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THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG SELF-EFFICACY, CRITICAL THINKING AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS OF IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

THE PRESENT STUDY WAS AN ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG SELF-EFFICACY, CRITICAL THINKING, AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS OF EFL TEACHERS IN THE IRANIAN CONTEXT. IN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE THREE VARIABLES MENTIONED, THE STUDY WAS AN ATTEMPT TO MEASURE THE POWER SELF-EFFICACY AND CRITICAL THINKING AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS AMONG IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS. THIRTY EFL TEACHERS AS WELL AS 150 EFL LEARNERS IN SOME LANGUAGE INSTITUTES IN TEHRAN TOOK PART IN THE STUDY. THE PARTICIPANTS WERE BOTH MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS AT THE UPPER-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WITH THE AGE RANGE OF 18-35. THIRTY EFL TEACHERS WERE ASKED TO FILL OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRES OF TEACHER SENSE OF EFFICACY SCALE AND CORNELL CRITICAL THINKING TEST AND IN THE NEXT STEP OUT THE STUDENTS OF EACH TEACHER FIVE STUDENTS WERE RANDOMLY SELECTED TO FILL OUT THE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS SURVEY. PEARSON CORRELATION WAS RUN TO PROBE ANY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIABLES OF THE STUDY. A MULTIPLE REGRESSION THROUGH THE STEPWISE METHOD WAS ALSO RUN TO PREDICT TEACHERS' SUCCESS BY USING THE SELF-EFFICACY AND CRITICAL THINKING. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCES (ANOVA) WAS EMPLOYED TO SEE IF THE RESULTS OF REGRESSION AT BOTH STEPS ENJOYED STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE. THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY REVEALED SIGNIFICANTLY POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP AMONG SELF-EFFICACY, CRITICAL THINKING AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS OF IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS. ALSO, IT WAS FOUND THAT BOTH SELF-EFFICACY AND CRITICAL THINKING COULD RELATIVELY PREDICT EFL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS. AS CRITICAL THINKING ALONE COULD PREDICT A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS' SUCCESS, THE RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS REVEALED THAT CRITICAL THINKING WAS A BETTER PREDICTOR OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS. THE FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT STUDY COULD HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR EFL TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IN THE IRANIAN CONTEXT.

KEYWORDS: SELF-EFFICACY, CRITICAL THINKING, PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

Introduction

As a key factor in successful adjustment and self-development, one's belief in self-efficacy is of paramount importance (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2011). Indeed, this can affect "cognitive, motivational, affective and decisional processes, and cause individuals to think positively and hopefully or negatively and cynically, in self-enhancing or self-debilitating manners" (ibid, p. 120). Self-efficacy (SE) beliefs can also influence the way barriers and changes in the environment are perceived; those with high sense of efficacy keep on trying and show resistance in case of hardships (Bandura, 2005).

Regarding teachers, this efficacy is reflected in the judgment of the teachers in their ability to bring about changes in the engagement level of the students and leading them to desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977) such as achievement (Ross, 1992), students' self-efficacy (Anderson et al., 1988), and motivation (Midgley et al. 1989). From another point of view, Allinder (1994) sees higher levels of planning observed in such teachers. Efficacy beliefs also make teachers more risk taker to experience new methods to fulfill the requirements of the classroom (Stein & Wang, 1988). Ashton and Webb (1986) also contend that efficacious teachers are less critical when their students make errors. From another point of view, teachers' SE has been strongly connected to their pedagogical success (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2011). Among the factors which correlate with self-efficacy, critical thinking seems a strong option (Moafian & Manafzadeh, 2011). Recently, the relationship between each of the aforementioned constructs (Self Efficacy and Critical Thinking) has been established (Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010; Wong, 2005).

Although research on the three constructs (CT, SE, and Success) has contributed greatly to the literature; however, they have never been studied jointly in a single study. Thus, the present research makes an attempt to fill this gap and investigate the impact of the constructs of self-efficacy and critical thinking on the teachers' success. On the other hand, such factors and their relationships have not been investigated about the teachers dealing with teaching English in separate single study.

The main purpose of this study was investigating the relationship among self-efficacy, critical thinking and professional success of EFL teachers in the Iranian context. A minor purpose of the study, however, was investigating the impact of self-efficacy and critical thinking on the professional success of Iranian EFL teachers. In this regard the significant point to consider was to see if these two variables could predict EFL teachers' professional success. Among the self-perceived challenges that nonnative English speaking teachers face are the lack of teacher confidence, biased attitudes of students and other teachers because of their nonnative status, as well as English language needs (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999). Teachers' sense of efficacy can potentially influence both the kind of environment that they create as well as the various instructional practices introduced in the classroom (Bandura, 1997). Furthermore, teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are confident that even the most difficult students can be reached if they exert extra effort; teachers with lower self-efficacy, on the other hand, feel a sense of helplessness when it comes to dealing with difficult and unmotivated students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The literature widely documents the pervasive influence of self-efficacy beliefs and corroborates social cognitive theory that places these beliefs at the roots of human agency (Bandura, 2001).

Some of the ELT studies have sought to yield a broader conception of teacher success than one which only accords significance to professional qualities as language proficiency and managing skills. In an attempt to keep in line with developments in psychology and cognitive science, this upsurge in language education research has investigated the impact of language teachers' various cognitive, affective and personality characteristics on their teaching practices and professional success. Among those investigated, one can refer to EFL teachers' multiple intelligences (Pishghadam & Moafian, 2007), emotional intelligence (Hashemi, 2008), and self-efficacy (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009). Following this line of research, another variable domain in which to investigate the concept of teacher success in foreign and second language teaching programs is L2 teachers' critical thinking ability (Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Although a number of studies have investigated teacher efficacy in different subject matters, “little research has been conducted to explore the perceived efficacy of nonnative English speaking teachers in different ESL and EFL contexts” (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008, p.2). Because of the fast worldwide spread of the English language, the number of NNESTs has increased tremendously over the last decades. As nonnative English speaking teachers become a focus of research and pedagogical interest in applied linguistics, the issue of their professional success is gaining significance as the role of English teachers’ multiple intelligences in their teaching success has been recently researched and documented (Pishghadam & Moafian, 2007). Meanwhile, the relationship between the self-efficacy of the Iranian NNEST teachers and their professional success has been left almost intact. Although the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers’ critical thinking ability and their professional success has been well researched (Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010), the role of EFL teachers teaching in the institutes, in this regard has not been well documented. Nor has the relationship among the three constructs of self-efficacy, critical thinking, and teachers’ success been studied simultaneously. The predictive ability of the self-efficacy and critical thinking concerning EFL teachers’ success has not been well-established either. The main problem in the present study was to see self-efficacy belief and critical thinking have any impact on the professional success of EFL teachers in the Iranian context.

