with complementary activities. The goal of this program is to increase the number of strategies that students with special learning disabilities have in social dealings and while facing vague situations or social problems. It is designed based upon education of four fields in school: diagnosing emotions and feelings, its root and role in one's behaviors and others' reactions, controlling impulses, social problem solving skill and favorable social skills. In order to teach each field, stories were written which define the skills indirectly and describe the benefits of utilizing them and the methods of applying them. Complementary activities were also designed to increase children's participation and, as a result, their accuracy level, attention and learning.

Seventh session: various methods of utilizing story's frame in this program were as follows: 1- the researcher reads the story, presents pictures and speak about the theme of the story through semi-structured questions, 2- group members take turns reading the story, presenting pictures and speaking about the theme of the story through semi-structured questions, 3- the therapist reads the story and children practice and act it out, 4- group story making: in this method, the therapist starts a story with the purpose of stating a particular subject (a skill or social problem) and asks the students to add a sentence to it one by one. In order to guide the story towards its determined goal, the therapist adds something to the story or asks questions, 5- making stories through prepared sentences: in this method, the sentences of a story are written on cards and handed out to students (each sentence on a separate card). Students put the sentences in such an order that a story is formed, then take turns reading their stories for others and discuss the theme of the stories, 6- making stories based upon pictures: each child is given cards of pictures (6 to 8 cards) and they are asked to build up two or three stories based upon the picture and tell it to others, 7- generalized discussion: the goal of the sessions of observation generalization is to check to see if the students are capable of showing appropriate social skills in different situations and environments by asking questions (what's happened? What can I do? Which behavior should I show? What is the result of such behavior?) from themselves based upon the cognitive processing approach (which he is expected to have learnt by the end of educational sessions). Considering data collection for generalization sessions (contrary to educational sessions), the therapist did not model the four stages of cognitive processing approach for the students, he merely presented pictures, read stories and educated. "What would you do if you were in the place of the one who is in the picture?" then students were expected to ask themselves the necessary questions and give answers based on the stages they had learnt previously. 4 new stories and their relevant pictures never previously used were presented in the generalization session.

Eighth session: summing up and practicing trainings and administering posttest.

Results

Table 1.the mean and standard deviation of social skills marks in the pretest and posttest of the groups studied

variable	component	experiment				control			
		pretest		posttest		pretest		posttest	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
	physical performance	13.42	2.12	21.45	2.10	15	2	16.54	2

physical health dimension (PCS)	physical role performance	8.18	1.25	13.12	1.11	9	1.16	9.89	1.52
	physical pain	9.17	1.15	4.32	1.23	6.23	1.03	6.56	1.32
	general health	15.56	2.52	21.18	1.15	11.14	1.89	12	2
	total	46.33	6.17	60.07	6.85	41.37	6.05	44.99	7.20
mental social dimension	freshness	14.15	2.23	20.18	2.15	12	2	12.12	2
	social performance	11.36	1.70	17.24	2	10.10	1.01	10.56	1.36
	role of emotion	10.17	1.03	16.18	1.25	9.56	1	10	1.18
	mental health	13	2	18.53	2	12	2	12.33	2.15
	total	48.68	7.12	72.13	8.12	43.66	7.03	45.01	6.84
social skills	total	176.32	4.14	208.90	6.15	176.80	4.74	180.70	4.73

As it is seen in table 1, the mean (and standard deviation) of the total score of the pretest of dyslexic students in the pretest of physical health test in experiment and control groups were respectively 46.33 (and 6.17) and 41.37 (and 6.05). The total score of the posttest of the students in experiment group in physical health dimension is 60.07 (and 6.85) and the score of control group students is 44.99 (and 7.20). The mean (and standard deviation) of the total score of the pretest of mental social dimension in experiment and control groups were respectively 48.68 (and 7.12) and 43.66 (and 7.03). The total score of the posttest of the students in experiment group in mental social dimension is 72.13 (and 8.12) and the score of control group students is 45.01 (and 6.84). The mean (and standard deviation) of the total score of social skills was 176.32 (and 4.14). The total score of the posttest of the students in the experiment group in social skills is 208.09 (6.15). The mean (and standard deviation) of the total score of the pretest of the students in the control group in social skills is 176.80 (and 4.74). The total score of the posttest of the students in the control group in social skills is 180.70 (4.73). In other words, after education of cognitive processing-based social skills, experiment group students possessed more favorable social skills.

As it can be observed in the table, there is not so much difference in the pretest stage between the scores of the students in the experiment and control group in terms of quality of life and social skills which indicate low levels of life quality and social skills. After teaching the cognitive processing-based social skills, the total score of the students in the experiment group increased which indicates improved quality of life and social skills as a result of such education.

Table 2: the results of Levene's test about the presupposition of equality of the two groups' variances inthe total scores of social skills variable

Box's M	DF1	DF2	F	P
5.116	91	4.784	1.212	0.106
	Levene			
Levene's	DF1	DF2	F	P
social skills	1	28	0.223	0.651
physical performance	1	28	0.154	0.717
physical role performance	1	28	0.112	0.803
physical pain	1	28	0.564	0.217
general health	1	28	0.926	0.214
freshness	1	28	0.819	0.203
social performance	1	28	1.223	0.118
emotional role	1	28	0.918	0.215
mental health	1	28	0.456	0.389

Before utilizing multivariable variance analysis parametric test, Box's and Levene's tests were used to comply with its hypothesis. Based on the Box's test which was significant for none of the variables, the condition of variance/covariance matrices was observed correctly (BOX= 5.116 and F=1.212=0.106). Based on Levene's test and its insignificance for all variables, the condition of variances equality between groups is complied with.

Table 3.information associated with the credential indicators of multivariable covariance analysis test

situation	test	value	F	DF of	DF of	P	ES	statistical
group	Pilai	0.654	31.145	9	20	p 0.001	0.654	1/000
	wikle's	0.154	31.145	9	20	p 0.001	0.654	1/000
	Hotling	18.361	31.145	9	20	p 0.001	0.654	1/000
	Roy's biggest	18.361	31.145	9	20	p 0.001	0.654	1/000

The results of Wikle's Lambda test showed that the influence of group on combination of life quality and social skills is significant [Wilks, F (20 and 9) = 31.145, $p \leq 0.001$]. This test considered the capability of utilizing multivariable covariance analysis (MANCOVA) possible. The results indicated a significantdifference in one of the variables studied in both groups. In other words, the hypothesis that teaching cognitive processing-based social skills helps improve social skills and promote the life quality of the dyslexic students is confirmed in the significance level of $p \leq 0.001$.

