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# EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF DICTATION ON GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE OF IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE MALE AND FEMALE EFL LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

THE AIM OF THE PRESENT STUDY WAS TO EXAMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DICTO-COMP AND STANDARD DICTATION ON BOOSTING MALE AND FEMALE INTERMEDIATE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE. TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY, 120 INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS STUDYING ENGLISH AT A LANGUAGE INSTITUTE IN ISFAHAN, IRAN, WERE SELECTED AS THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY AFTER A PLACEMENT TEST (THE OXFORD QUICK PLACEMENT TEST) WAS CONDUCTED TO MEET THE HOMOGENEITY CRITERION. THE LEARNERS WERE THEN DIVIDED INTO FOUR GROUPS OF EQUAL SIZE: FEMALE DICTO-COMP GROUP (FDCG), MALE DICTO-COMP GROUP (MDCG), FEMALE STANDARD DICTATION GROUP (FSDG), AND MALE STANDARD DICTATION GROUP (MSDG). ALL THE PARTICIPANTS IN DIFFERENT GROUPS TOOK A GRAMMAR PRETEST. FDCG AND MDCG LEARNERS WERE EXPOSED TO DICTO-COMP IN THEIR CLASSES, WHILE FSDG AND MSDG WERE IN CLASSES IN WHICH STANDARD DICTATION WAS PRACTICED. SUBSEQUENTLY, ALL THE LEARNERS WERE GIVEN A GRAMMAR POSTTEST. COMPARISONS OF PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES OF THE FOUR GROUPS THROUGH PAIRED-SAMPLES *T* TESTS REVEALED THAT BOTH DICTO-COMP AND STANDARD DICTATION EXERTED STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THE GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE OF BOTH FEMALE AND MALE EFL LEARNERS, YET DICTO-COMP APPEARED TO HAVE GREATER EFFECTS ON THE GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE OF THE LEARNERS, AND FEMALE LEARNERS WERE FOUND TO IMPROVE SLIGHTLY MORE THAN DID MALE LEARNERS. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY INCLUDE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A MORE SERIOUS INCORPORATION OF BOTH STANDARD DICTATION AND DICTO-COMP IN THE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND TESTING CURRICULA.

**KEYWORDS:** DICTO-COMP, STANDARD DICTATION, GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE

## Introduction

Grammar learning has been taken into account as both fundamental and marginal in language learning at different periods. Currently, grammar is considered as the indispensable part of language learning and it is believed that it has great importance for language learners. With the lack of sufficient grammatical



knowledge, words that are used for naming objects, actions and conveying messages among people would not be useful and their meanings would be understood imprecisely (Larsen-Freeman, 1991 cited in Rutherford, 2014). Grammar is the fundamental component of the language, which plays an essential role in any language-teaching program. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), grammar must not be neglected in language teaching, since a product without an appropriate knowledge of grammar would confine learners' knowledge improvement, and there is a widespread agreement that grammar must be taught in order to acquire proper accuracy. What is the most helpful way for teaching grammar items to second language learners?

During the history of second language (L2) teaching, there has not been a unanimous agreement on the role of dictation and teacher-training courses have not paid enough attention to techniques that help students learn grammar. Not only is teaching through dictation, including standard dictation and dicto-comp, a technique that establishes a new way to perform this assessment technique, but also it is useful for improving spelling, making sentences, learning grammar, and new vocabulary, etc. It helps to settle an agreement between what learners think they need (which might not be grammar at all but maybe text organization or Lexis) and what teachers think is necessary for learners. It improves listening skills since learners need to concentrate on the meaning while listening to the text. It helps practice their proofreading and editing skills. Learners have to be aware of grammar and use it productively while doing this task. In addition, it supplies a chance for collaborative learning. It also upgrades and refines their use of language (Farzami Pooya, 2014).

According to Kidd (1992), based on different theoretical and pragmatic reasons, dictation is an inspiring typical technique to enhance both direct learning and the indirect acquisition of L2 grammatical structures. He claims that dictation could be a beneficial general method for teaching grammar to ESL and EFL learners. Special techniques of dictation such as dicto-comp and standard dictation are easy to operate in the classroom and attract students' attention to the target language structure.

Language teachers have always used dictation for testing, but some teachers have been doubtful about its advantage in language teaching/learning. Currently dictation seems to be experiencing a revival as a valuable teaching device. It is believed that dictation can assist developing all language skills, that is, grammar, oral communication, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. It is both a language teaching and testing device that dates back to the 16th century. Its approval fluctuates depending on the popular teaching methodologies. For example, the direct method, reading method, and grammar translation method of teaching support the use of dictation. On the other hand, the natural method and the audio-lingual method do not consider dictation as a useful language-teaching tool (Stansfield, 1985). Norris (1993) defines dictation as a technique in which a passage is read or played aloud to students with pauses (usually at the end of sentences or long phrases), and students are supposed to write down what they hear as precisely as possible. Dictation was largely regarded as a testing device in the past. However, according to Farhady, Jafarpur, and Birjandi (2001), the use of dictation as a language testing technique was criticized on many arguments. Relating to the teaching values of dictation, (Valette, 1964 as cited in Rahimi, 2008) claimed that students are able to learn the language of the dictation practice. She believed that teacher's focus on different parts of the language, such as sound, phrases, sentences, etc., incites the learners to correct their writings. In fact, she stated that dictation could stimulate the students' consciousness of the written language. Conclusively, Stansfield (1985) mentioned that because learners employ more than one skill in dictation, they could be more successful in internalizing the language.

### Statement of the Problem

Lack of suitable grammatical knowledge has always created anxiety for teachers and learners. Moreover, nonexistence of an efficient method of teaching grammar and presenting structure to EFL learners is a

huge problem in EFL classes. Finding a useful way of presenting new grammatical structures and training students for using those structures in their productions can be considered an unnoticed area of research.

The role of grammar is conceivably one of the most contentious issues in language teaching (Richards & Renandya, 2002). These days, many teachers believe that the word 'dictation' is synonymous with 'old-fashioned', 'boring', and 'teacher-centered' activity. According to Kidd (1992), "The majority of ESL teachers in this modern communication era probably regard dictation as an old-fashioned and rather sterile method of language instruction" (p. 49).

There are a couple of reasons for why the researcher picked this subject for the study: Firstly, grammar learning has always been a challenging area for most EFL learners and applying an effective way of teaching grammar is important because without enough grammatical knowledge learners will not acquire proper accuracy (Debata, 2013). In addition, based on the researcher's personal experience of teaching, the present perfect, present perfect continuous, and past perfect are the most problematic verb tenses for Iranian intermediate EFL learners to learn properly and use accurately. Secondly, in most of the studies, dictation is meant to provide practice in listening comprehension, pronunciation, and writing (Kiany & Shiramiry, 2002) but less attention was given to the effect of dictation on the acquisition of grammatical structure (Paek, Chickering, Badger, & Wu, 2010). Thirdly, the conscious learning of structures can be improved by dictation activities (Kidd, 1992). Fourthly, different types of dictations would help teachers teach grammar and learners to internalize it in a more communicative way (Paek et al., 2010).

Therefore, the researcher suggested that different types of dictation practice could be practical for teaching grammatical points to EFL learners and their effects on the three aforementioned problematic grammatical structures must be examined in detail. Considering the results of the study, the researcher might get some steps closer to finding a solution to the poor grammatical knowledge of the intermediate EFL learners.

### Objectives of the Study

In this study, there were four major objectives to be pursued. The first objective of the study was to determine if the use of dicto-comp had any significant effect on Iranian female intermediate EFL learners' grammatical competence. The second objective of the study focused on using dicto-comp as a dictation technique and its effect on Iranian male intermediate EFL learners' grammatical competence. The third objective of the study was to see if the use of standard dictation had any significant effect on Iranian female intermediate EFL learners' grammatical competence. The fourth objective of the study focused on using standard dictation as a dictation technique and its effect on Iranian male intermediate EFL learners' grammatical competence.

### Research Questions

RQ1: Does using dicto-comp as a dictation technique have any significant effect on Iranian female intermediate EFL students' grammatical competence?

RQ2: Does using dicto-comp as a dictation technique have any significant effect on Iranian male intermediate EFL students' grammatical competence?

RQ3: Does using standard dictation as a dictation technique have any significant effect on Iranian female intermediate EFL students' grammatical competence?

RQ4: Does using standard dictation as a dictation technique have any significant effect on Iranian male intermediate EFL students' grammatical competence?

## Review of Literature

### Grammar

The importance of grammar is emphasized at its best by so many teachers. They believe that in order to acquire fluency in speaking, comprehensibility at reading, and accuracy in writing sufficient knowledge of grammar is necessary. A rich grammar competency enables learners to produce correct sentences and have correct communication with other people. According to Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence, which considers grammatical competence as one component of communicative competence, also grammar instruction is part of language teaching. In this new role, grammar cooperates with meaning, social function, or discourse or a combination of these rather than being segregated as an independent system to be learned as the final goal.

### The Importance of Grammar

The teaching of grammar should be based on the principles of comprehensibility and acceptability. Grammar is important, but usually English teachers in different countries of the world teach too much of it. They mention some significant reasons for the importance of grammar: a) because it is there, b) it is tidy, c) it is testable, d) comprehensibility, and e) acceptability

### The Role of Grammar in Language Learning and Teaching

Ancient Greeks started studying grammar more than 2000 years ago and people have been studying it since then (Hudson & Stubbs, 1992). However, there is not still a unanimous agreement among scholars about where and how to comprise grammar in a foreign language curriculum. Traditionally, grammar and specifically separate structures, was considered as the pivotal and essential part of language program. Nevertheless, unfortunately nowadays it has been ignored and lost its common acceptance. Many teachers believe that language is for communication and linguistic elements that are important to reach to this goal are vocabulary and meaning rather than form (Krashen, 1985). Krashen (1985) also stated that it would be more natural and motivating to expose learners to meaningful situations rather than teaching grammar. On the other hand, other scholars claimed that teaching grammar could improve learners' aptitude for learning a new language (Lund & Light, 2003).

According to them, grammar should be reestablished in teaching curriculum. As stated by Zhonggang-Gao (2001), an indispensable part of learning another language is comprehending its linguistic structures. According to them, these structures are instruments for acquiring communicative competence and they can ensure students' accuracy and fluency in second or foreign language. Current studies on the role of grammar on foreign language teaching and learning have indicated that grammar should be considered as an indispensable part of foreign language teaching (Nunan, 2005; Patterson, 2001).

### The Importance of Dictation

Madsen (1983) asserted that dictation is a guided-writing test that most teachers are familiar with it, but a minority of them handles it properly. In fact, he believed it is one of the easiest tests to use, and it gives very good information on the student's language ability. However, to reach to this goal it must be prepared, presented, and scored correctly.

### Benefits of Dictation

Alkire (2002) in his article states the following benefits for dictation. A) Dictation shows students the kinds of spelling errors they are prone to make. B) Dictation can help develop all four language skills in an integrative way. C) Dictation helps to develop short-term memory. Students practice retaining meaningful phrases or whole sentences before writing them down. D) Dictation can serve as an excellent review exercise. E) Dictation is psychologically powerful and challenging. F) Dictation fosters unconscious thinking in the new language. G) If the students do well, dictation is motivating. H) Dictation involves the whole class, no matter how large it is. I) During and after the dictation, all students are active. J) Correction can be done by the students. K) Dictation can be prepared for any level.

### Advantages of Using Dictation in the Classroom

Lightfoot (2006) stated that there are numerous reasons why dictation activities function properly in the classroom. From the teacher's point of view, dictation can be done with any level, based on the text, which is used and can be graded for a multi-level class.

For the students, dictations:

(1) Can focus on both accuracy (form) as well as meaning, e.g. in the dictogloss activity. (2) Can develop all four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing if the students do the dictating rather than the teacher. (3) Give students the chance to pay attention to features of pronouncing such as weak forms, linking, and elision.

In fact, dictation can be used to decrease preparation time for other activities, such as:

(1) Instead of spending hours making cut-up activities such as matching vocabulary and their definitions, why not give the students blank slips of paper and dictate the necessary information to them. This also gives the students more listening and writing/spelling practice. (2) To save time, the class can be divided into two groups and the words/phrases dictated quickly with each group required to write down only half the words given.

Montalvan (1990) has earlier remarked that there are at least twenty advantages of dictation but the most important are:

1. Dictation can help learners to improve all four language skills in an integrative way. 2. Students learn grammar while they are trying to develop their aural comprehension of meaning and of the relationship among segments of language. 3. Dictation is beneficial in developing short-term memory. Students practice remembering meaningful phrases or whole sentences before writing them down. 4. Practice in careful listening to dictation will be useful later on in note taking exercises. 5. Oral communication can be served through the correction of dictation. 6. Dictation can play a pivotal role in review exercise. 7. Dictation is psychologically powerful and challenging. 8. Dictation fosters unconscious thinking in the new language. 9. If the students do properly, dictation is inspiring. 10. Dictation involves the whole class and the size of the class is not problematic. 11. All students are active during and after dictation. 12. Peer correction is possible in a dictation activity. 13. Dictation can be prepared for groups with different abilities. 14. Proficiency level is not a confining factor for preparing dictations. 15. Both students and teachers can get immediate feedback (if the exercise is corrected immediately). 16. The dictation passage can (and should) be completely prepared in advance. (It can also be taped.). 17. Dictation can be applied very effectively by a novice teacher. 18. While dictating, the teacher can move in the class and pay attention to the learners individually. 19. Dictation exercises can pull the class together, for example, during those valuable first minutes. 20. Dictation facilitates access to interesting texts, by introducing a topic or summarizing it, as in a dicto-comp. 21. Studies have indicated that learning to write down while hearing can have positive effect on the development of literacy.