Research Questions

Considering the problem stated and the purpose of the study, the following questions were raised:

1. Is there any statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and professional success among EFL teachers in the Iranian context?
2. Is there any statistically significant relationship between critical thinking and professional success among EFL teachers in the Iranian context?
3. To what extent do the two variables of self-efficacy and critical thinking predict Iranian EFL teachers’ professional success?

Method

Participants

The nonnative English speaking teachers (NNESTs) taking part in the present study were 30 EFL teachers who were selected from among the male and female teachers of English teaching in Sokhan, Ayandeh, Gouyesh, and Tayebin, and Kiyan language institutes located in the eastern part of Tehran-the capital city of Iran. The reason behind such a selection was that the researcher had already taught in those institutes and this familiarity facilitated the process of conducting the present research. The EFL learners taking part in the present study were 150 EFL learners studying English in the aforementioned language institutes. The participants were both male and female students in intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced level learners with the age range of 18-25. The reason for the selection of these participants lied in the fact that these learners had received enough training in English by different teachers and were likely to present the researcher with more trustable answers and data for the present research.

Instrumentations

To collect the data, the researcher used Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), Successful Iranian EFL Teacher Questionnaire (SIETQ) (Moafian & Pishghadam, 2009), and Cornell Critical Thinking Test (Persian Version). The aforementioned instruments are introduced as follows.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) which is available in two forms (the short with 12 items and the long one with 24 items). The scale in its two forms enjoys high reliability indices between .81 and .90 (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008). Because this instrument was developed at the Ohio State University, it is sometimes referred to as the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale. The present researcher preferred to use the short form to absorb the cooperation of the teachers completing the questionnaire and present a more user-friendly data collection situation. This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. The participants are asked to indicate their opinion about each of the 12 statements mentioned in the questionnaire through selecting from a nine-level likert scale including nothing (1) up to a great deal (9). The short form of the questionnaire used in the present study includes three areas of *efficacy in student engagement* (items 2, 3, 4, 11), *efficacy in instructional strategies* (items 5, 9, 10, 12), and *efficacy in classroom management* (items 1, 6, 7, 8). The participants are ensured in the instruction section of the questionnaire that their answers would be confidential.

Teachers' Professional Success Survey

Teachers' professional success was estimated by their students through the Successful Iranian EFL Teacher Questionnaire (SIETQ) (Moafian & Pishghadam, 2009). Characteristics of successful EFL teachers' questionnaire was designed by Moafian and Pishghadam (2009). The questionnaire consists of 47 items ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The results of reliability analysis showed that the total reliability of the questionnaire was very high (Cronbach's alpha = 0.94). The results of factor analysis indicated that the questionnaire measures 12 constructs, i.e., teaching accountability, interpersonal relationships, attention to all, examination, commitment, learning boosters, creating a sense of competence, teaching boosters, physical and emotional acceptance, empathy, class attendance, and dynamism.

Cornell Critical Thinking Test

Cornell Critical Thinking Test (Persian Version), which is available and has been frequently used in the researchers conducted in Iran. A standard copy of Cornell Critical Thinking Test Series available in Persian was used. The Questionnaire includes 52 items in 7 sections and should be answered in 50 minutes. The aim of the test is checking the critical thinking and cognitive ability of the learners. The Persian version of the questionnaire was prepared by Professor Houman, the late professor of Tehran University in 2005. The questionnaire has been frequently used in various researches in both educational sciences and TEFL domain. The reliability of the test has been frequently checked in different situations and the reported reliabilities have been between .61 and .80 (Houman, 2005). Also, Alivandi Vafa (2005) presented that Cornell Critical Thinking Questionnaire in Persian enjoyed high reliability of .82 percent based on Cronbach's alpha.

Procedure

At first 30 male and female teachers of teaching English conversation in different language institutes in Tehran city were asked to fill out the questionnaires of Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale and Cornell Critical Thinking Test. In the next step from among the students of each teacher 5 students were randomly selected to fill out the Teachers' Professional Success Survey. Both teachers and the students were briefed about the nature of the research and the specifications of the questionnaires. The data were

collected and analyzed via SPSS software (version 22) and then reported and checked based on the research questions and research null hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

Checking Normality

Since the data were analyzed using Pearson correlation, it should be verified that the data enjoyed normal distribution. As displayed in Table 1, the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their standard errors were within the ranges of ± 1.96 .

Table 1

Testing Normality Assumption

	N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
		Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Critical Thinking	30	.270	.427	.632	-.907	.833	-1.08
Self-Efficacy	30	.378	.427	.885	1.373	.833	1.64

As the third question of the study required checking the predictive ability and value of variables of self-efficacy and critical thinking towards Iranian EFL teachers' professional success, the present data were analyzed through multiple regression as well, that is why the data had to be verified to see if they enjoyed normal distribution. As displayed in Table 2, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were non-significant ($p > .05$) for critical thinking, self-efficacy and teaching success; hence normality of the data was again confirmed.

Table 2

Tests of Normality for the Variables in an Account of Regression

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Critical Thinking	.122	30	.200	.956	30	.240
Self-Efficacy	.141	30	.134	.938	30	.081
Success	.124	30	.200	.931	30	.052

Checking Reliability

The KR-21 reliability indices for the critical thinking, self-efficacy, and teachers' success were respectively .89, .99, and .89. See Table 3 below for the indices of reliability of the instruments used in the study.

Table 3

Reliability Statistics

	N of Items	(Total Score)	Mean	Variance	KR-21
Critical Thinking	52	156	101.33	310.782	.89
Self-Efficacy	12	218	126.80	3271.821	.99
Success	47	235	137.07	2975.168	.89

Construct Validity

A factor analysis through the varimax rotation was run to probe the construct validity of the critical thinking, teachers' success and self-efficacy. It should be mentioned that the assumption of sampling adequacy was met. As displayed in Table 4 the KMO index of .77 was higher than .50.

Table 4

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.777
Approx. Chi-Square		75.180
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	3
	Sig.	.000

The Bartlett's test was significant ($\chi^2(3) = 75.18, p = .000$) indicating that the correlation matrix did not suffer from multicollinearity-too high or too low correlations among all variables. The SPSS extracted one factor which accounted for 89.76 percent of the total variance (Table 5).

Table 5

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.693	89.762	89.762	2.693	89.762	89.762
2	.169	5.650	95.412			
3	.138	4.588	100.000			

As displayed in Table 6, the critical thinking, teachers' success and self-efficacy loaded on the extracted factor. These results further supported the results of the regression model as significant relationships between the variables.