Table 4.the influence of pretest and cognitive processing-based social skills on social skills and life quality in dyslexic students

variable	component	SS	DF			MS	F	P	ES
			Group	Error	Total				
quality of life	physical performance	68.451	1	25	30	68.451	11.256	p 0.001	0.289
	physical role function	72.321	1	25	30	72.321	13.356	p 0.001	0.316
	physical pain	48.523	1	25	30	48.523	10.421	p 0.001	0.212
	general health	110.512	1	25	30	110.512	25.365	p 0.001	0.312
	freshness	124.365	1	25	30	124.365	31.412	p 0.001	0.589
	social performance	55.456	1	25	30	55.456	11.123	p 0.001	0.334
	emotional role	117.368	1	25	30	117.368	28.709	p 0.001	0.555
	mental health	236.709	1	25	30	236.709	41.489	p 0.001	0.654
social skills	social skills	346.217	1	25	30	346.217	44.05	p 0.001	0.680

The results of table 4 indicate a significant difference between the mean of physical performance (F (25 and 1) = 11.256, $p \leq 0.001$), physical role performance (F (25 and 1) = 13.356, $p \leq 0.001$), physical pain (F (25 and 1) = 10.421, $p \leq 0.001$), general health (F (25 and 1) = 25.365, $p \leq 0.001$), and freshness (F

(25 and 1)= 31.412, p 0.001), social performance (F (25 and 1) = 11.123, p $\leq$ 0.001), emotional role (F (25 and 1) =28.709, p 0.001), mental health (F (25 and 1) = 41.489864, p $\leq$ 0.001) and social skills (F (25 and 1) =44.05, p 0.001) between teaching cognitive processing-based social skills groups and control group. In other words, such results indicate promotion of social skills and life quality of the students of experimentgroup as compared with the control group.

Conclusion and discussion

The goal of the present research is to investigate the effectiveness of teaching cognitive processing-based social skills on improvement of social skills and life quality of dyslexic students. The results indicated that teaching cognitive processing-based social skills has a positive effect on improvement of the social skills of the dyslexic students. These results are in line with the results of other researches (e.g. Brian, 2010; John, 2011; Gourtiz and Eliot, 2012; Momeni et al [28] and Bagian Kooleh Marz et al, 1993) indicating that teaching cognitive processing- based social skills helps improve interpersonal relationships and social and cognitive skills in students afflicted with learning disabilities. In an attempt to describe these results, we can say that attending social skills education sessions increases the possibility of normalizing dyslexia for students and their families, because in majority of the cases, only one person is formally diagnosed with learning disability and this sense of loneliness and exceptionality is disturbing (Lout & Schefild, 2007). As a matter of fact, participating in sessions of educating social skills helps students admit their problems and deal with them rationally. Expressing successful and failing experiences in the presence of people with plenty of common individual characteristics gives him a sense of self-observation, friendliness, responsibility and self-efficiency. Thus, teaching social skills provides an opportunity for the students to immediately face their problems and feel they have skills which help them enjoy a joyful relationship, despite educational problems. What's more, the education was designed in such a way that made students think and meditate, because it was based upon questioning and thinking and various emphases were made that student refrain from providing quick and impulsive answers and think more deeply. On the other hand, reduction of isolating behavior and an increase in social problem solving behaviors are probably due to the fact that students' practical and verbal participation for finding solutions is greatly emphasized and their favorable behaviors and responses are encouraged [3]. This state has probably resulted in acquiring positive experience and improving the attitude of the students to one another, promotion of interpersonal relationships and reduction of his isolating behavior. Cognitive strategies for these students are steps taken to improve the kid's cognition and help him get out of the role "a defeated person". Selecting inappropriate social goals such isolation of the students afflicted with learning disabilities can indicate their rejection by their peers (Brian, 2010).

In another attempt to explain the results, we can say that since students afflicted with learning disability (dyslexia, mathematical disorder) have low levels of social skills, weal interpersonal relationships [3], low physical and mental welfare, they usually encounter noticeable problems in personal and emotional adjustment and emotions regulation [23] which result in the absence of interpersonal relationship between them. After teaching social skills, these students started to benefit from skills of establishing social relationship, regulating and managing emotions and the art of friend making. As they received positive feedback from group and the researcher, more favorable social goals tend to last longer in them and they showed less unfavorable feeling towards their peers. As a matter of fact, the individual difference of children in terms of social, cognitive, and emotional relationships is associated with their level of acceptance by peers and family. As the level of relationship with peers increases, the kid chooses more socialistic goals (the most important of which is social problem solving). Although these students show less self-efficiency and more negative feelings, the results of the posttest indicated a reduction of unfavorable social behaviors in them after they were taught social skills. On the other hand, the oral review of the previous session's homework in the beginning of each class showed that students had practiced the skills they had learnt at home in their relationship with family members and particularly their mothers which could probably lead to higher levels of mental security and sympathy between parents and kids (Bagian Kooleh Marz et al., 2014).

The results also showed that teaching cognitive processing-based social skills is quite effective in improving the quality of the life of dyslexic students. These results are in line with the results of other researches (e.g. Brian, 2010; John, 2011; Gurtiz& Eliot, 2012; [28], Bagian Kooleh Marz et al., 2014). In describing these results, we can say that children and adolescents suffering from this disorder behave unsuitably because they haven't learnt the correct methods. The most important problem of such people is about their inability in evaluating and monitoring their behavior which renders them unable to wait, thus they start doing something without thinking about its consequences which usually results in their social isolation and mental damage. Yet, cognitive processing-based social skill which entails self-regulation, evaluation, and improvement which makes people reinforce the skills they have learnt and do their homework and accomplish their social responsibilities without needing help from others [6]. Thus based upon the results of the researches one of the best methods for improving the behavior of the kids and adolescents afflicted with learning and behavioral disorders is to teach them the techniques of cognitive processing- based social skills (Hades, Karol, Katania, Cotton, Barker, Scofield, and Labman, 2010). This type of training helps students learn observe their behavior themselves internally, evaluate their behavior, consider its consequences and embark upon self-encouragement or punishment. Self-control is very useful because it helps children and adolescents manage their behavior in the absence of the elder's support and observation and teaches them to feel responsible about what they do and have a sense of responsibility towards their behavior. This sense of responsibility helps them improve mentally. Thus, teaching cognitive processing-based social skills to dyslexic students improves their self-control level, and, as a result, many of their problems such as problems in communication skills and disturbing behaviors reduce and their social skills and life quality improve. We can also say that dyslexic students have more problems than normal students in interpersonal skills (Lad & Troop-Gordon, 2003; Weiner, 2004), mood disorders and depression (Weiner & Schneider, 2002; Seidiridis, 2007), social information processing (Boominger and Kimhi-kind, 2008), social interaction and social abilities [2], high levels of social rejection and loneliness (Stell, Jones, Piarel, Van Akir, Farmier and Rodkin, 2008), and adjustment problems (Al-Yagan and Micolinser, 2004; [30], Ayorbach, Kros-Tsor, Manor and Shalo, 2008). What's more, low educational progress also results in their rejection, because the majority of normal students prefer to make friends with students who have not just educational progress, but also creative social interactions, too (Barat et al., 2008). Since dyslexic students face higher levels of damage in social skills and family interactions and experience low educational performance [33], these experiences, isolations, rejections and ignorance might result in different behavioral patterns. The majority of the children who are rejected display aggressive and impulsive behavior and tend to be dissociable [34]. Thus, all these factors can affect the level of their quality of life. Shortly put, the results of this research showed that teaching cognitive processing-based social skills can influence the increase of social skills and life quality. Based on this, we can point to 2 sets of the practical and theoretical consequences of the research. In the practical level, preparing educational programs and interventions and altering characteristic features can teach an individual the appropriate and efficient skills and strategies for promotion of social skills. In the theoretical level, the results of the present research can help enrich the current theories associated with personality, social skills and cognitive processing.