According to Ezenwosu (2011), it is surprising that despite all the benefits of dictation as enumerated above, dictation is not commonly used in English classrooms, particularly at the secondary and tertiary



education levels mostly because some linguists or teachers believe it is teacher-centered and old-fashioned. However, it seems that dictation is acquiring a revival as a beneficial teaching and learning device in recent years. It is believed that it can improve all language skills, which are, grammar, oral communication, pronunciation, and listening comprehension.

### Usefulness of Dictation for Teaching Grammar

Some studies have stated that dictation has potential value for grammar teaching without regarding the size of the class and the learners' proficiency level. For instance, Kidd (1992) argues that, in order to justify the usefulness of dictation practice for teaching grammar, one can resort to Oller's notion of expectancy grammar. According to Oller Jr and Perkins (1978), a learner's expectancy grammar is at the core of his or her predictive capacity. It is the ability to understand the speech by "continually formulating, modifying, and reformulating hypotheses about the underlying structure and meaning of input signals" (cited in Kidd, 1992, p. 50). Dictation can be an outstanding activity to practice and improve this general capacity, since it motivates the learner to pay attention to the forms as well as to the meanings of grammatical structures, both semantically and pragmatically. He continues that this approach is reliable with the modern view that the learning of grammatical forms must always occur in connection with semantic and/or pragmatic factors, the latter including both sociolinguistic and discourse related meanings (Celce-Murcia & McIntosh, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1991).

Dictation can also promote the subconscious acquisition of structures, since dictation passages may qualify as good comprehensible input. The well-chosen dictation texts that can challenge ESL students are bound to contain a few structures at the "i+1" level. Dictation also demands active involvement and attention to meaning. According to Krashen (1982), under such conditions, comprehensible input becomes "intake," and acquisition occurs automatically.

On the other hand, Kidd (1992) emphasizes that dictation activities can promote conscious learning of structures. When students are performing dictation exercises, they try to transcribe the text as accurately as possible. Follow-up work also involves many kinds of correction activities, which focus directly on form. One advantage of such attention to formal features is encouraging "consciousness-raising" of grammatical structures. This process of "rule internalization" may be nothing more than the development of "automaticity" (McLaughlin, Rossman, & McLeod, 1983) or "control of grammatical knowledge" (Bialystok & Sharwood Smith, 1985). Zhiqian (1989) summarizes the characteristics of dictation as a technique serving both the teacher and the students efficiently as follows:

Dictation can be used with a class of any size. Dictation ensures attentive listening. When the students are doing a dictation, their attention will totally be focused on the exercises. Dictation gives the students a chance to get practice in the sort of note taking that many courses require. Dictation requires the students to make the transfer from the spoken to written language. Dictation, if properly varied, can provide practice in listening comprehension, vocabulary building, increasing reading speed and comprehension, as well as elementary aspects of handwriting, punctuation, spelling, and composition formation. Certain types of dictation also lend themselves to the grammar class.

### Different Types of Dictation

According to Oller (1979), there are different types of dictation which include standard dictation, partial dictation, dictation with competing noise, dicto-comp (dictation composition), elicited imitation, dictogloss, combined cloze and dictation, pause and paraphrases, error identification, and jigsaw dictation. In Standard dictation, which is more properly called conventional dictation, dictation is usually read and the examinees are required to write down exactly what they hear. In Dicto-comp dictation, the material is presented to examine the learners in auditory format at a normal rate of speech, and they are required to write what they have heard. Rost (2002) stated that other variations of dictation include fast speed dictation, pause and paraphrases, listening closely, error identification, and jigsaw dictation.

Consequently, because of the functional and theoretical significance of grammar, it is remarkably important to use dictation as an educational tool to teach grammar. The present study aimed to investigate the impact of using dictation on the enhancement of learning grammar by Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

### Review of the Previous Studies

Kiany and Shiramiry (2002) investigated the effects of frequent dictation on the listening comprehension (LC) ability of elementary EFL learners. Two homogeneous groups of elementary EFL learners at the Kish Language Institute in Tehran, Iran were chosen. Each group consisted of 30 male elementary EFL students, 20 to 35 years of age. The participants were divided into control and experimental groups. The experimental group was given dictation 11 times during the term. At the end of the term the LC ability of both groups was post tested by a battery of 40-item NCTE Elementary Listening Tests (National Council of Teachers of English, 1972) which was also used as the listening pretest. The results showed that dictation had a significant effect on the listening comprehension ability of the participants in the experimental group. The mean gain scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than those of the control group.

Wangchao (2002) analyzed the effects of compound dictation on EFL teaching. The results revealed that the present task for our EFL teaching is still to rectify the teaching objectives, adhere to the teaching syllabus, and attach importance to textbooks and class teaching as well. Meanwhile CET should also pay attention to its item-setting regulations in order to make the test itself more valid and reliable.

Yang (2009) conducted a study on whether different dictation methods affect test-takers' performance. Three dictation passages were designed based on the three dictation methods, namely, partial dictation, passage dictation, and dicto-comp. Three homogeneous groups of 67 students took the test respectively. Results show that different dictation methods have significant effects on the test results. However, partial dictation and passage dictation tests do not produce significant difference in mean score, but dicto-comp test is significantly different from the other two. It suggests all three types of dictation methods, if well designed, can be applied to test dictation ability.

Cai (2013) examined the difference between partial dictation and test forms believed to measure more higher-order abilities. In a series of confirmatory factor analyses, the simplex, second-order, and bi-factor models were fitted to the scores of 367 college-level EFL learners in China in a listening test composed of partial dictation, gap-filling and constructed response tasks. The bi-factor model was identified as the best fitting and this supports the view that partial dictation measures the same construct as test forms believed to measure more higher-order abilities. Concomitant statistical analyses also showed that the partial dictation tasks were suited to the ability level of the test takers and had high internal consistency.

Marzban and Abdollahi (2013) investigated the effects of partial dictation on the listening comprehension (LC) ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Sixty EFL learners were chosen as the participants of the study, divided into two equal groups of control, and experimental. Each group consisted of 30 female intermediate EFL students. They both took a listening test as a pre-test. For one term, consisting of 20 sessions, the students in the control group were given the listening exercises in their textbook. The experimental group, in addition to the listening exercises in the textbook, was given partial dictation 11 times during the term. At the end of the term, the LC ability of both groups was post-tested with the same listening test taken from a TOFEL test, which was also used as the listening pre-test. Results of a t-test showed that dictation had a significant effect on the listening comprehension ability of the participants in the experimental group. The mean gain scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than those of the control group.

### Methodology

## Design

This study enjoys a quantitative design. It is a quasi-experimental study due to the lack of randomization in sampling. "This design is often used in classroom experiments when experimental and control groups are such naturally assembled groups as intact classes which may be similar" (Best & Kahn, 2006, p. 183).

The independent variable of the study was dictation, which appeared in two forms: standard dictation and dicto-comp while the dependent variable was grammar (i.e., three target English verb tenses: present perfect, past perfect, and present perfect continuous). There were four classes containing four experimental groups i.e., standard dictation, and dicto-comp (male and female). There were also two separate treatments each given to one of the experimental groups.

## Participants

The participants of the study consisted of one hundred and twenty intermediate EFL students studying English at an English language Institute in Isfahan. There were 60 female and 60 male learners and their ages ranged from 18 to 24 years. The participants' general English knowledge was assessed by Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT). The Oxford Quick Placement Test was run to guarantee the homogeneity of the participants. The participants were selected from 200 EFL learners after conducting the placement test and making sure that they were intermediate learners based on their scores of OQPT test. The participants whose scores of OQPT were between 29 and 43 were considered intermediate learners and selected to partake in the study.

The students were divided into four groups containing two male and two female groups. After dividing the participants into different groups based on their genders, they were randomly assigned into the aforementioned groups. Two methods of treatment were used for the groups of the study, which were the standard dictation and the dicto-comp. The first female group (n=30) received Standard dictation, and the second female group (n=30) received dicto-comp dictation. In addition, the third male group (n=30) received Standard dictation, and the fourth male group (n = 30) received dicto-comp dictation.

## Instruments

The instruments used in this study consisted of Oxford Quick Placement test (OQPT), pre-test, and post-test.

### Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)

The Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was used to measure the participants' language proficiency. This test consists of sixty items with different question formats containing two parts (Part one and Part two). There are multiple choice, item matching, and cloze test type items in the test. In each item, there is a missing word for which, there are four options. Students should find the correct choice among these options. Based on the test scoring level chart, those whose scores on the test were between 29 and 43 were considered as the intermediate level and categorized to be at the same level according to the OQPT results.

### Pre-test

To measure the grammatical ability of the participants before the application of the treatment a test of grammar based on the structures in focus of this study (present perfect, past perfect, and present perfect continuous) was developed by the researcher. The test included 45 multiple choice questions including 15 questions for each structure. To assure the reliability of the test prior to the main study a pilot study was

conducted with 10 participants resembling the target sample of the main study. Moreover, the clarity of the instructions of the test and the face validity of the test were evaluated in the same pilot study. In order to determine the validity of the test three experts in the field of TEFL who were university professors were consulted. The researcher conducted KR-21 formula for evaluating the reliability of the test and test yielded good reliability ( $r = .85$ ).

### Post-test

To evaluate the participants' grammatical competence and the efficiency of the treatment, a posttest was developed and conducted to them. The post-test was similar to the pretest with the same number of questions and level of difficulty. In order to solve the problem of test practice effects, the place of items and options were changed in the posttest. After collecting the numerical data, the scores of the pre-test and post-test were analyzed and compared to understand how much the treatments were effective and which group was more successful in achieving the goal of the study. Since the pre-test and the post-test were similar and the reliability and validity of the pre-test were already assessed, it could be considered that the post-test had the similar reliability and validity as the pre-test.

### Procedure

The participants of the study sat for OQPT to fulfill the criterion of homogeneity. They were assigned to four groups containing two groups of male and two groups of female learners. Two groups of participants including one male and one female groups received dicto-comp, and two other groups (one male and one female) received standard dictation. The dictation was performed at the end of each session and 15 minutes of each class was devoted to this process. All participant groups attended the class three times a week, in sum the whole treatment lasted for 12 ninety-minute sessions.

At the beginning of the study, the pre-test was administered to the experimental groups. The research was conducted in 12 sessions. In each session, either in dicto-comp or standard dictation classes, the participants received three texts for dictation. During the treatment, the new grammatical items present perfect, past perfect, and present perfect continuous of the students' book Top Notch, which had been taught to the experimental groups in the previous session, were practiced through dicto-comp and standard dictation techniques. The first experimental group received treatment through standard dictation and second experimental received treatment through dicto-comp.

At the end of the program, the post-test was administered to all the experimental groups. The aim of this test was to check the grammar development of the participants and to determine the effectiveness of using dicto-comp and standard dictation on grammar learning.

The basic procedure of research treatment was as follows:

#### *Dicto-comp*

1. The teacher read a text aloud to participants at normal speed.
2. Participants just listened but did not write anything.
3. The teacher then read the text again at normal speed and made short pauses between the sentences. The participants did not write anything but they tried to imagine what was being read.
4. Participants started writing what they heard and perceived.
5. In accordance with their perception, participants created a cohesive text with correct grammar and other features of the relevant type that approximates the meaning of the original, but was not a word-for-word copy of the text read by the



teacher. 6. Finally, all papers were collected by the teacher and checked. 7. According to their weaknesses, the teacher worked on them more during teaching.

The texts were selected by researcher from their course book or other sources. The three verb tenses of the study were frequently used in the dictation. To assess the readability of the text the Fog index was used by the researcher. The index number was 5, which was a suitable readability level for intermediate learners.

#### *Standard dictation*

1. The teacher read a text aloud to participants at normal speed. 2. Participants just listened and did not write anything. 3. They listened again, but there were some pauses, during the pauses they were supposed to write 4. The other step was listen again check what they wrote in the second step. 5. Finally, all papers were collected by the teacher and checked. 6. According to their weaknesses, the teacher worked on them more during the course.

The texts were selected by the researcher from their course book or other sources. The texts were at or below participants' current overall proficiency level, although there may be some new vocabularies. It may even be a text that participants have seen before. To assess the readability of the text the Fog index was used by the researcher. The index number was five, which was a suitable readability level for intermediate learners. The length of the text depends on participants' proficiency level. The three verb tenses of the study were frequently used in the dictation.

## Results

### Results for the OQPT

In order to ascertain the learners in the four groups were homogeneous in terms of their overall language proficiency, their OQPT scores were compared using a one-way between groups ANOVA. What follows is the results of the related analyses.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics Results Comparing FDCG, MDCG, FSDG, and MSDG Mean Scores on the OQPT*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for			
					Mean	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum Maximum
FDCG	30	37.36	3.05	.55	36.22	38.50	29.00	41.00
MDCG	30	37.73	2.63	.48	36.74	38.71	30.00	43.00
FSDG	30	37.53	2.35	.43	36.65	38.41	31.00	41.00
MSDG	30	37.80	2.67	.48	36.80	38.79	30.00	41.00
Total	120	37.60	2.66	.24	37.12	38.08	32.00	42.00

The mean scores of the FDCG ( $M = 37.36$ ), MDCG ( $M = 37.73$ ), FSDG ( $M = 37.53$ ), and MSDG ( $M = 37.80$ ) were, though not drastically, different from one another on the OQPT. To figure out whether the differences among these mean scores were significant or not, one needs to check the  $p$  value under the Sig. column in the ANOVA table below (Table 2.).