Table 6

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Self-Efficacy	.953
Success	.946
Critical Thinking	.944

Inferential Statistics

Research Question One: The first research question was an attempt to find if there was any statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and professional success among EFL teachers in the Iranian context.

A Pearson correlation was run to probe any significant relationship between self-efficacy and professional success among EFL teachers in the Iranian context in order to probe the first research question. As displayed in Table 7 the self-efficacy ($r(28) = .52, p = .003$, representing a large effect size) had a significant relationships with Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and professional success. Thus, the first null-hypothesis as "there is no statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and professional success among EFL teachers in the Iranian context", was rejected.

Table 7

Pearson Correlations; Teachers' Success with Self-Efficacy

		Success
	Pearson Correlation	.526**
Self-Efficacy	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	30

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

Research Question Two: The second research question wanted to find if there was any statistically significant relationship between critical thinking and professional success among EFL teachers in the Iranian context.

A Pearson correlation was run to probe any significant relationship between critical and professional success among EFL teachers in the Iranian context in order to probe the second research question. As displayed in Table 8 the self-efficacy ($r(28) = .82, p = .000$, representing a large effect size) had a significant relationships with Iranian EFL teachers' critical thinking and professional success. Thus the second null-hypothesis as "there is no statistically significant relationship between critical thinking and professional success among EFL teachers in the Iranian context", was rejected.

Table 8

Pearson Correlations; Teachers' Success with Critical Thinking

		Success
Critical Thinking	Pearson Correlation	.825**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	30

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

Research Question Three: The third research question of the study aimed at checking to what extent the two variables of self-efficacy and critical thinking could predict Iranian EFL teachers' professional success.

A multiple regression through the stepwise method was run to predict teachers' success by using the self-efficacy and critical thinking. The teachers' self-efficacy entered into the regression model on the first step to predict 73.4 percent of their success ($R = .857$, $R^2 = .734$). The critical thinking entered into the regression model on the second step to increase the percentage of prediction to 77.1 percent ($R = .878$, $R^2 = .771$). See Table 9 below for more details.

Table 9

Model Summary^c

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.857 ^a	.734	.725	28.619	
2	.878 ^b	.771	.754	27.027	1.124

a. Predictors: (Constant), SelfEfficacy

b. Predictors: (Constant), SelfEfficacy, CriticalT

c. Dependent Variable: Success

The negligible difference between the R-squared and Adjusted R-squared values ($.771 - .754 = .017$) indicated that the present results can safely be generalized to the population. The Durbin-Watson (DW) index was 1.12. As noted by Field (2013) DW indices between 1 and 3 are acceptable indicating that there are not any serial correlations between residuals (errors). The results of ANOVA tests of significance of the regression model (Table 10) indicated that the regression models enjoyed statistical significance at first ($F(1, 28) = 77.34$, $p = .000$) and second steps ($F(2, 27) = 45.55$, $p = .000$).

Table 10

ANOVA^a Test of Significance of Regression Model

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63346.547	1	63346.547	77.342	.000 ^b
	Residual	22933.320	28	819.047		
	Total	86279.867	29			
2	Regression	66557.461	2	33278.730	45.559	.000 ^c
	Residual	19722.406	27	730.459		
	Total	86279.867	29			

a. Dependent Variable: Success

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy

c. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy, Critical T.

Table 11 displays the regression coefficients (b and beta values) which can be used to build the regression equation. For example, the regression equation for the first step is; Success = 33.460 + (self-efficacy*.817)

Table 11

Regression Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients ^t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	33.460	12.888	2.596	.015		
	Self-Efficacy	.817	.093	.831	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	-44.021	38.908	-1.131	.268		
	Self-Efficacy	.518	.167	.544	.005	.275	3.638
	Critical T	1.139	.543	.857	.046	.275	3.638

a. Dependent Variable: Success

The regression equation for the second step is; Success = -44.021 + (self-efficacy*.518) + (critical thinking * 1.139). The assumption of non-multicollinearity should be reported when running linear regression. The Value of Tolerance should not be lower than .10 and the value of VIF (Variance inflation rate) should not be higher than 10 to conclude that the assumption is met; as is the case in this study. As

displayed in Table 12 the critical thinking ($r(28) = .85$, $p = .000$, representing a large effect size) and self-efficacy ($r(28) = .83$, $p = .000$, representing a large effect size) both had significant relationships with teachers' success.

Table 12

Pearson Correlations; Teachers' Success with Self-Efficacy and Critical Thinking

		Success
CriticalT	Pearson Correlation	.857**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	30
SelfEfficacy	Pearson Correlation	.831**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	30

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

Z-Transformation = .33, $p = .370$

The Z-transformation formula was used to compare the above mentioned R-values in order to probe which one had a higher contribution to teachers' success. The results of Z-transformation ($Z = .33$, $p = .370$) indicated that critical thinking was a better predictor of teachers' success when compared to self-efficacy.

Discussion

The findings of the present study revealed that firstly, there was a significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and professional success. Secondly, it was revealed that there was a significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' critical thinking and professional success. Thirdly, it was revealed that both self-efficacy and critical thinking can relatively predict EFL teachers' professional success. The results of data analysis also revealed that critical thinking was a better predictor of teachers' professional success. Hence, critical thinking alone could predict a high percentage of teachers' success.

The present findings are in line with the results of the previous research on the relationship between CT, self-efficacy, and EFL teachers' professional success. Wilson, et al. (2004) found that Singapore teachers' personal and general efficacy affected their teaching behaviors. Cheung (2006) who worked on Hong Kong primary in-service teachers found that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs vastly predicts their likely success in the classroom. Research reports in other settings also has proved the same: Liu, et al. (2007) in Taiwan, Wolters and Daugherty (2007) in America, Penrose, et al. (2007) in Victoria, Canada, Yan (2008) in Hong-Kong and Shanghai, Kotaman (2010) in Turkey, and Fives and Loony (2009) in America, all have come to the this conclusion that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs can highly predict their likely success in the second or foreign language classroom.

Considering the impact of self-efficacy belief as a predicator of EFL teachers' success, the findings of the present study confirms those of Chacón (2005) who studied the teachers' perceived efficacy among EFL teachers in middle schools in Venezuela.

Among the Iranian researchers, Karrabi (2005) found that English teachers' sense of self-efficacy was an effective factor in teaching grammar and experiencing in the profession. Abednia (2006) also found that EFL teachers' sense of efficacy can influence their success in what they do in the classroom environment. When self-efficacy of the EFL teachers becomes a significant factor in their profession they might find it an indispensable part of their job. As Eslami and Fatahi (2008) found, teachers' sense of self-efficacy highly correlated with their English proficiency and instructional strategies they use as nonnative EFL teachers. Izadinia's (2008) study also confirmed the previous studies and asserted that EFL teachers' efficacy and awareness of critical pedagogy in the EFL settings can promote their professional success.

Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2010, 2011) proved the high relationship among EFL teachers in terms of their critical thinking and self-efficacy. Akbari and Moradkhani's (2010) study also revealed that Iranian English teachers' self-efficacy could be a good predicator of their success. Of course their study showed that teachers' experience made a difference among them in this regard. Vaezi and Fallah's (2011) study, meanwhile, showed high self-efficacy reduces stress among Iranian EFL teachers. Another study by Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2011) revealed a high relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their pedagogical success in language institutes. Karimvand (2011)'s study, however, found that Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy positively correlated with their teaching experience. It means that teachers' experience affects their development of self-efficacy. Though it was not sought in the present study, such a concept could be further discussed and researched among Iranian EFL teachers.

Another significant factor which pertains to both findings of the study is the concept of critical thinking. The present study findings revealed that critical thing is a better predicator of EFL teachers' professional success when compared to self-efficacy belief. This finding is in line with the results of some previous research as follows. The findings of the studies done by Radhakrishnan (2009) and Simeric (2010) also proved that critical thinking could both affect the EFL teachers' success and be a reliable predicator of their professional success and their learners' development.

The subsidiary findings of the study revealed that both of the main variables of the study highly correlated with each other and could significantly predict each other as well. This finding is also in line with a lot of research results which have mainly focused on the relationship between critical thinking and self-efficacy among ESL/EFL teachers (Alivandi Vafa, 2005; Jamshidian & Farahani, 2010; Mirzaie, 2008; Sheikhy Behdani, 2009).

Though the participants of the study were both females and males, the gender factor and its effect could be focused on in the present study. Karrabi's (2005) study which focused on both male and female EFL teachers revealed that English teachers' sense of self-efficacy which played a significant role in better teaching grammar was higher in the male teachers, though some female teachers with high self-efficacy belief were among the successful teachers in this regard.

Unlike the studies reported, Bartlett (2005) found that the EFL teachers could enjoy high self-efficacy and critical thinking in case they were provided with teaching evaluation programs. Jamshidian and Farahani's (2010) study also revealed that critical thinking ability of the experienced teachers in both genders were almost the same and of course a good predicator of professional success in the foreign language classroom. Confirming the previous findings Karimvand (2011) also found that Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy highly and positively correlated with their teaching experience for both genders. In a more recent study, Rahimi and Soryani (2014) who studied the relationship between EFL teachers' critical thinking skills and vocabulary learning strategy instruction across gender in the Iranian context, came to know that that the negative relationship between male teachers' inference skills and vocabulary learning instruction was stronger than that of female teachers.

Based on the present study findings, both self-efficacy and critical thinking can help the improvement of EFL teachers' success in their own profession. The reason might lie in the fact that teachers' belief in what they do will provide them with the energy and spirit required to do their job more skillfully and find ways to be better teachers. As Bandura (2005) discusses, High self-efficacy beliefs can change the perspective of the teachers towards their own profession.

Critical thinking showed to be a highly critical factor in predicting EFL teachers' success in the Iranian context. It seems that teachers with high critical thinking ability can perform better in the EFL classrooms based on their students' views. Barjesteh and Vaseghi (2012) confirmed that critical thinking training for the EFL teachers could pave the way for their successful performance in the classroom. As critical thinking widens the scope of thinking and analyzing phenomenon around, and helps the teachers be more creative (Bessick, 2008), the teachers with high critical thinking are predicted to be more successful.

Implications

According to the results of the present study, some implications for teaching and learning English as a foreign language could be suggested. English teachers, material developers, policy makers in the ELT domain as well as the teacher trainers can be benefitted from the findings of the present study. As based on the present findings, both self-efficacy and critical thinking play significant roles in the teachers' professionalism, it is suggested that EFL teachers should be checked for their level of self-efficacy and critical thinking as well as for their language proficiency.

Second, the would-be-teachers should be encouraged through the principles of critical thinking and how to enhance their self-efficacy. These will help them to have better performance in their classrooms. It is also suggested that working EFL teachers be exposed to principles of self-efficacy belief in the in-service training programs so as to get familiar with the ways through which they could improve their own abilities in this regard.

Conclusion

To sum up, the findings of the present research revealed a highly positive relationship among self-efficacy, critical thinking and professional success of Iranian EFL teachers. The findings also showed that both self-efficacy belief and critical thinking could be predictors of EFL teachers' professional success. Meanwhile, the power of critical thinking was higher in this regard. This difference was not highly significant of course and based on the comparison which was made between the results of the present research and findings of previous ones reported in the literature. However as Nikoopour, et al. (2011) stress, critical thinking paves the way for analytical view towards EFL teaching and learning and that is why CT could be a reliable predictor of EFL teachers' professional success.

The findings of the study revealed significantly positive relationship among self-efficacy, critical thinking and professional success of Iranian EFL teachers. Also it was found that both self-efficacy and critical thinking could relatively predict EFL teachers' professional success. As critical thinking alone could predict a high percentage of teachers' success, the results of data analysis revealed that critical thinking was a better predictor of teachers' professional success. Theoretically speaking, the present findings are in line with Bandura's (2001 and 2005) studies indicating that self-efficacy could be a highly reliable predictor of learning within the domain of social cognitive theory. Also, in line with the impact of self-efficacy belief as a predictor of EFL teachers' success, the findings of the present study confirm those of Chacón (2005), Coronado-Aliegre (2006), Eslami and Fatahi (2008), Izadinia (2008), Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009), and Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2011) who revealed a high relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their pedagogical success in language institutes.

Considering the significance of CT as the predictor of EFL teachers' professional success, the present findings are in line with a lot of previously reported research home and abroad (Baleghizadeh &

Shakouri, 2015; Bessick, 2008; Dantas-Whitney, 2002; Fahim & Ahmadian, 2012; Ivie, 2001; Jamshidian & Farahani, 2010; Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2010; Pishghadam, 2008; Radhakrishnan, 2009; Rahimi & Soryani, 2014; Semeric, 2010; Vaughn, 2008). CT proved to be a better predictor of professional success for the EFL teachers. The present study findings revealed that both female and male EFL teachers mostly rely on their critical thinking rather than their self-efficacy belief in becoming a successful EFL teacher. This is of course in line with Bartlett's (2005) findings thermalizing that EFL teachers could enjoy high self-efficacy and critical thinking in case they are provided with related training. Jamshidian and Farahani's (2010), Karimvand (2011) and in a more recent study, Rahimi and Soryani (2014) have also confirmed the same.