Among the limitations of this study, we can point to the fact that this sample was merely restricted to the city of Koohdasht which makes it difficult to generalize it to other cities. The study population merely included male students of the junior high school level which makes it hard to generalize the results to female students. Concerning the great prevalence of this disorder in the childhood and adolescence period and great number of references to therapeutic centers, conducting psychological researches associated with this social damage can make a great contribution to diagnosing and treating the mental problems in such people. It is recommended that educational programs on cognitive processing-based social skills be taken into consideration in order to improve the interpersonal relationships and identify and express emotions in schools and families by psychologists and consultants. It is also recommended to use this therapeutic method on the comorbid disorders with learning disorders such as conduct disorder, oppositional defiance disorder

(ODD), and attention defect/hyper activity disorder. The results could then be handed out to consulting centers for further and future use.

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THE MODEL OF FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATION IN COMPETITIVE CONDITIONS

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Abstract
The paper introduces the model of development of students' professional motivation. Working with students – future specialists – is aimed at forming the cognitive unit of the idea of achieving success and successful professional activity; emotional and evaluative unit – the level of claims and self-identity; attributive block – internality and externality of the control locus; and the behavioral unit – active life stance, preferred behavioral strategies, motivational tendencies, i.e. motivation to achieve success.

Keywords: Motivation, professional motivation, model of formation of professional motivation, competitiveness frame, a student of pedagogical University.

Introduction
Higher education is considered extremely important for professional success (Pazukhina, 2007). Discussing the perspectives of the Russian education, many modern scholars highlight the necessity to increase the level of professional motivation of university students as a factor of development of their personal and professional competitiveness, which fits into the modern strategy of development of subject possibilities and human capacity.
Motivation-necessity components of instructional and educational-professional activities are studied in works of many Russian and international researchers (V. Apelt, A. A. Bodalev, L. I. Bozhovich, R. S. Nemov, Ye. P. Iljin, V. Ya. Kikot', A. N. Leontiev, A. K. Markova, G. A. Mukhina, N. V. Nesterova, A. N. Pechnikov, Kh. Khekkhauzen, G. I. Shchukina, P. M. Jacobson, V. A. Yakunin and others). The majority of papers concentrate on studying the influence of teachers and contents of learning materials on formation of motivation for learning. Learning motivation of schoolchildren is currently the most popular subject. Not so much attention is given to the learning and professional activity motivation of university students.
In the context of professional motivation, such problems are studied as problems of life and vocational self-determination (D. A. Leontiev, L. M. Mitina, Yu. M. Orlov and others) and of vocational choice (R. R. Bibrikh, E. A. Klimov, A. B. Orlov and others). There are works devoted to theoretical grounds of professional motivation development at various stages of personality formation, including those by Ye. A. Klimov, A. K. Markova, A. A. Rean and others. The concept of symbolic and contextual education is of high importance for theoretical and practical development of the problem (A. A. Verbitskiy, N. A. Bakshayeva and others), and, in its framework, some approaches to formation of cognitive and professional motivation at students have been developed.
Development and enrichment of professional motivation of future specialists are prerogatives of vocational higher education, in the first place. However, universities today are focused on providing students with special knowledge and skills, and the problem of development of future professionals' identity and of their professional motivation still remains in the background. Transition to the competence-based approach contributed to the solution of the problem, but only in part. Meanwhile, the priority in teachers' training is still exclusively associated with their specialty, the orientation of instructional-educational process remaining intensive. A significant part of students is guided by motives lacking any direct relation to the process of cognition, vocational training.

Background

The analysis of the previous researches on the problem of formation of students' professional motivation in the period of training at a higher educational institution, allows to speak, on the one hand, of a contradiction between the need for development of students' professional motivation during vocational education, which would contribute to purposeful assimilation of professional knowledge and skills, and, on the other hand, of the lack of a manageable model in the theory and methodology of vocational training.

The learning activity of students is multi-motivated, which is determined by complex interaction of socially conditioned processes of their training. Therefore, a transition from the students' current learning activity to their forming professional activity is the major problem of any vocational education. From the perspective of general activity theory, it is related to transformation of students' cognitive motives into professional motives (Uznadze, 2003). Proceeding from this provision, one can make a conclusion that their motivation, in the course of their training at a higher educational institution, undergoes certain changes, i. e. that motivation has its own dynamics from year to year. Meanwhile, the key component in motivational structure of learning and professional activity of pedagogical university students is their professional motive.

B. A. Sosnovskiy pointed out that, in the course of training, it is absolutely insufficient to proceed solely from activation and satisfaction of student's cognitive need (Sosnovskiy, 1993). This idea is supported by a whole range of authors, who believe that professional motives are the core of the structure of students' learning motivation, then followed by cognitive motives, those of social identification, and utilitarian motives (Sosnovskiy, 1993).

F. M. Rakhmatullina has revealed general social motives (understanding of great social significance of higher education). According to her data, the 'professional' motive is the most significant one in all the years considered. The 'cognitive' motive is the second in significance in the first year, but in the subsequent years it is replaced by the motive of general social and moves to the third place. The 'utilitarian' (pragmatic) motive is the fourth in all the years. It is typical that, from the youngest to the senior years, its rating drops, while the rating of the 'professional' motive increases, along with that of the 'general social' one. The 'professional', 'cognitive' and 'general social' motives at the students who perform well are expressed more intensively than at the students who perform at the average level, and the 'utilitarian' motive is expressed stronger at the latter than at the former. It is characteristic that the 'cognitive' motive takes the second place at the students who perform well and the third place at those with average academic performance (Rakhmatullina, 2000).