Table 2

*Results of One-Way ANOVA for Comparing FDCG, MDCG, FSDG, and MSDG Mean Scores on the OQPT*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.49	3	1.16	.16	.92
Within Groups	841.10	116	7.25		
Total	844.59	119			

As is displayed in Table 4.2, there was not a statistically significant difference in the OQPT scores for FDCG ( $M = 37.36$ ,  $SD = 3.05$ ), MDCG ( $M = 37.73$ ,  $SD = 2.63$ ), FSDG ( $M = 37.53$ ,  $SD = 2.35$ ), and MSDG ( $M = 37.80$ ,  $SD = 2.67$ ) because the  $p$  value under the *Sig.* column was greater than the specified level of significance (i.e.  $.92 > .05$ ), indicating that the four groups did not significantly differ in terms of their overall language proficiency and thus were homogeneous. This result is also shown in the bar chart

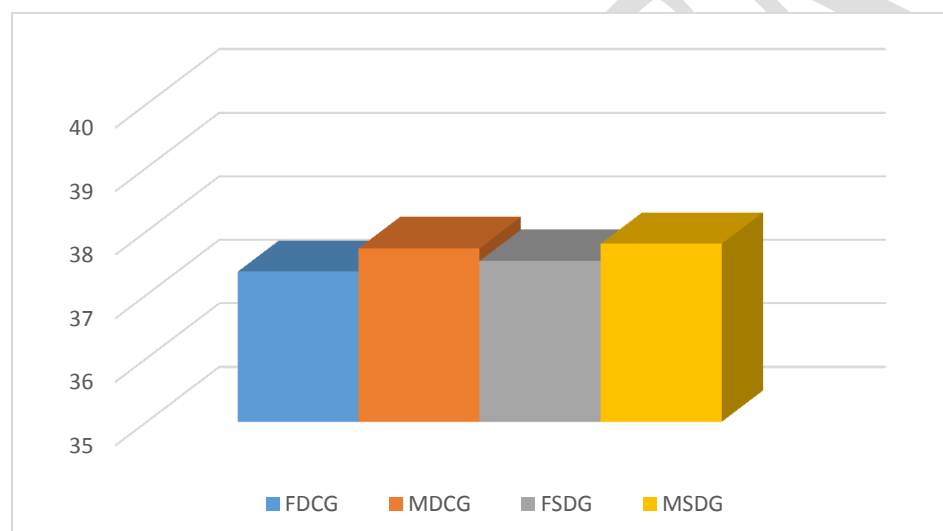


Figure 1. The Mean Scores of FDCG, MDCG, FSDG, and MSDG on the OQPT

This bar chart depicts the fact that the differences among the four groups on the OQPT were not considerable.

### Results for the Research Questions of the Study

The first research question of the study asked whether using dicto-comp led to the improvement of the grammatical competence of the FDCG learners or not. For this purpose, the pretest and posttest scores of the FDCG learners were compared using a paired-samples  $t$  test. The second research question of the study was essentially similar to the first one, except that it was about the MDCG learners. Consequently, the pretest and posttest scores of the MDCG learners were compared via another paired-samples  $t$  test. Since the third and fourth research questions were similar to the first two research questions except that they were about standard dictation, rather than dicto-comp, paired-samples  $t$  test was conducted two more times to compare the pretest and posttest scores of the FSDG learners and the MSDG learners. Table 1. presents the descriptive statistics for the pretest and posttest scores of the four groups of the study.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics Results Comparing Pretest and Posttest Scores of the FDCG, MDCG, FSDG, and MSDG*

Pairs	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FDCG Pretest	23.86	30	2.41	.44
FDCG Posttest	37.73	30	2.63	.48
MDCG Pretest	23.70	30	2.83	.51
MDCG Posttest	36.63	30	1.92	.35
FSDG Pretest	23.36	30	2.88	.52
FSDG Posttest	26.06	30	4.91	.89
MSDG Pretest	23.83	30	2.87	.52
MSDG Posttest	25.76	30	4.65	.85

Comparing the mean scores of the pretest and the posttest, it could be seen that for all the four groups, the posttest mean scores exceeded their corresponding pretest scores. That is, FDCG learners managed to achieve a mean score of 37.73 on the posttest, while their pretest mean score was 23.86. For MDCG learners, the same thing happened. Their posttest mean score ( $M = 36.63$ ) was far greater than their pretest mean score ( $M = 23.70$ ). Likewise, the pretest mean score of the FSDG learners ( $M = 23.36$ ) improved to be 26.06. Finally, for the MSDG learners, the posttest mean score ( $M = 25.76$ ) was greater than their pretest mean score ( $M = 23.83$ ). The significance or insignificance of these differences between the pretest and posttest scores of the four groups could be determined in the  $t$  test table below (Table 4.).

Table 4

*Paired Samples  $t$  Test Results Comparing Pretest and Posttest Scores of the FDCG, MDCG, FSDG, and MSDG*

		Paired Differences					df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean	95%	Confidence			
				Interval	of	that		
				Difference	Lower	Upper		
FDCG	Pretest							
-	FDCG-13.86	3.57	.65	-15.20	-12.53	-21.22	29	.000
Posttest								
MDCG	Pretest							
-	MDCG-12.93	3.18	.58	-14.12	-11.74	-22.25	29	.000
Posttest								
FSDG	Pretest							
-	FSDG-2.70	5.90	1.07	-4.90	-.49	-2.50	29	.018
Posttest								
MSDG	Pretest							
-	MSDG-1.93	4.87	.89	-3.75	-.11	-2.17	29	.038
Posttest								

The Sig. (2-tailed) value represents a  $p$  value lower than the significance level ( $.000 < .05$ ) for the FDCG, indicating that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the FDCG learners had been statistically significant. The same was also true for the pretest and posttest scores of the MDCG ( $p = .000$ ), FSDG ( $p = .018$ ), and MSDG ( $p = .038$ ). This means that the grammatical competence of learners of both genders improved significantly as a result of exposure to both types of treatment (i.e. dicto-comp and standard dictation). However, the improvement was greatest for FDCG since the mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores (as shown under the Mean column in Table 4.4.), irrespective of the negative mark, was the highest value (-13.86). The second most value out there is the value in front of MDCG (-12.93) and thus the MDCG had the second most improvement. Thus was followed by the mean difference value in front of FSDG (-2.70). Finally, the least improvement was made by the MSDG learners as the mean difference was -1.93. It could thus be inferred that, by and large, dicto-comp groups improved more than standard dictation groups, and also, females improved a little more than did male learners. This is also graphically shown in the bar chart below (Figure 4.2).

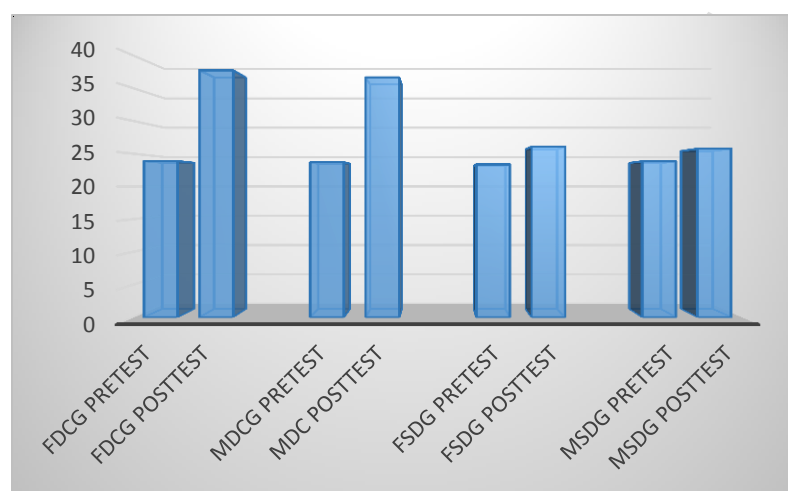


Figure 2. The Mean Scores of FDCG, MDCG, FSDG, and MSDG on the Pretest and Posttest

It is well beyond doubt that all the four groups showed better performances on their posttests, compared to their pretest performances. This indicates that both female and male learners' knowledge of grammar improved via the two instructional approaches (i.e. dicto-comp and standard dictation).

## Discussion

As set at the beginning of the study, the aim of the current study was to test the following research hypotheses:

H<sub>0</sub>1: Using dicto-comp does not have any significant effect on Iranian female intermediate EFL students' grammatical competence.

H<sub>0</sub>2: Using dicto-comp does not have any significant effect on Iranian male intermediate EFL students' grammatical competence.

H<sub>0</sub>3: Using standard dictation does not have any significant effect on Iranian female intermediate EFL students' grammatical competence.

Ho4: Using standard dictation does not have any significant effect on Iranian male intermediate EFL students' grammatical competence.

### Addressing Research Hypotheses One and Two

Since the assumption made by these two hypotheses are the same both are discussed in one section. To test these research hypotheses, the pretest and posttest scores of the female and male dicto-comp group learners were compared using paired-samples *t* tests. The obtained results indicated that the treatment positively affected the grammatical competence of female and male learners. Thus, the first and second null hypotheses of the study can be safely rejected. Kidd (1992) stated that based on different theoretical and pragmatic reasons, dictation is an inspiring typical technique to enhance both direct learning and the indirect acquisition of L2 grammatical structures. He argued that dictation could be a beneficial general method for teaching grammar to ESL and EFL learners. Special techniques of dictation such as dicto-comp are easy to operate in the classroom and attract students' attention to the target language structure. Therefore, currently dictation seems to be undergoing a revival as a useful teaching device. It is proved that dictation can help students develop all language skills, such as grammar, oral communication, pronunciation, and listening comprehension.

Dictation can help both the learners and teachers remove the grammatical problems commonly combined with the troubles of the other aspects of the language. The dictation will then operate as a form of review, the possibility of error will be reduced, and the students will be encouraged by their progress (Cullen, 2007).

Alkire (2002) in his article states that dictation can show students the kinds of spelling errors they are prone to make. It also helps develop all four language skills in an integrative way. It develops short-term memory. Students practice retaining meaningful phrases or whole sentences before writing them down. It can serve as an excellent review exercise. It is psychologically powerful and challenging. It fosters unconscious thinking in the new language. In addition, if the students do well, dictation is motivating. Therefore, it is quite axiomatic that disregarding the gender of the participants involved, dictation and specially dicto-comp which better incorporate the above-mentioned features can lead to grammar improvement of EFL learners.

The findings of this study are in line with the ones reported by Khoii and Pourhassan (2012). They investigated the effects of three types of dictation practice (standard dictation, dicto-comp, and dictogloss) on elementary EFL learners' immediate and delayed performance on tests of present tense, to be verbs and indefinite articles in English. The results indicated that the groups which receive dicto-comp outperformed other groups in developing grammatical competence as regards the tenses under investigation. In dicto-comp activities, the students have to listen to the passage as a whole and are not allowed to write it during the listening phase. Then they try to reconstruct the text from their memory without any further help. Therefore, there might be more focus on meaning and the role of certain grammatical structures in creating the meaning which can result in better grammar learning and internalization.

Stansfield (1985) reports that "more than 50 studies of dictation were conducted in the 1970s, and these findings were invariably favorable" (p. 26). Takeuchi (1997) did an experiment of dictating on 207 English language learners in Japan. Learners were given the dialogues in movies for more than 13 weeks. Finally, he observed the big change in functional abilities of those students. Takeuchi concluded that his experiment "proves that dictation is effective in foreign language teaching" (p. 62).

### Addressing Research Hypotheses Three and Four

To test these research hypotheses, the pretest and posttest scores of the female and male standard dictation group learners were compared using paired-samples *t* tests. The obtained results indicated that the treatment positively affected the grammatical competence of female and male learners. Thus, the third and fourth null hypotheses of the study can be safely rejected.

According to Rivers (1981), standard dictation is not just spelling practice. The backwash effect of this kind of dictation can help both the students and teachers overcome significantly the grammatical problems mostly alongside the problems of the other areas of the language. The dictation will then serve as a form of review, the possibility of error will be reduced, and the students will be encouraged by their progress.

As this study showed, standard dictation can be a means of assessing students' grammar learning ability and helping them to improve their grammar, and more importantly, the motivation implementing such a tool is created in learners to learn the language eagerly and effectively. Standard dictation helped learners to become aware of their own learning and monitor themselves. The students learned to be responsible for their own learning and become more independent learners.

The findings of this study lend support to those obtained by Domskey (2015). This study intended to investigate the effect of standard dictation on grammar learning ability of young Iranian beginner English as foreign language (EFL) learners. The findings confirmed the fact that standard dictation can significantly affect grammar learning ability of young Iranian beginner EFL learners. The findings were also in line with those of the study conducted by Khoii and Pourhassan (2012). They also reported the positive effect of standard dictation on grammar improvement of EFL learners. The findings also supported those reported by Adel and Hashemian (2015). They explored the effect of controlled writing (dictation) on the accuracy (in this case, grammar) of the writing of adult Iranian EFL learners. The results revealed that dictation has a positive impact on grammar accuracy of L2 learners.