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THE IMPACT OF TEACHER-MADE GAMES VS. CONVENTIONAL GAMES ON IRANIAN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND RETENTION OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH PLAYING GAMES IS POPULAR IN MANY INSTITUTES. TEACHERS USE DIFFERENT KINDS OF GAMES TO TEACH NEW VOCABULARY. THE PRESENT STUDY AIMS AT INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF USING TEACHER-MADE GAMES VS. CONVENTIONAL GAMES ON IRANIAN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND RETENTION OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY. TO ENSURE THE HOMOGENEITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS QUICK PLACEMENT TEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO 60 LEARNERS. THEN 40 PARTICIPANTS WHOSE SCORES WERE BETWEEN ONE AND FIFTEEN WERE SELECTED AS THE PARTICIPANTS AND WERE RANDOMLY DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS. A VOCABULARY PRETEST WAS ADMINISTERED TO THE PARTICIPANTS BEFORE STARTING THE TREATMENT. DURING THE FOUR SESSIONS OF TREATMENT, TWENTY VOCABULARY ITEMS WERE INSTRUCTED TO THE TWO GROUPS. FOUR DIFFERENT TEACHER-MADE GAMES WERE CONSIDERED FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, AND FOUR CONVENTIONAL GAMES WERE CONSIDERED FOR THE CONTROL GROUP. AFTERWARD, A VOCABULARY IMMEDIATE POSTTEST WAS ADMINISTERED. IN ORDER TO SEE THE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF TEACHER-MADE GAMES ON THE LEARNERS' ABILITY TO RECALL THE VOCABULARY ITEMS, A DELAYED POSTTEST WAS ALSO ADMINISTERED THREE WEEKS LATER, AND ALL THE COLLECTED DATA WERE ANALYZED THROUGH SPSS. THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT THE LEARNERS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP OUTPERFORMED THOSE IN THE CONTROL GROUP. HENCE, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT USING TEACHER-MADE GAMES CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY IMPROVE LEARNERS' ABILITY TO LEARN AND RECALL VOCABULARY.

KEY WORDS: EFL LEARNER, RETENTION, VOCABULARY, GAME

1. Introduction

Games have a crucial part in teaching unknown vocabulary. Based on Huyen and Nga (2003), they turn the learning atmosphere into a place full of fun together with competition, where students are eager to learn new things, and they will bring real-world context into the classroom.

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Games are made of sets of rules, and they can help teachers and students to apply them in the class, and no one crosses the border.

Language learning is a hard work, and it takes time since mind can acquire it slowly, so students should try many times to learn it. They may use different techniques to memorize it.

Although playing games can help students learn better, it is time-consuming, and it can be difficult for teachers to spend the class time for playing games, and at the same time control the classroom. Furthermore, most teachers are not familiar with this strategy for teaching; they may find it too challenging since they have to explain the rules of the games in English, which may not be understandable to EFL kids, and since teachers should pay attention to kids' personalities and cultures. Some of them are introverted students and hence reluctant to have a part in the games.

There are some famous vocabulary games such as Hangman, Role-play, Unscramble words, Board games. These kinds of games come from other countries, and they are not designed for the specific culture, so they bring some difficulties for both teachers and students, but teachers can reduce most of these problems by inventing new games.

2. Literature Review

Games have an old history which is divided into two basic periods: before and after the 19th century. Based on El-Shamy (2001), at first games were just some physical activities, which were related to a specific occasion such as religious rituals, celebrations and festivals. After the 19th century, the European people tried to modify some of their games' rules to fit with American tastes, because they thought them as a waste of time. From that period, games started to be used for educational purposes. The first game that had this goal was Mansion of Happiness the goal of which was to teach the differences between the good and bad to children. From that time, games continued to change until the time they turned to being a tool for training.

According to Krashen (2004), by using a list of vocabulary items students can learn thousands of vocabulary items, but it might be a discouraging prospect for students who find this method tedious. While explicit learning can be boring for some students according to him, explicit learning is enjoyable for new learners because they can learn words through conversation or in a game, but the process of learning is very slow, and it makes the situation hard for some learners who are hesitant to expose their experience to a native speaker. But by using games in small groups inside a class they can talk with their peers so their knowledge can be nearly the same, and they can understand each other, a fact which gives them positive feelings to continue their study. Students can enjoy learning and problem solving through games, since they are word-learning wizards and they can remember how a problem can be solved and through this way, games challenge their mind. Since games questions start from easy to hard, it can specify students' knowledge. McGonigal (2011) had the same idea and pointed out that problem solving can be fun for students, because learning is situated and occurs through a process of hypothesizing and reflecting upon the stimulated word within the game.

During the teaching process a lot of words can be taught by the teacher and games can help students to transfer them from their short-term memory to long-term memory and recall them whenever they are needed. Curtiss (2005) had the same idea and stated that when teachers are using games to teach vocabulary, it is not important that how many words they want to transfer, because games can make learners' mind ready, motivate them and pave the way for their learning.

Aslanabadi and Rasouli (2013) conducted a study on the effect of games on the improvement of Iranian EFL vocabulary knowledge in kindergartens. The aim of their study was to find a way to help young EFL learners fix the novel vocabulary in their minds. The study was conducted at two kindergartens. They divided the students into the experimental and control group. The experimental group was given an

online language teaching game and the control group was given a regular teaching. The result of their study revealed that games not only bring fun for learners in the class, but also they motivate learners and improve their confidence.

Kupeckova (2010) stated that there are various kinds of games such as recreational, pedagogical and therapeutic. Recreational games are just for fun and enjoyment, while therapeutic games diagnose or cure a problem in psychology. The pedagogical game is a kind of game that is used for an educational purpose, and the student can attend it and communicate with others.

Using games in the class is a trend to change the teacher-dominated class into a student-centered one or bring a situation in which both can participate in. Jones (2004) stated that games are very important. Therefore, language learners should not pay attention to the drills and memorization of language rule. They must involve a student in the process of learning and minimize the interference of the teacher. Allen (2004) stated that whenever students are active learners, they will automatically learn the language because they feel they are a part of what is going on. The teacher-centered class has problems since they think learners are passive, and they should pour knowledge into their mind. He also mentioned that games challenge students' past and new information. They cause students to make a mistake, to learn, but they should not be corrected by the teacher, because they can be bored with being corrected by the teacher several times.

Based on Bell (2009), by using games teachers can create a different context in which students can communicate, exchange information and express their own opinions. Many scholars agree that learning will happen as a result of learners' interest and motivation, and if it doesn't target their needs, it will not be successful. Haynes & Zacarian (2010) for example, highlighted the importance of creating enjoyment in class and believed that an entertaining situation can prevent the obligation feeling.