The problem of dynamics of learning and professional motivation is related in the closest way to the issue of its formation conditions. A. K. Markova indicated ways of formation of motivation: the first way – 'top-down' – implied inculcating students with ideals, giving them models of the best educational motives (Markova, 1996).

In our view, the above approach is also applicable to formation of learning motivation at the university age.

D. I. Feldshtein paid attention to the fact that necessary change of motives ratios, their hierarchy was provided by given organization of activity (Feldshtein, 2011).

In relation to these provisions, V. G. Leontiev indicated that the necessary level of motivation was provided only under certain conditions of learning activity, which could be achieved with the help of the dynamic equilibrium mechanism and formulated as the 'law of bipolar conditions'. From the law, it follows that the conditions that accompany the teaching process should be opposite to each other, e. g. collective forms of instructional and cognitive activity together with individual forms; heuristic method of knowledge assimilation combines with the algorithmic one; materials presented as questions and answers and as a monologue; 'general-to-specific' direction of knowledge assimilation accompanied by the 'specific-to-general' direction etc. Violation of this law in the teaching process can lead to dramatic reduction of motivation for instructional and cognitive activity (Leontiev, 2002).

V. G. Leontiev noted that high levels of group atmosphere were the most important factor of manifestation of motivation mechanism. Group cohesiveness, member interaction, emotionality, and empathic relationships create favourable conditions for formation of socio-psychological climate, business atmosphere – not only between people, but in the key activity itself, which is manifested by an increase in motivation for this activity (Leontiev, 2002).

Currently, the idea that, along with standard components, assigned from the outside, education should include emotional and personal components has already been realized in different concepts of education (Zimniaya, 2007). Without any emotional experience, value remains either formal or accidental. Consequently, the development of professional motivation is only possible where students' activities are organized so that they can realize individual and emotional aspects of professional standards and principles and live them through.

After the representatives of humanistic psychology, we believe that education is not just a process of assimilation of knowledge and skills – it changes students' internal emotional and cognitive experience and is related to all of their unique individuality (Maslow, 1984; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).

In this study, we share ideas of a number of Russian researchers, who studied professional formation of personality and allocated the following stages of professional development (Pazukhina, 2007; Rakhmatullina 2000; Zimniaya, 2007):

- Stage I is learning-academic, covering 1-3 years. Its result is formation of the 'student personality' that meets academic demands of a pedagogical university. Shaping of the learning-academic form of learning activity, optimal for assimilation of academic disciplines, is another result of this stage.
- Stage II is learning-professional, covering 3-5 years. Its result is 'establishment of a professional teacher's personality' that meets the requirements of the instructional and educational process. Learning-professional activity is shaped in the same period, being a means of personality formation and teaching activity; subsequently, it is transformed into professional-pedagogical activity.

Methods

The development model of students' professional motivation includes the following blocks:

1) cognitive block (meets the cognitive criterion of developing motivation for achievement; development indicators are a system of ideas on achieving success and successful professional activity);
2) emotional-evaluative block (meets the emotional-evaluative criterion of development; its indicators are the levels of claims and personal self-esteem);
3) attributive block (meets the attributive criterion of development; its indicators are internality and externality of the control locus);
4) behavioural block (meets the behaviour criterion of development; the indicators are the level of students' academic performance, active life position, preferred strategies of behaviour);
5) personal motivational tendencies (meet the motivational criterion of development; its indicators are the motive of achieving success and the motive of avoiding failure);
6) actualization of professional activity values at experts in social work; conditions of realization of students' potential motivation to achievement and related characteristics of personality in the process of vocational education.

The result of motivation process is a sum of various factors; we paid special attention to the following ones:

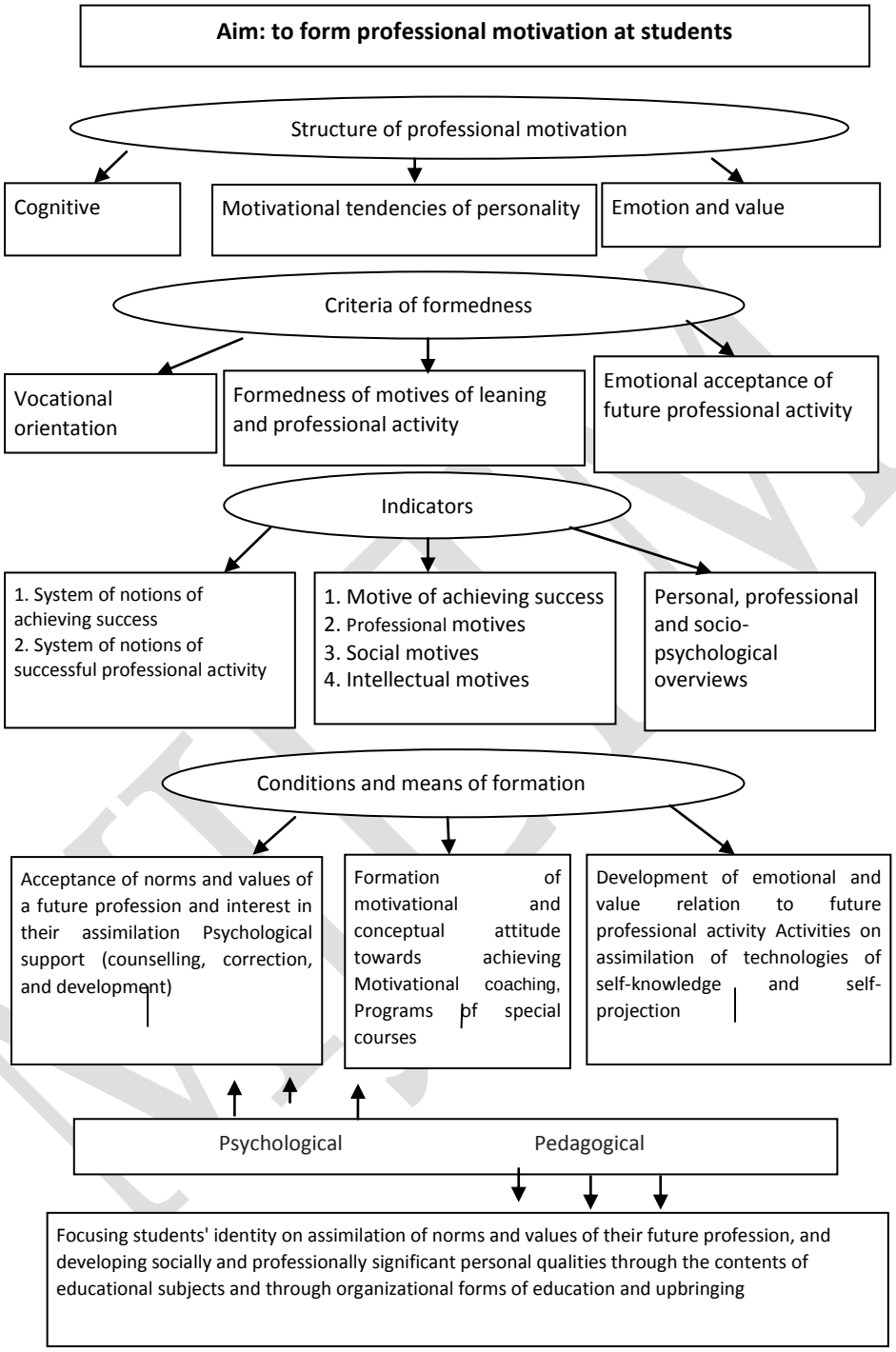
1) desire to work (internal motive, which can be stronger or weaker, depending on concentration or relaxation of personality);
2) own effectiveness (implying more or less strong conviction of an individual's ability to build their life based on their own opinion, depending on themselves);
3) psychological temporal perspective (determines what goals we choose, depending on a life stage);
4) people's emotions (serving 'as an inner adviser' during decision-making).