In sum, there might be several reasons for the findings germane to third and fourth hypotheses of this study. In the standard dictation group, the students wrote the sentences or phrases chunk by chunk as they heard them; therefore, they kept the chunks only for a short time in their memory. Thus, this type of dictation involved immediate recall and had an immediate effect on the students' performance on the given test. As stated by Reinders (2009), having to remember only a small amount of text will allow learners to reproduce the text more accurately; in other words, greater uptake is likely to take place.

### Conclusion

This study revealed the positive effect of standard dictation and dicto-comp on grammar improvement of Iranian EFL learners. In addition, there was no significant difference between the performance of male and female learners meaning that gender was not an influential factor as far as the effectiveness of dictation is concerned. Therefore, this study was a sort of confirmation for previous studies highlighting the importance and value of dictation both as a testing and teaching device.

A large number of previous studies stated that dictation has potential value for grammar teaching without regarding the size of the class, learners' gender and the learners' proficiency level. For instance, Kidd (1992) argues that, in order to justify the usefulness of dictation practice for teaching grammar, one can resort to Oller's notion of expectancy grammar. According to Oller Jr and Perkins (1978), a learner's expectancy grammar is at the core of his or her predictive capacity. It is the ability to understand the



speech by “continually formulating, modifying, and reformulating hypotheses about the underlying structure and meaning of input signals” (cited in Kidd, 1992, p. 50). Dictation can be an outstanding activity to practice and improve this general capacity, since it motivates the learner to pay attention to the forms as well as to the meanings of grammatical structures, both semantically and pragmatically. He continues that this approach is reliable with the modern view that the learning of grammatical forms must always occur in connection with semantic and/or pragmatic factors, the latter including both sociolinguistic and discourse related meanings (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1991).

### Implications of the Study

The results of the current study can be beneficial for all instructional centers. They bear some implications for SLA researchers, material developers, syllabus designers, test makers, and L2 teachers. This study, according to the obtained results, may offer some tips for L2 teachers who might pay some attention to teaching grammar or any other four major skills; listening, speaking, reading, writing, because standard dictation and dicto-comp cannot be restricted to any skills or subjects in isolation.

The results are useful for teachers in schools, language centers and institutes in that they can change the way they assess and instruct the students and move toward a more learner-oriented method. By the use of dictation, they can design an assessment system in which the students have to study during the whole term for the course and not just study for the test. This way they will be more motivated to learn and will use meta-cognitive strategies and think about their learning. They will try to document their learning and this way enhances their ability in language skills. If we change the way we assess our learners, and move away from test-oriented procedures and seek help from alternative assessments like dictation, then it will indirectly affect teaching, learning, test development, syllabus design, and material development. Undoubtedly, implementing dictation is a continuous long-term assessment and it is more oriented to process than product. This way the students themselves are also involved in the process of evaluation and teachers can integrate assessment and instruction in order to obtain better results for their classes.

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# IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' VIEWS ON LEARNING GRAMMAR THROUGH WEB- AND BOOK-BASED MATERIALS

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## ABSTRACT

SI FAN (2011) STATES THAT THE WEB AND WEB-BASED TECHNOLOGIES HAVE BECOME WIDELY ACCEPTABLE AND FEASIBLE IN THE MODERN SOCIETY. THEY HAVE CREATED A NEW PARADIGM IN VARIOUS AREAS, INVOLVING THE FIELD OF EDUCATION. THE WEB SUPPLIES TEACHING STAFF AND LEARNERS WITH A INFLUENTIAL SOURCE FOR INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION, EVALUATION, AND ASSESSMENT. THIS PAPER SHOWS THE ATTITUDES OF EFL LEARNERS TOWARD LEARNING GRAMMAR IN AUTONOMOUS WEB-BASED AS WELL AS TRADITIONAL BOOK-BASED CONTEXTS AND ALSO TOWARD SOME MATERIALS THAT ARE USED FOR THESE SITUATIONS. THE PARTICIPANTS CONSISTED OF 30 HOMOGENOUS MALE AND FEMALE LEARNERS. THEY WERE ASKED TO FILL OUT QUESTIONNAIRE, WHICH WAS ADAPTED AND USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. THE ANALYSIS OF OBTAINED DATA SHOWS THAT ALTHOUGH COMPUTERS HAVE A LOT OF WELL-DOCUMENTED ADVANTAGES, THE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS STUDY GENERALLY PREFERRED PAPER-BASED MATERIALS. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY SUGGEST SOME SOLUTIONS FOR IMPROVING BOTH WEB- AND BOOK- BASED MATERIALS.

**KEY WORDS:** CALL, WEB-BASED MATERIALS, BOOK-BASED MATERIALS, EFL LEARNERS ATTITUDE.

## 1. Introduction

For many years, learner autonomy has been noticed essential and Language Resource Centers (LRCs) and the materials that attached within them are frequently imagined as ideal physical locations to facilitate such autonomy. Centers will often provide materials to cover the range of language skills as well as vocabulary, essentially above all else, grammar-based materials. In the past, such materials would be specifically paper-based frequently comprising in house task sheets and published self-study resource books. Recently, computers have come to play an important role and in many situations it would be difficult to imagine an LRC without computer.

Numerous authors have highlighted the important role of computer in the process of language learning. The term Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) became established in language education in the early 1980s (Chapelle, 2001). The Levy (1997) named it as tutorial CALL, because it is rolled as a teacher for students. Richardson and Swan (2003) noted that online learning has been defined as any class that offers at least part of its curriculum in the online course delivery

mode, or as transmission of information and/or communication via the internet without instructors and students being connected at the same. Some people named tutorial as a dated application and one which is associated with a bygone era of Skinner (1954) and behaviorism, and as such, it is sometimes featured as 'drill and kill' because students would mechanically enter answers into a computer software program over and over again until they got it right. However a lot of changes have done in CALL. Levy and Stockwell (2006: 185) note that 'Although a highly valid and useful application of CALL, drill based grammar activities, which comprise a significant proportion of grammar tutorial exercises, appear to have been the target of criticism in recent years . . .'

Another feature of online learning that can be considered as a one of advantages is the role of teacher and student. With online learning the teacher becomes more facilitator than a lecturer, and student become active learner. However as with many education systems, some disadvantages exist. Some researchers claim that traditional classroom is more effective than web-based or online learning because of lack of face to face interactions.

But in contrast to this revolution in materials and the role of computer in teaching and learning, a lot of issues about the advantages and limitations of computer assisted language learning (CALL) have emerged. One of the disadvantages of it is error correction of computer. Such tutorials provide some grammar exercises for students at class and beyond. Websites now have many advantages, frequently available at no cost; the resource can be seen as providing 'anywhere, anytime' learning material. These websites would useful for needs of our students who have known nothing in their lives but digitalized technologies.

We have already discussed about the digital technology and its usage, but there have been at least two issues that support tutorial CALL over and above paper-based alternatives. First, the instant feedback of CALL, and also it is seen as being particularly helpful in developing learner autonomy.

## 2. Literature Review

In this part, theories and concepts in relation to CALL will be reviewed to provide a theoretical foundation to the research. Fan (2011) stated that Web-based learning has become a popular topic in all educational levels across Australia. A search on the Eric (Educational Resource Information Centre) Database in June 2010 for citations containing the term "web-based learning" has returned 3,870 references. Many of these citations are related to the use of the Web in tertiary education institutions and the evaluation of web-based learning environments.

Erben, Ban, Jin, Summers, and Eisenhower (2008) stated that by the early 1960s, universities had begun creating local area networks that allowed computers on campus to communicate with one another, affording a rapid exchange of information. Soon thereafter, educators became interested in using these networks for the purposes of language learning and teaching. In fact, Collett (1980) was one of the first to use his university mainframe computer to post grammar activities for his language students. Almost a decade later, Dunkel (1987) called for the use of computer-aided instruction as a more holistic, meaningful way to teach languages, in keeping with Canale and Swain's (1980) notion of communicative competence.

Although CALL has a lot of valuable features, students rarely use CALL method for learning grammar. Bullen (1998) conducted a case study examining students' participation and critical thinking in a college level undergraduate course utilizing computer-mediated conferencing. The case study showed that some students felt disconnected from others in this type of learning environment, citing lack of facial expressions and other features common to a traditional classroom environment.

Since the early 1990s, research on computer-mediated communication (CMC) has examined how electronic media could be employed to enhance language learning (Beauvois, 1992; Chun, 1994; Chun & Plass, 2000; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1992; Kern & Warschauer, 2000).

Some researchers (Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996) began to question how language teaching and the role of the teacher are affected by the use of technology in the classroom. Wilson in 1996 designed three categories of learning environment to show the position of the Web and web-based technologies in teaching and learning. The conceptual model is based on his theory (figure 2.1)

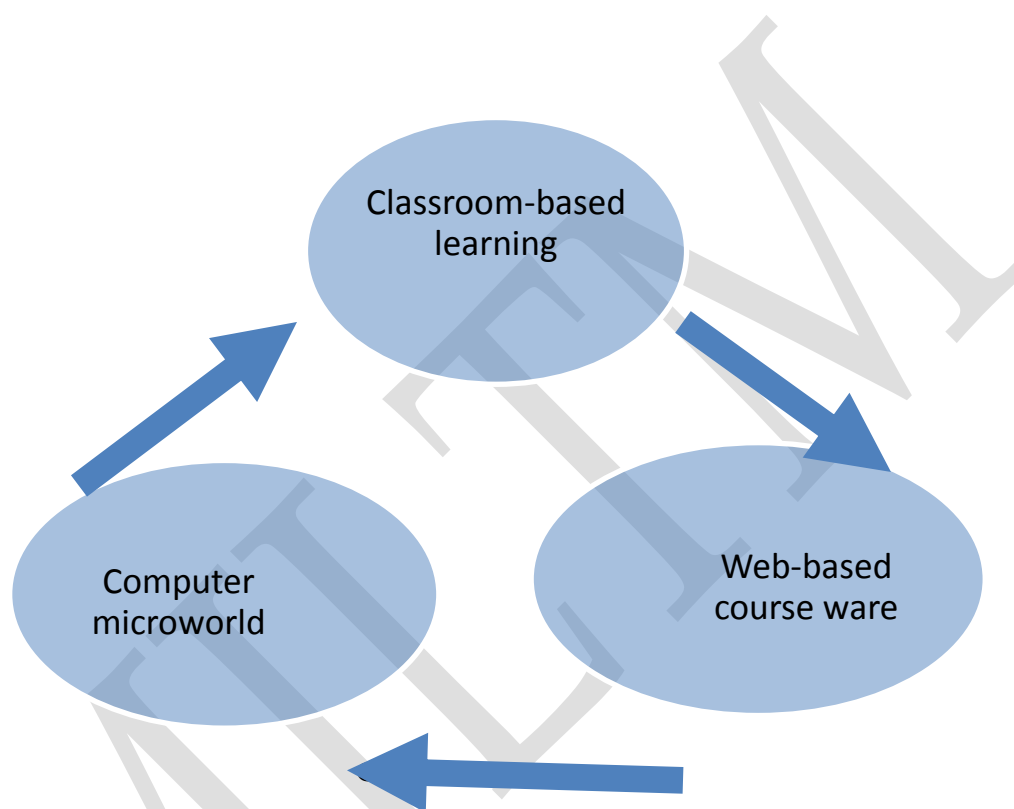


Figure 1. Three categories of learning environments

Recently, the Web has become an important avenue of the learning community (Chang, Lim, & Zhong, 2008). Many universities, schools and for-profit education institutions now offer online classes or courses, or use the Web in a variety of ways to support students' learning. (Fan, 2011)

### 3. Research Questions

This research aims to answer two research questions:

1. What attitudes do students have towards learning grammar outside the classroom?
2. Do students prefer websites or paper-based self-study resource books to learn grammar outside the classroom?

### 4. Methodology

#### 4.1 Participants

Thirty Iranian EFL learners, studying at Khorasgan University were asked to participate in this study. The rationale behind choosing M.A. students was that their major was English teaching and they experienced many methods in learning grammar.

#### 4.2 Materials and Instruments

As for the instruments, an attitude questionnaire was used in this study. The questionnaire was adopted from Haw and Szymczyk. The attitude questionnaire which is used for this study is about the students and their attitude towards learning grammar. It contained 9 questions. The questions are divided in to two sections; the first section of questionnaire is about general information. These included gender, age, and computer skill and the second section is about independent grammar practice.

#### 4.3 Procedures

In this study, the learners were chosen randomly but their major was the same. The aim of this decision was to help the researcher make sure that the learners were homogenous in terms of level of proficiency and their experiment in foreign language.

#### 4.4. Data Analysis

This research was conducted using a questionnaire. The data gathered were in a form of descriptive statistics. Statistical data in this research determine numerical data which show the strength of participants' responses to the questionnaire items. In order to convey the essential characteristics of the data, The Excel software was used. The analysis results are presented in the forms of frequencies.

### 5. Findings and Discussion

In general, participants considered grammar practice through web- based material as a very essential aspect of language learning. For over half of them (16 students), grammar practice was of great importance. In addition, 10 students considered grammar practice of very great importance and four thought that it had some importance in language learning. Despite this findings, attitudes towards grammar differed. Table 1 and Figure I illustrate how the students completed the sentence 4 in the questionnaire.