According to Foreman (2003), using games in the class is an excellent idea for students to practice new vocabulary since they have time to practice them without the risk of failure, there is the element of an information gap between teammates, and it can engage every one of the students, and they are responsible for the point. In a game, two humans' skills can combine together, which are physical and mental powers. Playing games can teach them how to consider alternatives. It makes the class a different place in which learning is the central point. Students can share their information about vocabulary through communication.

Vocabulary games are special because they challenge students and make them work together so they can memorize them faster. Tuan (2012) overemphasized game's power and stated that it can facilitate meaningful learning, because there is not any sense of fear and humiliation so students are free to make different sentences by using new vocabulary. Ersoz (2005) believed that knowing how to teach a new word is not the key to successful learning. He emphasized that the best lesson may fail since students can learn things when they think them as a useful tool for their real life. Therefore, it is worth looking for ways to teach better and use games, which bring fun to the class environment. Orlick (2006) had the same point of view and stated that a teacher can attract students by providing activities that are communicative, pleasant, safe and non-threatening as well as meaningful and challenging. These kinds of games lead to students' self-confidence, learning satisfaction and communication among learners.

Games have a long history in school and they started by using paper cards to teach vocabulary, which could make the students eager to learn. Games are often difficult to be used in a formal situation like the class, but as Nielsen (2006) stated, students can learn and remember new words faster through games. Kids' teachers are more eager to use a game for teaching vocabulary and there is an old connection between vocabulary learning and games, to some extent; it is derived from communication approaches to language teaching and learning. Peterson (2010) stated that there is a common point about games and language learning in the sense that both try to make a situation where students learn and memorize the

new lesson. He pointed out that one of these games can be role-play games, which make learners use the language for meaningful communication with others.

According to Pound (2005), games create a situation which has been called heads-on, minds-on, which allow students to focus on games and learn new words. Serious games allow them to think about a solution to answer a vocabulary question and also let them feel the tension of crises, which can challenge all their skills. It is a way to strengthening the awareness.

Pavicic (2008) stated that EFL learners need to discuss things which they are learning, they can recycle vocabulary that they just learned, and also they can transfer their knowledge. Playing games have a crucial role in learning and recycling a word. A teacher should be aware of these values and give them time to consult about the games' answer with each other.

According to Bradley, Rystedt and Lindstrm (2010), there are a lot of reasons that a teacher should use vocabulary games. First of all, they are fun; they help a teacher to motivate students and turn them from passive students to active ones. Second, it can help them to participate willingly, build relationships and feel equal. It can also help teachers to create a friendly and positive atmosphere where the chair arrangement can differ from game to game, and this causes a different class. Third, the reason which people want to learn a second language is to use it in real life, communicate with others and transfer their knowledge. Games are good tools for these goals since, a teacher can create different situations, and students can practice words in a different context. Fourth, students need to be emotionally involved. A game can bring strong emotions, like happiness, excitement, amusement and suspense, which allow them to feel positive about their learning situation. Fifth, games are good for introverted students and those with low confidence, and it can show itself when they play in small groups, because they can have a chance to speak in front of a few people rather than the whole class. It is sometimes easier to forget anxiety when playing a game, because the atmosphere is not that much serious, and grammar is not important. Sixth, the school system is too boring for young learners, and it is always based on teachers, but games bring variety and make the students feel these differences. Teachers need to think about games and their benefits for students, and they must preplan for them.

Iran Dolati and Mikaili (2011), for instance, examined the effects of games on facilitating students' vocabulary learning. The purpose of their study was to gain information about the role of games in the area of vocabulary learning among students. The participants of their study were 70 female students in the age of 12 to 13 years old, who were selected from one of the Iranian primary schools in Iran. By analyzing the pretest and posttest, they found that applying games has a significant role in teaching vocabulary to language learners. They also found that games can motivate and engage learners especially the introverted and passive ones in the whole learning process.

Muhanna (2012) stated that from time to time games do craft setbacks for both the teachers and learners since they will not be effective unless the teacher clarifies the task engaging the games. According to Vossoughi and Zargar (2009), games not only encourage learners to participate in class activity, but also help them in vocabulary development. Karpicke (2009) pointed out that games can help students mind to work properly and hard in order to answer the games' question.

A teacher should keep in mind that learning is a broad area and teaching every word by pictures is impossible, because some words are abstract, like freedom, which cannot be felt or shown by pictures. It is true that teachers can use pictures to teach better, but still they may have some problems with abstract words, so they can use different kinds of games like role play to reach their goal.

Teachers must consider when to use games, which of them are useful and how to use them appropriately in order to meet both students' needs and lesson objectives. Unfortunately, some teachers may neglect their usefulness, but as Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2005) stated games should be seen as meaningful practice of language, which can be exploited as follow-ups of the present teaching material in order to

practice and reinforce the required skills, knowledge. Also, for revising and recycling already acquired skills and knowledge, it can act as a tool for discovering students' weaknesses in their language proficiency. Ge (2012) stated that choosing and using an educational game is very hard for teachers. They should keep in their mind that some issues like the number of students, proficiency, cultural context, timing, and learning topic can influence learners. Games help a teacher to create contexts according to the students' level and make the language useful and meaningful. Liao and Chen (2012) stated that games are like building blocks, which can boost learners' lexical growth and retention. The most important part in learning a language is the memorization of the target language words. However, the problem is that these words might not be correctly recalled over a long period of time. Parle, Singh and Vasudevan (2006) stated that this is related to the human mind by which a daily word can be easily remembered but others not. They defined memory as the process of encoding, saving and recalling.

Based on Schmitt (2000), the amount of exposure to new vocabulary has a direct relation to its learning. When a teacher uses games to teach the unknown vocabulary in the class, they can be repeated several times so learners can learn them in different contexts.

Vahdat and Rasti-Behbahani (2013) investigated the effect of games on Iranian EFL students' vocabulary learning. The participants of their study were 40 intermediate EFL learners, both male and female. They chose their participants through TOEFL. They divided them into two groups (10 males and 10 females in each): a control group and an experimental group. The control group studied vocabulary in traditional classes, but the experimental group experienced vocabulary learning (the same words) via games. The findings of their study revealed that learning vocabulary via games was advantageous.

According to Gersten and Baker (2000), vocabulary retention plays an important role in vocabulary learning. Some teachers believe that there should be a limitation in teaching vocabulary. A good technique based on their idea is using games, because students can do them over and over for a long period of time. An instructor must be aware of selecting those words which transfer key components and are of high utility and relevant to the words which being taught. Limiting words not only helps teachers to teach better, but also gives them the power to make the revision process faster. Moreover, it can help students understand the deep meaning of words.