Experimental research was conducted on basis of one of the Russian higher educational institutions. Students of graduating classes at the directions 'Psychological and pedagogical education' and 'Psychology' took part in the study.

The sample included 46 students (aged 20-21 years).

The key objective of the diagnostic programme of the research was to study the peculiarities of students' professional motivation. In order to diagnose professional motivation of pedagogical university students, the diagnostic programme was drafted, accommodating methodologies that allowed to explore all the selected components: motivational tendencies of personality (motive of achieving success and motive of avoiding a failure); the cognitive block (system of ideas on achieving success and successful professional activity); the behaviour block (the level of a student's academic

performance, active life position, preferred strategies of behaviour); the emotionality-evaluative block (the levels of claims and personal self-esteem).



The following research methodologies were used in the diagnostic programme: motivation of professional activity (methodology by K. Zamfir modified by A. A. Rean); diagnostics of motivators of personal social-psychological activity (by D. McClelland); 'Career Anchor', the methodology of diagnostics of value orientations in a career (by E. Schein, translated and adapted by V. A. Chiker and

V. E. Vinokurova); express diagnostics of personal social values (by N. P. Fetiskin, V. V. Kozlov V. V. and G. M. Manuylov); the locus of control by J. Rotter.

Results

The results analysis of the experimental stating stage allows to make the following *conclusions*:

1. The "autonomy (independence)" rate of the sample is 17.4%, which represents the desire to be free from organizational rules. The "management" career orientation is intrinsic to 13%. "Professional qualification" suggesting the presence of abilities and talents in a specific area (research, achievements in sports etc.) was found in 10.9% of respondents only. For 32.6% of respondents, 'integration of lifestyles' is the leading career orientation; they are focused on integration of various aspects of lifestyle. 'Service' is the leading career orientation for 17.4% of the sample. This value orientation is typical of people doing business, because the want to follow basic values in their job. The 'job stability' career orientation is typical of 8.7% – those who seek security and protection.
2. Characterizing the group as a whole, one can say that internal motivation (45.6%) is the predominant type of vocational training motivation (although its share is less than a half of the surveyed students). Students with external positive motivation (30.5%) are the second to the leading group. This type of motivation is 'worse' than the internal one, because students are not attracted by the activity itself, but rather by the other people's attitude (positive assessment, encouragement, praise etc.). The third place is taken by the students with external negative motivation (13.04%).
3. In general, medium levels of achieving success prevail in 39.1% of the sample. High and medium levels of striving for power are found in 17.4% of the surveyed. High and medium levels of a tendency towards affiliations is typical of 43.5% of the respondents.
4. The following socio-psychological orientations represent the greatest value for the students: family – at 30.4% of respondents; professional – 24%; social – 19.6%; intellectual – 8.7%; physical – 13%; spiritual – 4.3%.

Professional motivation was formed in the students in conditions of the shaping experiment, in the course of the specially developed motivational training. Such classes need to be held every year, because professionally important personal qualities are formed throughout the whole training in a higher educational institution, while professional motivation is subject to changes in each of them. Particular attention should be given to this type of training for senior students. Many students start to work in the fourth year at the university, meaning they already use the acquired knowledge. In this period, the professionally significant personal qualities are formed particularly intensively. In this context, professional motivation is especially apt to changes.

Professional motivation, just as many other personal qualities, is formed under the influence of external environments and internal conditions. External environments include: upbringing peculiarities, influence of reference groups, and other factors conditioning first-hand social experience. Internal conditions include: settings, basic needs, values, skill to set goals to oneself and to others. Formation of professional motivation has its specific mechanism, prerequisites, and dynamics. A number of peculiar features depend on the factor of age.

Formation of professional motivation at students in conditions of an educational experiment has been carried out in the course of specially developed motivational training.

In accordance with the problem, purpose, and tasks of the current research, we have developed a programme of formation of professional motivation at pedagogical university students, relying on principles and programmes of motivational training developed by A. K. Markova (Markova, 1996), at the same time taking into consideration the students' age, orientation, interests, and strivings.

The current programme ***aims at*** shaping their motivation for learning and professional activity.

The program allows to solve the following ***problems***:

(1) formation of deliberate, responsible, positive attitude towards a chosen profession at the stage of getting education;
(2) forming the motives for leaning and professional activity;
(3) forming a "self"-professional image as a core component of functional structure of development of personal professional motivation;
(4) creating favourable socio-psychological climate in a study group;
(5) expanding possibilities of self-knowledge ("I am in profession");

(6) developing professional flexibility.

Peculiarities of the program

This is a development program and will be effective for groups of students with: insufficient formedness of professional motivation, unconscious choice of profession, possible mismatch of individual characteristics or personal qualities on the one hand and professional requirements on the other.

In class, students were provided with materials containing information on learning and professional motivation, its peculiarities in the university age, the consequences of a wrong or unconscious choice of profession, the role of individual psychological properties and qualities in their professional choice. In the course of training, the ability of integral perception of their "self" image as a subject of professional activity was formed; their willing to get a particular profession and their sense of responsibility for the professional choice increased. The age range of the trained students was 18–21. The group included 28-40 people.