Table 1  
Students' opinions about web-based grammar practice

Grammar practice is..... for me.								
Students' opinion about grammar practice								
	Easy	Useful	Abstract	Difficult	Boring	Useless	Meaningful	Interesting
Number	7	30	2	14	7	0	8	9

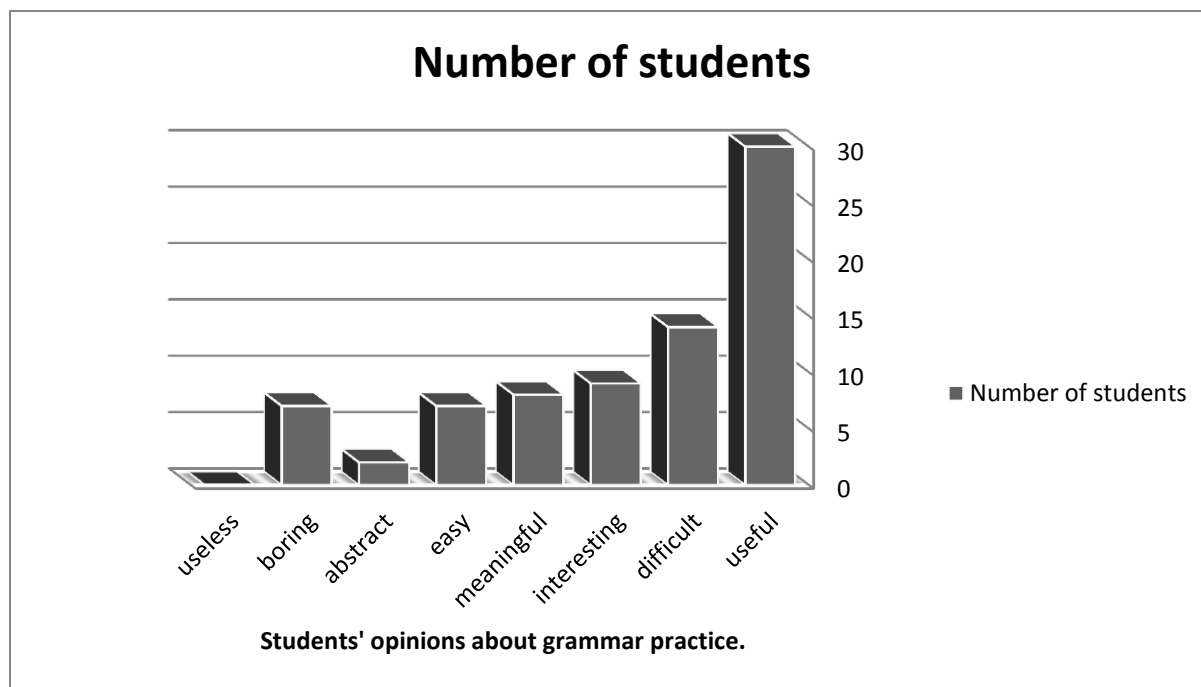


Figure 2: Students' opinions about grammar practice.

With regard to practicing grammar independently 26 out of 30 students reported that they spent time on studying grammar outside the classroom. Four students reported not practicing grammar independently and they wrote a variety of reasons for this: Lack of time (2 students), difficult (1 student), and boring (1 student).

The study suggests that, in general, students had positive views towards practicing grammar independently, considered grammar practice an important part of foreign language learning, and that they used different materials for this purpose. The data revealed that students' attitudes towards the self-study book were more positive and that they considered the paper-based material more useful for independent grammar practice than the computer-based counterparts. The biggest limitation, on the other hand, seems to be lack of variety which makes independent grammar practice with a book boring. Regarding the computer-based material evaluation, whilst it cannot be concluded that students' feedback was negative, nonetheless the level of uncertainty was much higher. Students' perception of practicing grammar on the Web was generally positive but according to them such practice also had more disadvantages.

This study shows that despite the era of the digital native, our students have not, under certain conditions, abandoned more traditional resources and it would be a mistake for practitioners and other resource providers to slavishly follow the digitalized medium route for everything. The 24/7 access argument, which is sometimes used to dismiss traditional alternatives, has been turned on its head in this study; it is an argument which was used by this small sample in support of paper-based resources. We conclude that the tutorial CALL has a role but shows no sign of replacing paper-based materials.

In addition, Jarvis (2008) draw on a parallel study (in the same LRC) to assert a less restrictive role for computers in such contexts. There is some evidence (Jarvis 2008) to suggest that NNSs view a



wide range of computer materials as helping with their language studies even where there is no explicit language learning function such as working on assignments, sending an email, or accessing information from the Web. Despite a changed context of the widespread availability of computers, a good old-fashioned self-study grammar book still has an important place for our learners.

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NOTES



# THE EFFECT OF COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES ON IMPROVING IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILL: THE CASE OF TIME GAINING AND CIRCUMLOCUTION

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## ABSTRACT

THIS STUDY INVESTIGATED THE EFFECTS OF COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES (CSS) OF TIME GAINING AND CIRCUMLOCUTION ON IMPROVING IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILL. TO FULFILL THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY, 75 HOMOGENEOUS FEMALE STUDENTS WITH THE AGE RANGE OF 12 TO 20 FROM KIANFARDA ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, AHVAZ, IRAN WERE SELECTED AS THE TARGET PARTICIPANTS. THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO THREE EQUAL GROUPS OF 25- TIME GAINING AND CIRCUMLOCUTION EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS AND ONE CONTROL GROUP. ALL GROUPS WERE PRETESTED BY A RESEARCHER-MADE SPEAKING PRE-TEST. REGARDING THE TREATMENT, THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS WERE TAUGHT BY USING THE COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES INCLUDING TIME GAINING AND CIRCUMLOCUTION. THE RESEARCHER TAUGHT BOTH EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS HOW TO COMPENSATE THEIR FAILURES IN CONVERSATIONS BY USING TIME GAINING AND CIRCUMLOCUTION STRATEGIES. HOWEVER, THE CONTROL GROUP WAS DEPRIVED OF TEACHING THESE STRATEGIES. THE TREATMENT TOOK 12 SESSIONS OF 50 MINUTE (THREE SESSIONS IN A WEEK). FINALLY, THE THREE GROUPS TOOK THE SPEAKING POST-TEST. THEN THE COLLECTED DATA WERE ANALYZED THROUGH USING ONE-WAY ANOVA. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT BOTH TIME GAINING AND CIRCUMLOCUTION EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS GAINED HIGHER SCORES THAN THE CONTROL GROUP IN THE POST-TEST. TIME GAINING AND CIRCUMLOCUTION STRATEGIES IMPROVED IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILL.

**KEY WORDS:** TIME GAINING, CIRCUMLOCUTION, SPEAKING SKILL.

## 1. Introduction

Although meaningful and fluent communication is the final goal of EFL learners but most of them have numerous problems to conserve and communicate in the target language. Attempting hard to express their minds through their limited English knowledge and having difficulties to initiate and maintain in conversations due to lack of linguistic knowledge are considered a big problem and cause anxiety and frustration to many learners. Lots of EFL learners are not satisfied with the results of studying English for many years and become demotivated gradually. Teaching compensatory strategies (CSs) can be a useful way to make up their breakdowns in conversations and to develop their strategic competence and to enhance their speaking ability.

Canale (1983) and Canale and Swain (1980) define strategic competence as the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in L2 used when attempting to compensate for deficiencies in the grammatical and sociolinguistic competence or to enhance the effectiveness of communication. CSs have been defined as "mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on

meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (Bialystok & Frohlich, 1980, p. 420).

According to Faerch and Kasper (1983), "communication strategies are conscious plans to solve learners' problems in achieving a special goal". It is also believed that learners can improve communicative proficiency by developing an ability to use specific communication strategies that enable them to compensate for their target language deficiencies (e.g., Bialystok, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995).

When faced with a breakdown in communication, students can either dispense with their original communicative goal or reach their original communicative goal via a different route by making use of the limited linguistic means they have at their disposal. When motivated learners encounter difficulties in communicating meaning in the target language without finding any solution and when they feel they have made no progress in learning, it leads them to become anxious, demotivated and unsuccessful language learners. Teaching compensatory strategies can be a solution to these problems and not only it can improve learners' communication skills, but also decrease their anxiety level, increase their motivation and pave the way for learners to become more successful EFL learners. This study taught two types of compensatory strategies-time gaining and circumlocution-to Iranian EFL learners in order to improve their speaking skill. So the following questions were raised in this study:

RQ 1. Is compensatory strategy of time gaining effective on Iranian EFL learners' speaking?

RQ 2. Is compensatory strategy of circumlocution effective on Iranian EFL learners' speaking?

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

### 2.1. Communication Strategy

A communication strategy is defined as an individual's attempt to find a way to fill the gap between their communication efforts and immediate available linguistic resources (Maleki, 2007). Although there are other definitions of communication strategies as well, the basic idea remains the same. For example, Faerch and Kasper (1983) defined CS as "potentially conscious plans" which are used by an individual to solve a problem in order to reach a specific communication goal. It is believed that communication strategies play an important role in the development of strategic competence (e. g., Faucette, 2001); therefore, one can define communication strategies within strategic competence framework. According to Canale and Swain (1980), strategic competence is "verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence" (p. 30). Scattergood (2003) believed that strategic competence is cultivated if teachers create a language classroom in which communication strategies are taught and practiced.

The issue of communication strategies has been and still is an important topic in foreign language learning and second language acquisition. Van Lier (1988) said that SLA takes place through L2 learners' active participation in speech events. Rababah (2005) asserted that raising consciousness of CSs is crucial for a number of reasons; one of them is that it leads to learning by "eliciting unknown language items from the interlocutors" (p. 194). He continued to say that "successful language learning is not only a matter of developing grammatical, sociolinguistic, and semantic competence, but also the strategic competence which involves the use of CSs" (p. 194). Also, Maleki (2007) believed that the use of communication strategies is conducive to language learning and that "communication strategy training should be incorporated into school syllabuses" (p. 594). Other researchers such as Tarone (1984), Bialystok (1990), Dörnyei and Thurrel (1991), Dörnyei (1995), and Oxford (2001) have all praised the positive role of communication strategies in teaching and learning a second/ foreign language, specifically English.

### 2.2. A Typology of CSs

Tarone (1980, p. 429) summarized types of CSs under five main categories, along with their subcategories.

The list goes as follows:

#### *A. Paraphrase*

Paraphrase includes three subcategories which are described below:

- (a) Approximation: The use of a target language vocabulary item or structure, which the learner knows is not correct, but which shares semantic features with the desired item to satisfy the speaker (e. g., "pipe" for "water pipe").
- (b) Word coinage: The learner makes a new word in order to convey a desired concept (e. g., "airball" for "balloon").
- (c) Circumlocution: The learner describes the characteristics or elements of an object or action instead of using the appropriate TL structure (e.g., the thing you open bottles with for corkscrew).

#### *B. Transfer*

Transfer has two elements in it:

- (a) Literal translation: The learner's translating word for word from the native language (e. g., "He invites him to drink" for "They toast one another").
- (b) Language switch: The learner uses the NL (native language) term without bothering to translate (e. g., "balon" for "balloon" or "tirtil" for "turtle").

#### *C. Appeal for Assistance*

This refers to the learner's asking for the correct term or structure (e. g., "What is this?").

#### *D. Mime*

Mime refers to the learner's using non-verbal strategies in place of a meaning structure (e. g., clapping one's hands to illustrate applause).

#### *E. Avoidance*

Avoidance consists of two subcategories described below:

- (a) Topic avoidance: The learner's by passing concepts for which the vocabulary or other meaning structures are not known to them.
- (b) Message abandonment: The learner's beginning to talk about a concept but being unable to continue due to lack of meaning structure, and stopping in mid-utterance.

A series of other strategies called "achievement strategies" were proposed. They were named as so because it was believed that learners use their language resources to convey meaning, whether what they say is grammatically or socially correct. Johnstone (1989, p. 48) listed achievement production strategies as follows:

- Code-switching and gesticulation
- Literal translation and foreignizing
- Word coinage
- Simplification
- Generalization
- Paraphrase
- Restart and approximation
- Establish foreign identity
- Appeal for repair and confirmation

Some empirical studies were carried out concerning the effectiveness of communication strategies on improving learning English as a foreign or a second language; some of them are reported here chronologically.

Saemian (1991) inspected the relation between the effects of proficiency and the use of communication strategies (CSs) among Iranian EFL learners. The researcher found statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of both frequency and types of CSs employed. The high proficiency group resorted to more circumlocution and approximation. Yet, the low proficiency group used more repetition, paralinguistic, avoidance, and code-switching. Yarmohammadi and Seif (1992) conducted a research regarding the application of different CSs for solving

communication problems in interrelated oral and written tasks. The researchers identified a link between the type of task (oral compared to written) and the use of specific CSs. For instance, strategies of literal translation, approximation and topic avoidance, were found aplenty in writing, while code switching strategies were employed more in oral tasks. However, from this tentative position, it is still unclear whether Iranian learners could use strategy such as paraphrase effectively.