Research Questions

Based on the foregoing discussions, the following research questions were developed for this study:

Q1: Is there any statistically significant difference between the effects of teacher-made games and conventional games on Iranian children's vocabulary learning?

Q2: Is there any statistically significant difference between the effects of teacher-made games and conventional games on Iranian children's vocabulary retention?

3. Method

3.1. The Design of the Study

This study had two variables: one dependent, learning and retaining vocabulary and one independent, vocabulary treatment types. This was a quasi-experimental study, in which the researchers used a pretest, an immediate posttest, and a three-week delayed posttest with a control group and an experimental group.

3.2. Participants

All the learners who enrolled in the beginner level of Iran Language Institute in Rasht and Fouman were asked to take Quick Placement Test (QPT) to choose the learners who were really at the beginner level.

Forty beginner learners were assigned into two comparison groups. Each class contained twenty learners. Their ages ranged from eight to eleven.

3.3. Materials

3.3.1. Quick Placement Test

This test included 40 multiple-choice items of grammar and vocabulary from simple to difficult and from beginner to intermediate to get homogenized groups of participants. All the students who were the candidates took it. Based on the test rubrics, the participants who scored 0 to 15 were considered to be at the beginner level and those who scored above 15 were excluded.

3.3.2. Pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest

The pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest were designed by the researchers and the reliability measures of the tests were established and explained in the following sections. All the tests contained 20 multiple-choice items which the learners answered in 40 minutes. The words were taken from the students' coursebook *Up and Away in English*. They were about clothes, sense verbs and different parts of the body, and they had not been learned before. The test items were designed from easy to hard, which has been presented in Appendix A.

3.3.3. Teacher-made games

3.3.3.1. Guess box:

This is a teacher-made game which challenges students' previous knowledge about words. It can be used as a tool for teaching or reviewing. This box has two moving circles on which a teacher can place different words, and it depends on the vocabulary that he wants to teach. The left circle is for the written form of a word, and the right one is for the picture of a word. Students can easily get the rules of this game since it is so simple. In order to start the game teachers should turn on the device; the two circles move, and they cannot be seen anymore by the students. Then he must start teaching a word and should give some short definitions about it. That they are moving and the students cannot see them increases their curiosity, so they listen carefully to understand what it is. Then the teacher stops the right circle, so they can see the picture. After some coral repetition and memorization of the word, it is time for the writing section. At first, the teacher should ask the students if they can guess how to write the word based on its sound or not. He stops the left circle to show the word to the students and after that, he should write it on the board. And after making a sentence by himself, he can ask the students to make other sentences. In the case of revision, a teacher can use this game in the beginning or the end of a class for revision and playing.

3.3.3.2. Chance game:

This is a teacher-made game which can be interesting for students because it is based on chance. This game has two characteristics: it can be used as a revision device and a game for teaching words. There can be five or more (depending on the teacher's decision) removable pictures on this box with an arrow that is in the middle of the box that can point to each of them whenever the device gets on and off.

At first, the teacher turns on the device so the arrow can move and when the device is off it points to a word, and the teacher starts teaching that one. Students can see all parts of this process, and since it is different from the ordinary way of choosing a word to teach, it is interesting for the students. Also a teacher can ask them to say stop and in this way, they can choose the word which gives them courage. Then, after announcing the word several times, asking the students several questions about the words, and writing the word on the board, he asks the students to make sentences or questions with them. In the

case of revision, the teacher should divide students to some groups, and then he must turn on the device and ask them about words. He can also turn on the device two times and ask students to make sentences or questions based on those two words. The group which makes a correct answer can get a positive mark. In this way, he can assess their understanding about a word and the students can understand how to use them in different contexts.

3.3.3.3. Angry circles:

This is a game with different usages. A teacher can use it for teaching a word, reviewing it, sentence making, question making and unscrambling the sentences. A teacher can do lots of games at once by the help of this game. This teacher-made game has five moving circles that give a huge flexibility and power to the teacher to use them based on his goals. However, some common ways of using this game are explained below.

A teacher should talk about a word, and then he must show its picture, which is painted on one circle. After that, he places it on the device and asks the students to repeat it several times. After the repetition and question section, he should write the word and ask the students to make a sentence like the one by him. Then he applies all these steps for the second word, too. After teaching five words and when the device is completed, he asks them to repeat the words again and make questions based on them to ask each other, or he can ask them to place these words in order on the box from left to right in the case of group words (body parts, time activities), which can make the game much more interesting. There are some other activities that a teacher can do with this game.

3.3.3.3.1. Making sentence:

He or she can put some circles in order.

Their numbers are written on the back of the cards, so it is easy for a teacher to place them on the device, and it will not take that much time for rearranging them. Each card contains four words. When the device is on, the circles move and the order of the sentence changes, so it challenges the students' vocabulary knowledge and their information about sentence making. After that, when the device is off, students would rearrange the words in order.

3.3.3.3.2. Making question:

A teacher can apply all the above steps with question cards, or he can use those sentences and ask them to make Yes-No, past, future and Wh-questions. They can ask them to change the sentences, too. For example, the example sentence is in the present tense, and they can be asked to change it to future.

3.3.3.3.3. Fill in the blank:

A teacher takes one of the words which have been taught. Students should complete the sentence based on their creativity and previous knowledge about words.

3.3.3.3.4. Time game:

A teacher can omit some circles and ask a group of students to complete the rest of the sentence based on their own words. However, there is a time limit for this game, and it can be shown by some lights, which are designed on the device. Whenever they are off, the students should present their sentences without any mistakes.

3.3.3.4. Magic box:

This game is designed for revision, but it can be used for teaching too, and it depends on the teacher's goal. There is a moving circle in the middle of this box and a pointing arrow which is painted on the box. Whenever a teacher turns the device on, the moveable circles move. A teacher must turn it on and off to start the game. The students name the pictures or in the case of the abstract items, they should look at the word and mime it. In both cases, first, the students should spell the word, make a sentence with that word and ask a question about it of his classmates, and if they cannot answer, his group will get a point. At the end of the game, he should pronounce the word correctly in order to get the full point.

There are some lights on each of these games which attract students and can be used as a tool for specifying times for each game.

3.3.4. Conventional institute games

There are some famous conventional games, which are used in different institutes.

3.3.4.1. Memory:

The teacher presents a word together with its definition, and then he asks for repetition, asks questions, and, at last, writes the word on the board and asks the students to make a sentence. After that, he shows some pictures on cards with their definitions on other cards and asks the students randomly to come to the board and match them. Whenever the teacher wants to review what have been taught he should prepare forty cards on half of which he writes some words and on the other half, he writes the synonyms and short definitions of those words. One student from each group plays this game. Each of them face twenty cards which they should find the correct match for. In this game, the challenge is based on the mind power to remember and speed. Everyone who can find four cards is the winner.