The frequency of meetings should be more than once a week, duration of each meeting – 1.5-2 hours.

The program contents are as follows. It is divided into two stages: the communicative and career counselling ones.

The first stage results are getting involved in the group work, self-cognition as a subject of interpersonal interaction. The goal of the stage is to emotionally unite the participants, to activate their desire to get better.

At the second stage, interrelation between individual and personal features on the one hand and professional requirements on the other are considered; the image of their professional "self" is formed. At this stage, the goal is to form the professional motivation.

Each class meeting was held in the standard mode that included the following stages: introductory part (with the goal to mobilize attention, to arouse interest for class activities); the main part (with the goal to form professional motivation); final part (with the goal to reflect, discuss and sum up the class results).

When implementing the experimental program, different methods were used, including group discussion (situation analysis), business and role-playing games, conversation etc.

The forms of work used in the training process: individual work, work in pairs, work in micro-groups, group work etc.

Discussion and conclusions

Comparative analysis of the results obtained at the stating and control stages of the experiment reveals positive dynamics manifested in the following:

- in the sample, the number of students with value orientation ("professional competence", "management", "entrepreneurship") increased;
- predominance (although insignificant) of internal motivation over external motivation was revealed at the students, along with predominance of external positive motivation over external negative motivation;
- changes in leading necessities – motivators of identity of the students who took part in the experiment – were found. The need for 'achieving success' has grown in popularity – from 39.1% up to 47.8%, which testifies to reinforcement of the professionally oriented motivation. The number of students with a "tendency towards affiliation" has decreased from 43.5 % to 34.8%, while "striving for power" remained constant (17.4%);
- changes were found in the social values of the participating students. Among social-psychological orientations, the "professional" one represents the greatest value for students at the control stage (37%). Another social-psychological orientation – "intellectual" – has grown more popular (from 8.7% up to 13%), which suggests a transition to higher levels of personal development, with more complex organization of motivation and self-consciousness.

The experiment has confirmed the hypothesis that the efficiency of process management of student's motivation formation benefits from a research of structure and specificity of professional motivation at pedagogical university students. It would be highly desirable to develop and organize a program aimed at forming deliberate, responsible, positive attitude towards a chosen profession at the stage of receiving education.

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EXAMINING AMBIGUITY TOLERANCE IN THE DOMAIN OF EFL READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract
The paper focuses on the Iranian EFL learners' reading performance development, taking into account ambiguity tolerance as an explanatory factor of foreign language learning. This study was aimed at exploring possible relationship between the learners' level of ambiguity tolerance and their reading performance in English as a foreign language under an ambiguous condition. Thirty intermediate students at Zabansara institute in Tehran were selected from among a total number of 75 learners based on their performances on the Nelson Proficiency Test to fulfill the aim of this study. Based on the participants' answer to The Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale, they were assigned into two groups of low and high tolerance of ambiguity. During the instructional period both groups experienced the same condition which was reading texts under ambiguous atmosphere. Based on the results of the reading pre-test and post-test gathered from both groups, the considerable role of ambiguity tolerance on the better reading performance of the EFL learners was implied.

Keywords: Ambiguity Tolerance, Ambiguous condition, EFL context, Reading Performance

Introduction
It is not deniable that EFL learners seldom know the meanings of all the words in a reading passage. Therefore, they may give up quickly when they independently read a passage containing some arduous words. This problem is observed repeatedly during the exams that contain some novel passages to read. To prevent this problem, students should increase their tolerance of ambiguity during the process of reading and this should happen even in the presence of the teacher. Thus, the importance of AT in an EFL context especially in reading comprehension cannot be ignored. In addition the importance of tolerance for ambiguity can be perceived by looking at the body of research done in learning a foreign language (e.g. Erten & Razi, 2009), learners' creativity and problem solving (e.g. Charness et.al, 2013), and being more willing towards novel concepts (e.g. Toh et.al, 2016). Although some studies have been done in Iran with the focus on AT in learning English, there is a tangible lack of observing the reading performance of the EFL learners while the natural ambiguity of the tasks are maintained for a period of time. Consequently, the current study aims at filling this void in the field of EFL learning and teaching in Iran and provide an insight for all the teachers around the world which tackle with the same lack.

Research question
The primary objective of this study was to observe the reading performance of the EFL learners in a period when the ambiguous condition is maintained. In light of the goals of the study, the following research question was posed:
Q1. Does ambiguity tolerance have any significant impact on the reading performances of the EFL learners under the natural ambiguous condition?

Review of the Researches on AT and Second Language Learning
In a study done by Atamanova et.al. (2014), which aims at exploring possible relationships between students' communicative competence in English and their AT as an explanatory factor of foreign language learning, the role of AT in facilitating language learners' progress has been recognized. It is also claimed that AT has a significant role in the study of decision making since many realistic situations involve ambiguity (Heath et.al., 1991). Studies like the ones done by Charness et.al. (2013), have shown that an individual's tolerance for ambiguity is linked to creativity in problem-solving tasks. Not very irrelevant to the previous study, Toh et.al. (2016) conducted a study, the results highlight the important role that risk attitude can play in a design team setting and show that teams with an overall higher level of tolerance for ambiguity are more likely to select novel concepts. Lin

et.al. (2014) in their study explore the relationships among AT, language learning strategies, and L2 proficiency in the context of learning Chinese as a L2 (CSL) in Taiwan. As a result high AT was identified to be a significant predicator of L2 competence and the use of L2-oriented learning strategies with less reliance on L1. Also findings showed that language teachers should assist students with low AT to cope with L2 ambiguity and further encourage them to take advantage of opportunities to use L2-oriented strategies, especially in L2 setting.

More related to this study, dealing with AT and reading comprehension, El-Koumy (2000) examines whether EFL learners with different levels of AT vary in foreign language reading comprehension, the results show that the moderate AT group outperformed the low and high group. Kondo-Brown (2006) in her study on learning Japanese, identified avoidance of ambiguity as a factor in her pursuit of understanding affective variables in reading ability while the correlational analysis revealed a close relationship between AT and intrinsic motivation. Moreover, the results obtained by Nishimo (2007) in his study suggest that students who feel comfortable with ambiguity, for instance having high levels of tolerance, prefer to fulfill reading tasks without using a dictionary while students with less AT rely heavily on dictionaries in order to minimize the ambiguity.