Maleki (2007) investigated the teachability of CSs for university students. He used a textbook which dealt with specific CSs such as approximation, circumlocution, foreignizing, word coinage, appeals for assistance, and time stalling devices for the experimental group. The control group used a textbook without CSs use. After four months, the experimental group performed better on the Cambridge ESOL speaking test and a house-made achievement test than the 66 'Free' to Choose: Communication Strategy Use in EFL Classrooms in ... control group. It was suggested that teaching CSs could be effective and conducive to English language learning.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

Deciding to carry out this work, the researcher selected 75 participants from among 100 intermediate students at Kianfarda English language institute, Ahvaz, Iran. The participants participating in this study were female students with the age range of 12 to 20 who were divided into three equal groups of 25- time gaining and circumlocution experimental groups and one control group.

#### 3.2. Instrumentation

The first instrument which was utilized in the present study to homogenize the participants was the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). It helped the researcher to have a greater understanding of what level (i.e., elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate) her participants were at. According to this test, the learners whose scores were 39 and above (out of 70) were considered as the intermediate learners.

The second and the most important instrument for gathering information was a researcher-made speaking pre-test. The pre-test included several questions and answers items concerned with the learners' text book. (i.e., New Interchange 1) developed by Richards (2008). The learners were wanted to talk about the topics of the units about 3 to 4 minutes and their speech was recorded for the second rater. The reliability of the pre-test was calculated through inter-rater reliability by means of Pearson correlation analysis as ( $r = .740$ ).

The third instrument was a post-test of speaking: The post-test was similar to the pre-test in form and different on topics. The topics of this test were selected from the New Interchange 1 textbook. The difficulty level of the topics was the same in the pre and post-tests. The reliability of the post-test was computed through inter-rater reliability by means of Pearson correlation analysis as ( $r = .720$ ). The pre and post-tests were validated by three English experienced teachers.

The fourth instrument was the speaking checklist (Hughes, 2003). It was used to aid the raters score the participants' speech. The raters scored the participants' speech based on the mentioned speaking checklist.

#### 3.3. Procedure

In the first step, 75 female students with the vast scope of age range (12 to 20) from Kianfarda English language institute, Ahvaz, Iran were selected as the participants of the study. They were required to sit for the proficiency test (OPT) to deduce their proficiency levels in terms of homogeneity. They were assigned to three groups of 25- time gaining and circumlocution experimental groups and one control group.

All groups were pretested by a researcher-made speaking pre-test. Regarding the treatment, the experimental groups were taught by using the compensatory strategies including time gaining and circumlocution. One experimental group received instruction on how to compensate their

failures in conversations by using time gaining strategy. The researcher taught them to use fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., using well, now let's see, and uh). The researcher taught "the circumlocution strategy" to the other experimental group; she taught this group to make up their conversational breakdowns and failures through describing the characteristics or elements of an object or action instead of using the appropriate target language structure (e.g., the thing you open bottles with for corkscrew). On the other hand, the control group received traditional training, for example, they were wanted to memorize a large number of English vocabularies in order to maintain and continue their conversations. The treatment took 12 sessions of 50 minutes (three sessions in a week). Finally, the three groups took the speaking post-test. Then the collected data were analyzed and interpreted based on the objectives of the study.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed and interpreted based on the purposes of the study. The purpose of the study was exploring the possible effects of compensatory strategies on improving Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill. In order to provide answers for the research questions, a series of statistical analysis were applied to the collected data through using SPSS software version 17. Finally, One-Way ANOVA was run to analyze the data.

## 4. Results

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics (Three Groups)

Groups	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Time Gaining Pre-test	25	5.00	17.00	13.5500	3.0065
Time Gaining Post-test	25	10.00	20.00	18.1100	3.0689
Circuml ocution Pre-test	25	4.00	17.00	13.4500	4.3682
Circuml ocution Post-test	25	7.00	20.00	18.2100	4.1482
Control Pre-test	25	4.00	18.00	13.5000	3.6863
Control post-test	25	7.00	19.00	13.8000	3.6070

Based on the above table, all three groups' performance in the speaking pre-test was almost the same; their means reveal that they were at the same speaking proficiency level scores of time-gaining group's pretest is 13.5500; the mean scores of circumlocution group's pretest is 13.4500 and the mean scores of control group's pretest is 13.5000. But concerning their performance after the treatment, experimental groups- time-gaining and circumlocution- outperformed than the control group in their post-test. The mean scores of time-gaining group and circumlocution are 18.1100 and 18.2100 respectively in the posttest but the mean of control group is 13.8000.



**Table 2:** One-Way ANOVA (Pre-test)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.100	2	.050	.003	.996
Within Groups	792.400	57	13.903		
Total	792.700	59			

Table 2 indicates the pre-test scores of the three groups. Since the observed F (.003) is less than the critical F (3.15) with  $df=2/57$ , the difference between the groups is not significant at ( $p<0.05$ ). In fact, the performance of the three groups was the same in the pre-test.

**Table 3:** One-Way ANOVA (Post-test)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	163.632	2	81.816	6.190	.004
Within Groups	753.100	57	13.213		
Total	916.731	59			

The above table shows the post-test scores of both control and experimental groups. Since the observed F (6.190) is greater than the critical F (3.15) with  $df=2/57$ , the difference between the groups is significant at ( $p<0.05$ ). The experimental groups got better scores in the post-test of speaking. It can be concluded that time gaining and circumlocution strategies had positive impacts on the performance of the experimental groups in the post-test.

## 5. Discussion

In this part the research questions are discussed one by one:

### **RQ 1. Is compensatory strategy of time gaining effective on Iranian EFL learners' speaking?**

This study included three groups which their performance in the pre-test was almost the same. Based on the obtained results, both experimental groups-time gaining and circumlocution- and control group had almost the same scores in the pre-test. But regarding their performance in the post-test, the results showed that the scores of the students in time gaining group were increased. Time gaining improved Iranian EFL learners' speaking in the post-test.

The results of this research are in line with Maleki (2007) who examined the teachability of CSs for university students. He used a textbook which dealt with specific CSs such as circumlocution, approximation, appeal for assistance, word coinage, foreignizing, and time stalling devices for the experimental group. For the control group he used a textbook without CSs use. After four months, the experimental group performed better on the Cambridge ESOL speaking test and a house-made achievement test than the 66 'Free' to Choose: Communication Strategy Use in EFL Classrooms in ... control group. It was suggested that teaching CSs could be effective and conducive to English language learning.

## 2. Is compensatory strategy of circumlocution effective on Iranian EFL learners' speaking?

After analyzing the data, it was proved that circumlocution group like time gaining group performed very better in their post-test in comparison to their pre-test performance. Teaching compensatory strategy of circumlocution to the Iranian EFL learners helped them to improve their speaking ability. After the treatment the participants could speak English more fluently without giving up their conversations. Though the participants had some English deficiencies, they could continue their conversations by using compensatory strategy of circumlocution.

The findings of the present study confirm the Majd's findings (2014), she inspected the impacts of teaching communication strategies- Circumlocution, Approximation, Word coinage and Appeal for help- on anxiety level and motivation of Iranian students. In her study, a Cambridge Proficiency Test was used and 40 Iranian homogeneous participants among learners who were 12-14 years of age were chosen. The learners were taught how to apply CSs they communicate in the foreign language. At the end of 3-month teaching and applying these strategies to the class activities, oral and written Cambridge Proficiency Test were held again to determine the effectiveness of the mentioned strategies on Iranian students' communication improvement. A five point Likert Scale questionnaire was also used to measure their anxiety level and motivation during communication in English after learning and using CSs. The findings of the study proved that teaching CSs to EFL learners and applying them to the class activities is a practical way to improve students communication skills, increase their motivation and decrease their anxiety level.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper proved that teaching CSs has positive impacts on Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill as Dörnyei (1995) stated that through using CSs learners' rather than giving up their message, may decide to try and remain in the conversation and achieve their communicative goal. The results of the study confirmed that teaching CSs- time gaining group and circumlocution- is a fruitful approach to improve learners' communication skills which in turn can increase their motivation because they feel more secure and comfortable during communication. In fact, both strategies helped the students to improve their speaking skill equally. The findings of the present study revealed that both time gaining and circumlocution strategies can help Iranian EFL learners to improve their English speaking fluency and communicative ability. The results support the assumption made by previous research that strategy training in the use of strategies for speaking in a foreign language produces positive results (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995). In a nutshell, learners can improve their speaking skill through learning to use CSs during communication.

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# LANGUAGE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF CHILDREN'S STORY BOOKS IN THE EFL CONTEXT IN IRAN

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## ABSTRACT

THERE HAS BEEN A GROWING FOCUS ON INTEGRATING LITERATURE IN EFL/ESL CURRICULUM. WHILE SOME INSTRUCTORS TEACHING EFL MAY STILL BELIEVE THAT THEY SHOULD ONLY FOCUS ON LINGUISTIC ASPECTS, OTHERS USING LITERATURE IN THE EFL CONTEXT HAVE REALIZED THAT LITERATURE ADDS A NEW DIMENSION TO LANGUAGE TEACHING. SHORT STORIES, FOR EXAMPLE, HELP LEARNERS TO IMPROVE DIFFERENT LINGUISTIC AND SOCIAL SKILLS. IN SPITE OF THIS, LITERATURE IS NOT USED IN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN IRAN, EXCEPT FOR SOME SPECIFIC UNIVERSITY COURSES. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE IS TO EXPLORE ATTITUDES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS TOWARDS USING CHILDREN'S STORY BOOKS IN THE EFL CONTEXT IN IRAN. AN ONLINE-SURVEY WITH SIX OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS WAS HELD WITH 40 ENGLISH TEACHERS EMPLOYED IN KAZEROON EDUCATIONAL OFFICE. THEY ARE TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE FIRST PERIOD AND THE SECOND PERIOD OF HIGH SCHOOL. ALL PARTICIPANTS CONSIDERED SHORT STORY BOOKS AS A USEFUL TOOL IN ENHANCING LINGUISTIC SKILLS AND COMPONENTS REGARDLESS OF THE STUDENTS' LEVEL. GENDER, AGE, PROFICIENCY LEVEL AND FIELD OF INTEREST WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS OF CHOOSING STORY BOOKS.

**KEYWORDS:** STORY BOOKS, LITERATURE-BASED INSTRUCTION, EFL CONTEXT, TEACHERS' ATTITUDES, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

## Introduction

Erkaya (2005) pointed that the use of literature in EFL/ESL teaching dated back to over one century ago. In the nineteenth century, instructors using Grammar Translation Method made their students translate literary texts from the second/foreign language to their mother tongue. Then, instructors using other methods like Direct Method and Audio-lingual Method that emphasized linguistic structures and vocabulary used literature no longer. Later in the seventies, new-fangled methods such as Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, Silent Way, Total Physical Response, and the Natural Approach did not use literature in EFL/ESL programs and neither did the Notional-Functional Syllabus. Accordingly, the traditional textbooks, and the new communicative syllabus might not be sufficient for the students that search for literature-based curriculum following whole language philosophy.

For the past two decades, there has been a general awareness of using literature in teaching EFL. Instructors have focused on utilizing literature in order to improve the four skills, personal growth and cultural awareness. In terms of literature-based teaching, Langer (1997) stated, "because it taps what they know and who they are, literature is a particularly inviting context for learning both a second/foreign language and literacy". In his opinion, literature can also open "horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore"(p.607). With students at the beginning and intermediate levels, teachers can use literary texts for

"language practice, reading comprehension, and possible aesthetic appreciation" (Muyskens, 1983, p. 413). In his opinion, with advanced students they may be used for the "development of knowledge of world literature, practice in reading and discussing creative work, and the introduction of literary concepts, genres, and terminologies- e.g., recognition of figures of speech, levels of meaning, and other stylistic features" (p. 413). While talking about the logic behind using literature in language teaching, Carter and Long (1991) used three models – *the Culture Model, the Language Model, and the Personal Growth Model*.

#### ***The role of literature in the EFL program in Iran***

English is a compulsory subject in Iran from guidance school to university. The students want to gain competence and pass their exams. The teachers have to give students direct assistance in order to cope with examinations. These instructors do not pay a lot of attention to literature-based instruction because teaching English is usually test-oriented. Due to the lack of adequate competence and oral skill training, the students are not interested in taking part in conversations or expressing ideas in L2. Furthermore, students are often embarrassed and shy in EFL classes when they make mistakes; they do not want to lose their self esteem by making more mistakes. Therefore, they prefer to listen rather than start or take part in conversations in L2 (Lee, 2003).

Although some teachers are aware of the benefits of using literature in language classes, it is not easy for them to find a balance between what they have to teach in order to prepare the students for their tests and what both teachers and learners are interested to do.

#### ***The reasons for selecting children's literature***

As Chen (2006) stated, having numerous literature resources, selection becomes the most vital issue for EFL instructors. In his opinion, we should consider these three important factors to choose appropriate materials for EFL students: *language, content, and length*. Regarding language, Krashen's (1982) *Input Hypothesis* stated that *comprehensible input* should be  $i + 1$  in which  $i$  shows the learner's current level of competence and  $i + 1$  refers to a bit higher level which is comprehensible because of non-linguistic and contextual factors. It is not necessary for readers to understand everything when they are willing to have general comprehension. It can occur through non-linguistic and contextual clues like story structure. So, the input should not be so simple to demotivate readers, nor so difficult to hinder their comprehension. In terms of content, Adyanju (1978) considers three criteria: *cultural information, material accessible to students' schemata, and strong story lines*. The first two are related to students' involvement. The last one is concerned with the story line that should be strong enough to encourage learners to go on reading. Length is the last but not the least important element in choosing literature. Sage (1987) believed that shorter stories make the students' reading task easier because it is not necessary for them to wait unwillingly or anxiously till the end to find the events happening to the protagonist. In other words, the story should have comfortable length to encourage learners to continue eagerly.