Materials and Methods

Participants

The participants of this study were a group of 30 Iranian EFL intermediate learners, studying English at Zabansara Institute in Tehran during spring courses, 2016. All of them were native female speakers of Persian and their age range varied from 12 to 16. The present study adopted a convenience sampling method in which "a certain group of people was chosen for study because they were available" (Frankel & Wallen, 2003, p. 103). Therefore, the selection of participants was based at first upon a convenience sampling procedure due to availability and practicality reasons and finally based on the results of the students' proficiency test and the students' performance on AT scale.

Instruments

Several instruments of evaluation of the participants' performance were developed and used to find an answer to the research question:

a) Nelson 350 A test

Nelson 350 A test (Flower & Coe, 1976) (Appendix A) was used for homogenizing the subjects regarding their proficiency level at the beginning of the research. This test consists of 50 multiple choice items. Before starting the treatment, Nelson test was administered to the participants to ensure their homogeneity regarding their proficiency level. The validity and reliability of the Nelson test have been estimated several times before by other researchers and it is considered as highly valid and reliable test of English proficiency (Shahivand & Pazhakh, 2012, p. 18).

b) The Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (SLTAS)

To put the participants into two groups, one with high level of AT and the other with low level of AT, The Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (SLTAS) (Ely, 1995) (Appendix B), with some embedded demographic questions was used. SLTAS was preferred over the other similar scales as it is known to be the only one designed for measuring AT in language learning situation. The version of the scale which was used in this study has 12 items with a five point Likert scale while each item aims to measure students' agreement level with statements depicting intolerance of ambiguity in language learning situations. In addition, the Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability and the standardized item alpha of the scale was previously proved by Kazamina (1999), namely .84 and .84 respectively.

c) The Reading Comprehension Tests

The purpose of the reading comprehension tests was to assess students' changes in reading comprehension over a period of time while they were experiencing reading texts in ambiguous condition. To this end, a pre-test and post-test of reading comprehension were developed by the researcher while the reliability of the test was supported by inter-rater reliability, namely 0.97. It is important to mention that comprehension questions of these tests were supposed to preserve the ambiguous nature of the EFL reading environment and put the whole demand on the students. These questions measure readers' abilities to ascertain:

1. Factual information that is not directly stated in the reading passage
2. The main idea of a paragraph embedded within the passage

3. The main idea of the entire reading passage
4. A paraphrase of a sentence or paragraph of the passage
5. The meanings of certain vocabulary terms that are meant to be understood from contextual clues in the passage
6. Underlying, unstated information that must be inferred from contextual clues in the passage.

Data collection and procedure

The study was conducted over 15 sessions, and as the first step the researcher administered Nelson Proficiency Test among 75 students to ensure the homogeneity of the participants, as a result, 30 of them were selected as intermediate learners. For the purpose of assigning the participants into two separate groups based on their level of AT, the Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (SLTAS) (Ely, 1995) was used. The participants of both groups were administered a pre-test of reading under a condition which was kept ambiguous at the first session of the treatment. During the following sessions all the efforts were made to maintain the natural ambiguities existed while reading a text for the first time, and the teacher tried her best not to spoil them and let the students at both groups tackle with them on their own. In the fifteenth session, all the participants went through a reading post-test to assess their level of reading improvement after experiencing the ambiguous condition of the treatment in order to see which group had a better reading performance under this special condition.

Results and findings

Results of the Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (SLTAS)

The participants were told that the items in the SLTAS explore their reactions to statements portraying intolerance of ambiguity in some language learning situations. That is, agreement with an item was a sign of intolerance. Thus, it was reasonable to consider a mean of 3.00 as a dividing line between tolerance and intolerance. Any value above the dividing line would be a sign of lower levels of tolerance whereas those below would point to more tolerance according to their distance to the mean score of 3.00. Table 1 displays the participants' mean scores from the SLTAS.

Table 1. Ambiguity Tolerance scores from the SLTAS

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. When I'm reading something in English, I feel impatient when I don't totally understand the meaning.	30	2.77	1.006
2. It bothers me that I don't understand everything the teacher says in in English.	30	2.53	1.196
3. When I write English compositions, I don't like it when I can't express my ideas exactly.	30	2.37	1.066
4. It is frustrating that sometimes I don't understand completely some English grammar.	30	2.17	1.020
5. I don't like the feeling that my English pronunciation is not quite correct.	30	1.97	1.066
6. I don't enjoy reading something in English that takes a while to figure out completely.	30	1.97	1.159
7. It bothers me that even though I study English grammar, some of it is hard to use in speaking and writing.	30	2.03	1.245
8. When I'm writing in English, I don't like the fact that I can't say exactly what I want.	30	2.27	1.112
9. It bothers me when the teacher uses an English word I don't know.	30	2.20	1.064
10. When I'm speaking in English, I feel uncomfortable if I can't communicate my ideas clearly.	30	2.50	1.137

11. I don't like the fact that sometimes I can't find English words that mean the same words in my own language.	30	2.03	.964
12. One thing I don't like about reading in English is having to guess what the meaning is.	30	2.03	1.098
TOTAL AMBIGUITY TOLERANCE SCORE	30	2.06	1.094

Based on the participants' scores on this scale, they were categorized into two groups until the end of study. In figures 1 and 2 the reason for categorizing participants into two groups is obviously depicted.

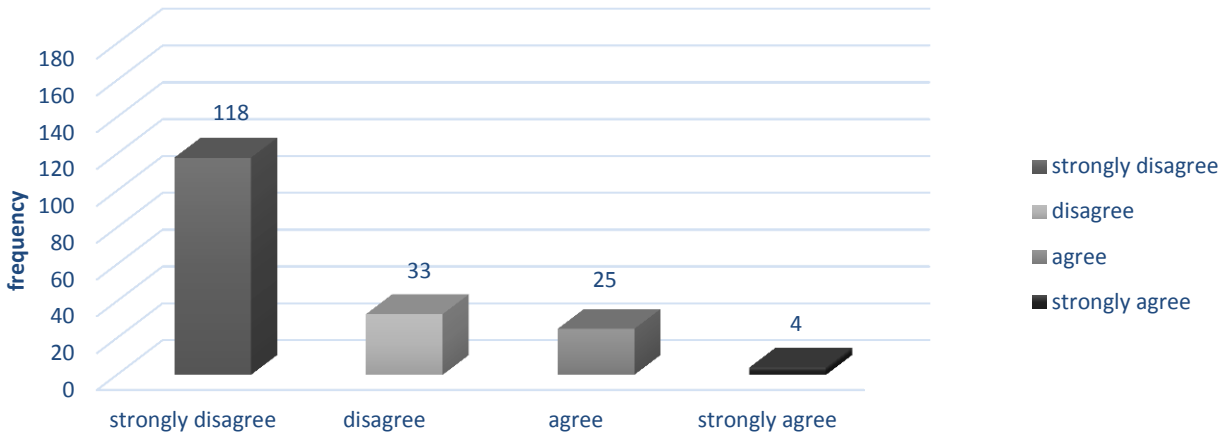

figure1. participnats' answers to SLTAS with higher level of AT

From figure 1, one can easily deduce that the frequency of the answers is more on the first two items which are strongly disagree and disagree namely 118 and 33 respectively. This is a good indicator of putting these 15 participants in high AT group. While figure 2 justifies putting the other 15 participants in low AT group. Since the last two options, were chosen more frequently by these participants.