Based on the above criteria, children's literature appears a good source of comprehensible input slightly higher than learners' linguistic level with a lot of nonlinguistic clues which help EFL students develop their language skills. In 1992, Clark (p. 5) asserted that children's storybooks are also one of the best ways of conveying English-speaking culture because 'cultural values are frequently conveyed with greater directness than in literature addressed to adults' (cited in Chen, 2006). Hever (2001) reported a study done at Stockholm University to compare the vocabulary of texts prepared for Swedish high school students with the general frequency of words in English. He reported that in the TEFL texts many generally frequent words like words in newspapers, magazines, TV broadcasts and discussions, are under-represented. Story book words used in dialogue are really close to the words in ordinary conversations (cited in Neyman, 2002). So, in an EFL classroom children's literature, especially children's storybooks, are suitable materials for literacy and cultural development.

#### **Related Research on Using children's Storybooks in Language Learning**

While literature-based method needs more preparation time for teachers to select the most appropriate storybooks, utilizing this method has a lot of benefits for students. Sage (1987) mentioned that learners in literature-based instruction classes do not learn L2 by memorizing grammatical rules and new words presented separately in textbooks. They see language as a whole because they learn language components and skills in a whole context. This way of acquiring knowledge is in accordance with the subconscious process of language acquisition proposed by Krashen (1976). Other researchers enlisted various advantages of using short stories, as literary texts, in language classes (Rudman, 1993; Smallwood, 1996). Khatib, Derakhshan & Rezaie (2011) stated that events in a short story can be associated with real life experience and can lead to speaking ability improvement in students. According to Ebrahiminejad, Azizi, Gowhary & Jamalinesari (2015), teaching cognitive strategy of summarizing short stories can enhance students' speaking ability. Some of the most important researches are as follows:

#### *Teaching the four skills to students of different levels*

Recent investigations support the success of a story-based instruction in teaching the four modes to students of different levels including limited English speakers, ordinary learners, as well as the advanced ones.

According to Chien (2000) a study at a public high school in Taipei investigated the effect of using *predictable stories* as reading materials on the children's oral performance and literacy development of ESL beginners. Daily instruction was given by the researcher for one year. Five 6 to 7 year old students were chosen on the basis of family background and ability level. Data in the form of videotapes, audiotapes, teaching logs, student portfolios, and miscue analysis were gathered from daily observations during instruction and from parent interviews. The results showed that predictable storybooks helped them develop some reading abilities like book awareness. It also indicated that predictable storybooks in the classroom let children become involved in the story as they read along with the teachers repeating different phrases.

Lao and Krashen (2000) presented the result of a comparison between a group of students reading literary texts and a second group reading non-literary texts at a university in Hong Kong. Regarding vocabulary and reading abilities, the group who read literary texts showed significant improvement.

Morrow (1985) investigated the effects of re-telling stories over a period of time on oral language development. Twenty five girls and thirty four boys from four public kindergarten classes were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. Pre and post comprehension tests were prepared. The same picture story books were used for both groups. After the story was read and questions were asked, the children in the control group were asked to draw pictures about the story. The children in the experimental group were asked to retell the story. The results showed a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group for the total comprehension test scores. The study supported the idea that retelling stories improves understanding of the story as a whole as well as the understanding of story sequence.

Mangubhai (1983) presented the results of a story-based reading program in eight schools in Fiji. They found that after eight months in the program, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders improved in reading at twice the usual rate. After 20 months, the improvement had not only continued but also had spread to other language abilities. According to Eckofft (1983) and Carson (1990) what is read in the storybooks can be presented in the grammatical structures and style of their writings; and it is more effective in writing than formal structural instruction (cited in Neyman, 2002).

Chen (2006) assigned a task of story reading and writing for his students in a required composition course for English majors. He wanted to use children's literature to improve EFL university students' writing ability. Participants of the project were 43 first-year English majors (n=43) from a national university in southern Taiwan. Their opinions were gathered from their reflective statements and interviews. Two raters identified the themes. Then, data were coded independently. A majority of the students considered the selected stories as good writing

modelsrding. The result can propose some suggestions for classroom practice in the EFL university classrooms. The following table summarizes the students' opinions regarding the themes and their subcategories.

**Table 1. Frequencies and percentages of students' opinions about the program of reading and writing stories (N=43)**

Themes/Subcategories	Frequency	%*
<b>Stories Selected for Reading</b>		
Good writing models	38	88%
Simple language	40	93%
Varied cultures	32	74%
Short/comfortable length	25	58%
Universal topics	20	47%
<b>Process of Writing Stories</b>		
Rewarding	41	95%
Confusing and frustrating	9	21%
Self-healing or adventurous	4	9%

#### *Improving students' motivation*

Short stories can work as a means to motivate students to continue reading because they want to know what has happened to the protagonist. When they finish the book, they, as beginners, will get a high opinion of themselves. They are also highly motivated by storybooks because they know that educated people respect literary works. They think that being aware of great novels and short stories is a sign of being well-educated. So, having positive attitude towards utilizing them in language classes, they enjoy taking part in literature-based activities. Accordingly, they will have a successful reading experience which paves their ways of reading in English and acquiring more vocabulary.

Above all, as Langer (1997) pointed, second language learners use their own language and culture as their background knowledge to understand and participate in the discussions related to short stories. It stimulates them to start or take part in theses conversations eagerly.

Oxendine (1989) talked about a second grade teacher in a rural Appalachian school accompanying the required text book readings with familiar regional literature to teach reading to her students. The children had to write their own regional stories, as well. The study indicated that students taught with this approach were highly motivated, unlike the demotivated students taught with the purely basal reader approach.

#### *Transmitting the foreign culture*

Short stories are effective ways of transmitting the culture of the people about whom the stories were written. In other words, learners can get information about the idiomatic language and cultural contexts (Shang, 2006). By the way, they understand the commonalities and differences between the two cultures. Next, they can evaluate the moral merits in the text to improve their personal and societal values. Van (2009) also focused on the significant role of literature in developing cultural awareness. He also confirmed that literature-based instruction can improve critical thinking, creativity and imaginative abilities.



Although English story books are not used in language teaching in Iran, except for some specific university courses, understanding teachers' attitudes towards short stories can be really vital because their perspectives can influence their approaches as well as techniques and activities chosen in language classes (Kayaoglu, Cirakli, Aykit & Tas, 2012). So, noticing teachers perspectives can have an influential effect on language teaching process as a whole.

### Methodology

Data collection procedures were done through an online-survey with six open-ended questions. The questions were constructed on the basis of research objectives and related studies. The researcher used an explanatory research rather than collecting statistically accurate data in order to discover teachers' precise attitudes towards the issue in detail. In order to pave the way of constructing a theory of teachers' perspectives, it is preferable for teachers to present their ideas by answering open-ended questions instead of choosing some options.

The participants were 40 English teachers employed in Kazeroun educational office. They teach English in the first period and the second period of high school. Their answers to each question were classified into two or more groups and were analyzed in detail. In gathering data, the researcher remodeled the procedure done on the teachers' attitudes towards the integration of literature in Black Sea Region (Kayaoglu et al., 2012 ).

### Data Analysis

The questions were answered in detail. Then, the responses were classified in two or more groups. They are answered and discussed as follows:

#### First research question

Can using short story books be beneficial for language teaching/learning in Iran? Why?

At first, all the participants agreed that it is a useful tool in language teaching for Iranian teachers and learners. Most of them mentioned that learners need a kind of preparatory input that should be provided with some main books before initiating to teach by short story books.

The next frequent idea was related to adding variety and fun to the classes to get away from the long-lasting traditional methods. The next category stated that implementing story-based teaching can foster intrinsic motivation and self-confidence as vital means of success in language learning process.

Inductive language learning by exposure to linguistic structures was also mentioned by the participants. They believed that message-oriented learning can be enhanced easily and subconsciously.

#### Second research question

What kinds of short story books are suitable for learners in Iran? Why?

All of them agreed that it is a kind of gender-related issue. They also stated that the young boys in their classes are interested in sports, crime and political stories while the girls love romance, family life and artistic story books. Other factors like age, proficiency level and field of interest were considered as crucial factors in order. The group teaching in the first period of high school told that integrating the visual element like pictures in story books can provide optimal condition of language learning. Some of them focused on noticing Krashen's hypothesis while choosing the books. In their opinion, books are suitable if they are just slightly above students' current level.

The next group think that different books in different genres should be integrated into classroom activities.

#### Third research question

Regarding the proficiency level of learners, in which levels should short story books be used to teach language?

The participants mentioned that regardless of the students' level, all the students in the first and the second period of high school can promote their linguistic abilities while English short stories are integrated into their classes. They also think that there should be a correspondence between the students' level of proficiency and the level assigned for the story books if we want the story books to come to their outmost effects.

#### Fourth research question

Can using short story books in classes help to enhance the students' listening, speaking, reading and writing? Which one can be improved more?

All of them confirmed that it can enhance the four-mentioned skills because they are interrelated. However, in terms of the skills enhanced more by means of short story-book instruction, their ideas were different. They considered reading as the skill enhanced more if short stories are integrated into the curriculum. They concluded that short story-book instruction can have a direct effect on reading comprehension and fast reading. They indicated that listening can be the second skill to be improved due to the technological development and availability of CDs for most storybooks.

A group considered writing while another group considered speaking as the third one to be improved when short story books are integrated into the curriculum. They believed that story telling, summarizing storybooks and story-based discussion can play a central role in improving speaking. They also focused on the key role of storybooks in acquiring idiomatic expressions and formulaic speech as the means to the end of speaking improvement. In their opinion, writing can be enhanced indirectly.

#### Fifth research question

Can using short story books in classes help to enhance other abilities except for the four-mentioned skills? Which ones?

The participants focused on different linguistic components like grammar and vocabulary. They explained that grammar can be learned inductively. Accordingly, cultural awareness, critical thinking, logical thinking, self-confidence and motivation can be fostered.

Some of the participants paid attention to the students' exposure to the literary texts by means of storybooks. They explained that language teaching should also integrate literature as a valuable resource into the curriculum.

A minor group insisted on better understanding and reproducing language when it is arranged in sequences and related lines. This is the case of implementing short stories in language classes.

#### Sixth research question

They stated that since they did not experience the case, they cannot answer the question precisely though they inferred students' gender-related and proficiency- dependent preference for story books.

The next group told that although the students did not experience using story books in their classes, they were really interested in a few stories narrated in the main text books.

In order to be aware of students' needs and interests, they suggested a kind of needs analysis using an interview or a survey.

#### Conclusion

The interest to integrate short stories into EFL and ESL curriculum has recently been enhanced. Regarding the dynamic triangle of teacher, learner and subject matter, teachers' attitudes towards the use of story books play an important role in language teaching and learning. The purpose of the current study is to manifest teachers' views and attitudes towards the use of short stories in classes.



The results of the online-survey with six open-ended questions held with 40 English teachers showed that short story books are beneficial in language learning in Iran because of fostering self-realization, intrinsic motivation, message-focused learning and top down processing.

Some findings represented that gender, age, current level of proficiency as well as interest are the crucial factors of determining short stories' suitability. According to the participants, all students in the first and the second period of high school can use the books to promote their linguistic and communicative abilities. The research also showed that short story books in classes help to enhance the four interrelated skills directly or indirectly. The results also indicated that some other constructs like higher order thinking, cultural and literary awareness are fostered if story books are used in classes. Few teachers showed negative attitudes towards the application of story books in English classes. Considering teachers' views and attitudes, using story books as an influential tool seems inevitable.

The results can have some theoretical and practical implications. Although the present study might not be a representative of different English teachers in different contexts in Iran, other researchers can examine more English teachers' attitudes in various contexts in different parts of Iran in order to generalize the findings and make a theoretical basis in implementing short stories in English classes regarding teachers' views. The results and findings can help material and text book designers to consider teachers' positive attitudes towards integrating short stories in the EFL curriculum in Iran. English teachers interested in integrating various tools to reinforce learning and teaching can also benefit from the results because a lot of curriculum development and teaching improvement can be arranged and monitored by knowledgeable teachers.

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# THE EFFECT OF TASK-BASED EXTENSIVE READING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' WRITING ACCURACY

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## ABSTRACT

THIS STUDY EXAMINED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TASK-BASED EXTENSIVE READING ON WRITING ACCURACY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS. IT WAS CONDUCTED WITH 36 UPPER-INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS COMPRISING TWO EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS AND ONE CONTROL GROUP IN TWO LANGUAGE INSTITUTES IN TABRIZ. THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS WERE ASSIGNED TO READ GRADED READERS EXTENSIVELY OUT OF THE CLASSROOM AND COMPLETE AFTER- READING TASKS: GROUP 1 HAD "EXTENSIVE READING WITH WRITTEN SUMMARY TASK", WHEREAS GROUP 2 HAD "EXTENSIVE READING WITH ORAL SUMMARY TASK". CONTROL GROUP DID NOT RECEIVE SUCH TREATMENTS AND WAS JUST ENGAGED IN THE REGULAR CLASS PROGRAM. THE RESULTS OF ONE-WAY ANOVA AND POST HOC TEST INDICATED THAT EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS PERFORMED BETTER THAN THE CONTROL GROUP ON THE POST-TEST. SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WERE FOUND BETWEEN THE CONTROL GROUP AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP 1 AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP 2 AND CONTROL GROUP.