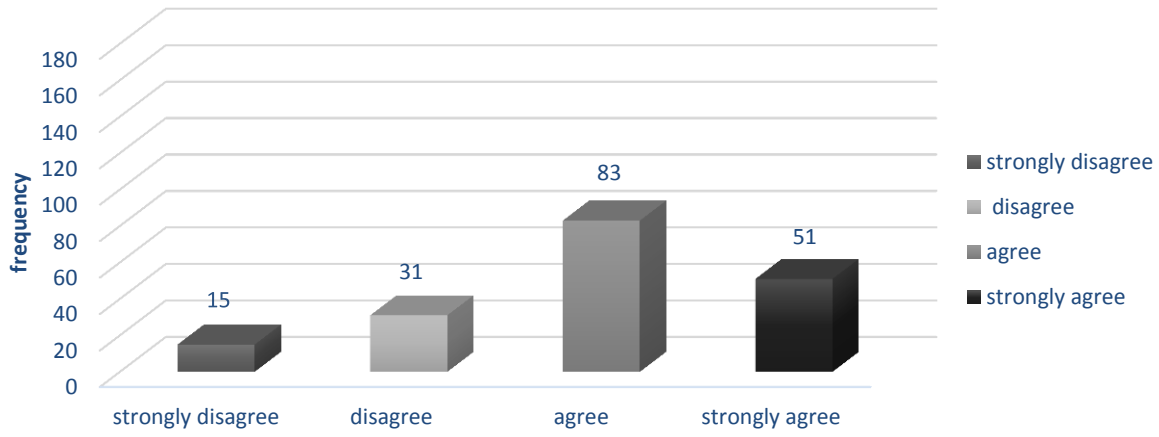

figure2. participants'answers to SLATS with lower level of AT

Results of the reading tests

In order to see whether the same treatment given to the both groups had caused any significant change in their reading performance and to see which group had performed significantly different

under the ambiguous condition during reading, t-tests were run. The results obtained from the statistical tests are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Reading pre-test and post-test by Low AT Group					
	Number of participants	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
R (pre-test)	15	15.5	19.5	17.60	1.16
R (post-test)	15	16	19.5	18.23	.923
Descriptive Statistics of Reading pre-test and post-test by High AT Group					
R (pre-test)	15	16.0	19.5	17.83	..994
R (post-test)	15	18.0	20.0	19.16	.617

R= Reading

It can be seen that there were differences between the mean of each group's pre-test and post-test. To see whether these differences were significant or not, t-test was used. The following tables are going to find the answer to research question.

Table 4. Result of independent sample t-test of low AT within group reading pre-test, post-test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	9.215	.005	1.095	28	.2825	-.433	.395	-1.243	.377
Equal variances not assumed			1.095	18.033	.2955	-.433	.395	-1.321	.443

Table (4) indicated that there was not a significant difference between mean scores of the participants 'reading pre-test and post-test in the low AT group, t (18.033) = 1.095, p = .295 > 0.05. Therefore by conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table 5. Result of independent sample t-test of high AT within group reading pre-test, post-test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.368	.549	4.413	28	.000	-1.333	.302	-1.952	-.714
Equal variances not assumed			4.413	24.34	.000	-1.333	.302	-2.001	-.699

Table 5 illustrates the result of pre-test and post-test of reading in high AT. As shown in this table, the difference was considered to be statistically significant which means the participants performed better after the treatment. Table 3 reveals that participants of high AT group performed better than low AT

group. Finally to see whether the difference in the reading performance of the two groups after the treatment was significant, an independent sample t-test was performed on the post-tests. According to table 6, t (28) = -3.254, p =.003 < 0.05, the difference was statistically significant.

Table 6. Result of independent sample t-test between groups in reading post-tests

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	6.243	.019	3.254	28	.003	-.933	.287	-1.521	-.346
Equal variances not assumed			3.254	25.49	.003	-.933	.287	-1.542	-.340

Discussion

The general findings which can be drawn from the results of this study is the undeniable effect of maintaining the ambiguous nature of reading tasks on the participants' reading performances with higher level of AT and to some extend those with lower level of AT. In other words, the data gathered in this study suggest that AT plays an important role for EFL learners in their process of language learning and specifically in their reading comprehension. Students from high AT group received better marks from the six reading tests during the treatment. Running the independent samples *t*-tests within and between the two groups and comparing the means of both groups in reading post-test, indicated that the EFL learners' reading performance is directly related to their level of AT.

In accordance with the findings of this study, Lin et al. (2014), identified that high AT is a significant predicator of L2 competence and the use of L2-oriented learning strategies. Findings of the study done by Lin et al. (2014), and the present study showed that language teachers should assist students with low AT to cope with L2 ambiguity like the treatment which was applied in this study, and further encourage them to take advantage of opportunities to increase their tolerance, especially in a foreign setting. Consequently the general results of this study are consistent with the findings of researches done by Erten et.al (2009), Keshavarz et al. (2012), and Atef-Vahid et al. (2011) which indicted the significant relationship between EFL learners' AT and different aspects of learning a foreign language.

Conclusion

Based on the reviewed literature and this small-scale experimental research, it can be concluded that spoon-feeding the language learners especially during reading tasks is not going to direct them to their real needs when they are supposed to read something by themselves. Knowing the influential role of AT in language learning and specifically in reading, all EFL teachers have the responsibility of preparing the real-life situations of learning in which students can flourish every hidden aspect of their capabilities such as AT. As it was done in this study both groups experienced the same ambiguous condition of reading and the lower tolerance of the low AT group did not restrict the teacher to use some other methods, due to the fact that learners seek new opportunities to learn and become competent enough to read well and decide reasonably under complex and ambiguous situations. Consequently, the responsibility of preparing such conditions for having more efficient learning and reading is mostly on the teachers' shoulders. For these reasons, instead of asking our students to be quite and to be just the recipient of the information given by the teacher about a text, let's ask them to be involved in their reading process and make all the unknown parts meaningful by linking them to different parts of the text or their own knowledge.

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