**KEY WORDS:** EXTENSIVE READING, TASK, TASK-BASED EXTENSIVE READING, WRITING ACCURACY

## 1. Introduction

Reading involves several intricate skills that must be met so as to make the reader successful. For instance, skillful readers identify the purpose of reading, manage the reading with the purpose in mind, use tactics that were effective to them in the past when reading similar texts for similar purposes, and check their understanding of the text in light of the purpose for reading (Zainal & Husin, 2011). Moreover, Ur (1998) noted that if there is a task for the learner to perform, s/he feels more motivated, and the reading itself becomes more purposeful. According to Nunan (1989), task is a communicative activity which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally on meaning.

As Applebee (1984) argued, writing is the externalization and remarking of thinking and to count writing as detached from the intentions and viewpoints of the writer is not to address composition as a reflective device for meaning making. A major challenge, according to Yaghoubi-Notash (2015), faced by foreign language learners is to produce good-quality writing. Language learners, especially at higher levels of proficiency, are burdened by demanding, time-consuming writing

tasks for general as well as academic purposes. This is partly due to the fact that writing is an outgrowth of perhaps a long-term stock-taking in terms of other language skill areas such as reading, vocabulary, grammar, and so on (Yaghoubi-Notash, 2015).

Hamadouche (2010) mentioned that some criteria in different aspects of writing including content, organization, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and accuracy are essential for writing and these criteria make the writing task a difficult one. According to Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992), "writing accuracy refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to write fluently" (p.142). Larsen-Freeman (2003) also asserted that grammatical accuracy, in writing, is required to ensure the writer's intended message and to avoid communicative misunderstanding.

Tsai (2006) stressed the importance of linking writing and reading in college EFL courses. He stated that teachers of English as a foreign or second language have managed to teach writing and reading independently from each other. Nevertheless, writing and reading share similar features and learners are more likely to benefit from the teaching program that makes writing and reading activities go hand-in-hand in such a way that complete each other. Implementing this concept in real teaching conditions would not be a problematic challenge when EFL writing teachers consider students' needs, are conscious of the advantages of the reading-writing connection, and wisely devise teaching practices (Tsai, 2006). Besides, Hedgcock and Ferris (2009), supporting extensive reading (ER) programs, suggested that having the types of background knowledge through these types of reading programs is not only helpful to L2 production but indispensable to it. Extensive reading generally involves rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer readings with the focus generally on the meaning of what is being read (Carrel & Carson, 1997). Bell (1998) stressed that reading extensively offers teacher engagement in a concentrated and encouraging reading program to direct students along a passage to be independent and resourceful in their reading and language learning, and furthermore to be well-improved and naturally-respondent to form texts, thoughts and ideas in writing.

Since writing is an important but at the same time difficult skill in learning a new language, ample research has been conducted to help students improve this ability. Shahan and Lomax (1986) suggested three models explaining the writing-reading relationship. Their models contained the interaction of writing and reading, reading-to-write, and writing-to-read. They used path analysis to investigate the impact of reading on writing. The results showed that the reading-to-write was superior to the other two models.

Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2014) assigned students into experimental and control groups in order to assess the effect of the extensive reading program on the writing performance of the Saudi EFL university students. Results indicated that the extensive reading program had a significant positive effect on learners' writing performance. Salehi, Asgari and Amini (2015) investigated the impact of extensive reading on the writing performance of Iranian EFL pre-university students. The achievement of the experimental group, measured by the difference between the pre-test and the post-test, was meaningfully better than that of the control group. This indicated that the extensive reading significantly improved EFL learners' writing performance.

Smith (2003) in his study on elementary school children found out that when children read more narrative texts such as short stories, fiction books, and poems, they would raise their concern over structure and function of expository texts. He also claimed that topical bibliography and commentary could incorporate expository texts into school curriculum, which are considered a rewarding experience and a primary function for students to enhance their expository writing. Shen (2009) surveyed the effects of a reading-writing linking project on the freshmen EFL college students who studied English as an obligatory subject. The results of the study showed that the learners' mastery developed not only in critical thinking but also in linguistic progress as well as in personal growth.

Chuenchaichon (2011) investigated the development of paragraph writing skills in EFL writers through the use of a reading – into – writing method. The study's results showed that the reading – into – writing method had a positive impact on the paragraph level writing development of these learners. The students of the experimental group tended to use more compound sentences and more complex sentences in their writing. This might be attributed to the fact that they had more chance of reading texts containing compound and complex sentences.

Lee and Hsu (2009) examined the impact of ER on less successful students' writing in a Taiwanese university. In the measurement of their writing, five subscales were included: content, vocabulary organization, mechanics and language use. The same numbers of writing assignments were done by all of the students in a writing class. The results indicated that reading has a strong effect on writing and fluency. Having a longer duration was essential in having better results and this study confirmed that the longer the period of ER program, the better the writing development.

Although a multitude of studies have been undertaken to investigate the impact of extensive reading on different language skills (writing, speaking, etc.) and subskills (vocabulary, grammar, etc.) as noted above, the influence of task-based extensive reading on writing performance of EFL learners is an under-researched area. Accordingly, this study was planned to connect some types of language tasks to extensive reading programs in order to investigate their influences on writing accuracy of Iranian EFL learners. To this end, the following research question was posed:

RQ: Does task-based extensive reading have a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing accuracy?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

Three intact classes from two private language institutes in Tabriz, one of the largest cities in Iran, participated in this study. The participants were 36 female students at upper intermediate level. Their age ranged from 17 to 25 and their native language was Azari. They belonged to three classes whose homogeneity was considered with a pre-test by the researchers. Then, they were randomly assigned into 2 experimental groups and 1 control group, each with 12 students.

### 2.2. Instruments

Since the researchers decided to measure students' accuracy in narrative writing, they asked the students to use the graded readers in levels 4 or 5 for out of class extensive reading program. An appropriate text, as Eskey (2005) suggested, needs to be slightly difficult for the learners' reading ability. In other words, it should meet Krashen's  $i+1$  standard for comprehensibility. The graded readers written in stages satisfy this requirement. According to Coady (1997), the graded readers are useful for English language learners because they provide learners with repeated exposure to vocabulary and syntactic structures.

The researchers for both the pre- and post- test chose narrative writing to be in harmony with the type of extensive reading materials (i.e., story books) used by the experimental groups. The participants, in both pre-test and post-test, received four different writing topics from which they were supposed to choose one and write about it. Topics were selected from "Writing Power" (White, 2003). The topics for the pre-test were:

1. A special gift I gave or received
2. A difficult decision I had to make
3. A favorite childhood memory
4. A mistake that taught me an important lesson

And the post-test topics were:

1. The best celebration you have ever had
2. Your first day in school or college
3. Falling in love and marriage
4. A day that you will never forget



### 2.3. Procedure

Before starting the main study, the researchers conducted a pre-test, which was a narrative writing, for three classes in order to get the initial scores for the students' writing accuracy. Participants were supposed to write at least three paragraphs, each containing at most 10 clauses. These papers were corrected by two scorers in order to increase the reliability of the scoring. The inter-rater reliability was calculated through Pearson Product-Moment correlation and an acceptable reliability ( $r=.761$ ) was obtained. The results of ANOVA for the pre-test indicated that the three classes were homogeneous regarding writing accuracy.

After ensuring that there was not any significant difference between the classes, we randomly assigned them into three groups, two experimental groups and one control group. Prior to giving treatment to experimental groups, the basic objectives of the program were explicitly told to the students. The researchers decided to deal with the issue directly and provide them with a comprehensive introduction. They were informed of the benefits of extensive reading and how an extensive reading program works.

The treatment for the experimental groups started by assigning each of the participants in experimental groups to finish a story book which was a graded reader in levels 4 or 5 outside of the class every week. By the end of a two-month semester, they were supposed to finish eight story books. The treatment for the experimental groups differed in the type of task that they had to complete after reading stories. That is, one experimental group (Group 1) was asked to present the written summary including the general idea of the story to the teacher every session. Whereas, the other experimental group (Group 2) was required to present an oral summary of the story, and comment on the story's organization and characters of the story orally to the class every session. Hence, group 1 had "Extensive Reading with Written Summary Task", whereas group 2 had "Extensive Reading with Oral Summary Task". Experimental groups went through all above mentioned steps twice a week. One third of the class time was allocated to their presentations with regard to these programs and the rest to the usual class programs.

While the experimental groups were receiving the treatment which was having the opportunity to read more texts (stories) for pleasure and general idea and complete after-reading tasks, the control group (Group 3) was engaged in the regular class program. In the last session, a post- test in the form of narrative writing was administered to investigate the effectiveness of task-based extensive reading training on writing accuracy. The students were given 60 minutes to write about one of the given topics which they favored. The papers were scored by two raters to obtain the inter-rater reliability. The reliability of the scoring was met through inter-rater reliability as ( $r=.806$ ). The average of the scores of two raters was considered in the statistical analyses. Writings were corrected for accuracy using the ratio of error-free clauses per total clauses (EFC/C). Following Frear and Chiu (2015) and Wiggleworth (2008), who reported that EFC/C is the most precise measure of writing accuracy that we currently have, we applied that formula in our study as well. All errors related to spelling and punctuation were excluded.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

To obtain and compare the mean scores of the three groups, the researchers applied descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Moreover, to have a detailed comparison between the groups, we employed a post hoc test.

### 3. Results

To determine the homogeneity of the participants regarding their writing accuracy on the pre-test, the researchers conducted a one-way ANOVA. Table 1 represents the results.

Table 1

*Results of ANOVA for Mean Comparison of the Three Groups on the pre-test*



Groups	M	SD	df	F	p
Group 1	14.41	1.56			
Group 2	15.15	1.08			
Group 3	13.87	1.75			
Between groups			2	2.223	.124

*Note.* Group 1=Extensive Reading with Written Summary Task, Group 2= Extensive Reading with Oral Summary Task, Group 3=control

Table 1 shows that the difference between the groups on the pre-test is not statistically significant ( $F(2, 33) = 2.223, p = .124$ ). Thus, as there was no statistically significant difference between the groups on the pre-test, the three groups were assumed equivalent. To answer the research question, "Does task-based extensive reading have a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing accuracy?", the researchers calculated descriptive statistics and ran a one-way ANOVA for the three groups of the study. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Results of ANOVA for Mean Comparison of the Three Groups on the Post-test*

Groups	M	SD	df	F	p
Group 1	18.16	1.58			
Group 2	19.29	1.11			
Group 3	14.04	2.27			
Between groups			2	5.108	.012

*Note.* Group 1=Extensive Reading with Written Summary Task, Group 2= Extensive Reading with Oral Summary Task, Group 3=control

Results of one-way ANOVA indicated there were significant differences between the groups on the post-test, ( $F(2, 33) = 5.108, p = .012$ ). As Table 2 indicates, Group 1 ( $M=18.16, SD= 1.58$ ) and Group 2 ( $M=19.29, SD= 1.11$ ) outperformed the control group ( $M=14.04, SD=2.27$ ). In order to find which group's mean was significantly higher than the others, Tukey's Post Hoc test was carried out (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Results of Post hoc for Comparison of the Groups*

	Mean difference	Standard Error	p
Group 1 - Group 2	1.13	.619	.261
Group 2 - Group 3	5.25	.126	.008
Group 3 - Group 1	4.12	.653	.015

*Note.* Group 1=Extensive Reading with Written Summary Task, Group 2= Extensive Reading with Oral Summary Task, Group 3=control

The Tukey post hoc test, as Table 3 shows, revealed no significant differences between the two treatment groups ( $p = .261$ ). However, significant differences were found between the control group and experimental Group 1 ( $p=.015, p<.005$ ) and the experimental Group 2 and control group ( $p=.008, p<.005$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study set out to investigate the impact of two types of tasks in an extensive reading program on the writing accuracy of Iranian EFL learners. Results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental groups and the control group on the

posttest in favor of the experimental groups. Comparing the experimental groups, the second group outperformed the first group. That is, the effect of presenting the extensive reading materials (stories) orally and commenting on their organization was better than that of just providing their written summary. However, their mean difference was not too significant. The significant differences were found between the treatment Group 2 and control group and control group and treatment Group 1.

The results obtained from the study revealed that the treatment which is task-based extensive reading training can work in Iranian EFL contexts. A possible reason for this might be that the learners had more chance of reading and working with texts of various structures and word forms. Moreover, extensive reading followed by doing tasks could have increased EFL learners' confidence and motivation for language learning in general and for improvement of writing accuracy in particular.

Using extensive reading as a method of developing writing ability is a notion for which numerous researchers have found optimistic results (e.g., Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman, 2014; Chuenchaichon, 2011; Lee & Hsu, 2009; Salehi, Asgari & Amini, 2015; Smith, 2003). Each of these studies considered the effectiveness of extensive reading on writing performance of students in different proficiency levels but did not combine their programs with task-based performance. Results showed that extensive reading had a significant positive effect on learners' writing performance.

It is hoped that the results of this study which has taken into consideration both tasks and extensive reading have benefits for students and teachers, as well as curriculum designers. It emphasizes the need for time management programs along with a well-structured curriculum in order to teach reading courses extensively to students. The findings may open the mind of the students towards the importance of task-based extensive reading in their writing performance. Besides, teachers can better understand the issue and integrate it into their classroom routine in general and in the writing class in particular.

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