3.3.4.2. Hot seats:

The teacher divides the class into two groups. One student from each group sits in front of them in the way that his or her back is to the board. The teacher writes two different words on the board, and their group members should act out that word, but they cannot say anything. The group which gets three points will win the game.

3.3.4.3. Hangman:

The teacher starts presenting the word orally. After repetition and asking questions of the students, he asks the students to guess the written form of the word based on its sounds. If they guess it correctly, he writes it on the board. Otherwise he draws one part of a hanged man on the board. This game continues until the students complete the whole word or the picture becomes complete. In the case of reviewing, the teacher thinks of a word and writes a row of dashes, which is based on the number of the letters of the actual word. There is an important rule in this game according to which a teacher cannot use some words, including proper nouns such as names, places, and brands. If the students say the correct letter, he must write it instead of one of the dashes; otherwise, the teacher draws an element of a hanged man. The game is finished whenever they can guess or the picture is completed. In this game, both groups participate simultaneously.

3.3.4.4. Erase a word:

After teaching the words in the unit, the teacher writes them on the board and asks the students randomly to read them aloud. If they say it correctly all the class members clap for them. Whenever the teacher wants to review the words, he should write two lists of the words in the unit on the board. Then

he makes two groups. Each team forms a line leading to the board. The first person reads the word, and if it is correct, he erases it and names another word, but if he is wrong, the student moves to the back of his or her team's line. The first team which erases all the words is the winner.

3.4. Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

For the starting point, QPT was given to 60 participants to choose the beginner-level learners. The learners who got 0 to 15 were chosen to participate in the current study. Then the selected participants were divided into two groups. A teacher-made 20-item pretest of vocabulary was administered to both groups before teaching vocabulary. Since none of the participants got more than five on the pretest, no one was excluded on the pretest.

The first group was taught the new vocabulary by four teacher-made games:

- a. Magic box
- b. Angry circles
- c. Chance game
- d. Guess box

The second group received the same words, but with four conventional institute games:

- a. Hangman
- b. Hot seats
- c. Erase a word
- d. Memory

The vocabulary instruction was presented twice a week in 4 sessions. Each class session was 90 minutes, but 20 minutes of each session were allocated to teaching vocabulary. During each session, the students were presented with 5 new words. The course material was the coursebook *Up and Away in English*. Finally, all the participants took an immediate posttest and, after three weeks, a delayed posttest, which were parallel to the pretest.

To analyze the data, SPSS was used to run t-tests between the groups and repeated measures ANOVAs within the groups. Also, the reliability measures of the tests were established.

4. Results and Discussion

Before starting the treatments, QPT was employed to establish the homogeneity of the participants in the terms of language proficiency. It consisted of two parts: vocabulary and structure. Initially, 60 male and female students participated in the study. After the administration of QPT, 40 beginning students whose scores were between 0 and 15 were selected. Then they were randomly classified into two groups. A third group was chosen to act as a sample for establishing the reliability of our tests. All the tests were further modified and validated and were proved reliable.

The descriptive statistics of QPT are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the proficiency scores

Group	N	Mean	SD
Control	20	3.20	1.473

Experimental	20	3.70	1.031
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Table 1 indicates that the groups were at the same level.

Before the treatments started, a vocabulary pretest was given to the participants to make sure that the groups were initially equal regarding their vocabulary knowledge. The results from the pretest appear below in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the pretest scores

Group	N	Mean	SD
Control	20	3.00	.686
Experimental	20	2.90	1.447

As it can be seen from Table 2, the mean scores of the control group and experimental group were 3 and 2.90, respectively, which seem to be very close to each other.

The results of the immediate posttest, after the treatment, appear in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the immediate posttest scores

Group	N	Mean	SD
Control	20	12.35	2.033
Experimental	20	17.00	1.556

As it can be seen from Table 3, the mean scores of the control group and experimental group are 12.35, and 17, respectively, and the experimental group seems to have outperformed the control group.

Also, the results of the delayed posttest appear in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the delayed posttest scores

Group	N	Mean	SD
Control	20	12.75	2.221
Experimental	20	18.25	1.682

As it can be seen from Table 4, the mean scores of the control group and experimental group are 12.75 and 18.25, respectively, and once more, the experimental group seems to have outperformed the control group.

In order to find out whether the differences between the two groups on the different tests were significant, four t-test analyses were run. Table 5 summarizes the results of these analyses.

Table 5. T-tests between the scores of the two groups on all the tests

Group	<i>t</i> value	N	<i>p</i> level
QPT	-1.244	38	0.221
Pretest	0.201	38	0.842
Immediate posttest	-8.122	38	0.000
Delayed posttest	-8.828	38	0.000

The *p* levels of the immediate posttest and delayed posttest were smaller than 0.05, which means that the differences were significant. However, the groups were not significantly different on the homogeneity test and pretest.

Therefore, both null hypotheses were rejected and the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on both the immediate and delayed posttests. In other words, the teacher-made games were more effective than the conventional games for both the acquisition and retention of the new vocabulary.

We also needed to run within-group analyses to find out which group(s) had improved more since the pretest and retained that learning until the delayed posttest. The results of repeated measures ANOVAs showed that both groups improved from the pretest to the posttest and managed to retain that learning until the delayed posttest. However, Scheffe post-hoc tests results revealed that there was no significant difference between the immediate and delayed posttests of the control group, while there was a significant difference between the two posttests of the experimental group in favor of the delayed posttest. This could have been due to some learning between the immediate and delayed posttests because of the attractiveness of the teacher-made tests and the repetition of those games by the students themselves. But some informal interviews with the participants after the study revealed that there was no repetition and the students claimed that this was the effect of the teacher-made games that helped them remember the words later when they met them again in the delayed posttest. Thus, the teacher-made games were more effective than the conventional games in both the acquisition and retention of the new vocabulary.

This study was an attempt to shed more light on the field of vocabulary learning and teaching. This result is in line with the results of some other studies. For example, according to Schmitt (2000), explicit vocabulary teaching strategy is recommended for learners.

Thornbury (2002) pointed out that when a teacher presents new vocabulary to students, they will turn to their passive vocabulary knowledge, and learners may forget or cannot recognize where to use them correctly. It can be resolved just through some activities, which involve a learner. So, in this case, the passive knowledge will turn into an active one because they are using them in different ways. He also mentioned that there are lots of activities, which can transfer words from learners' short-term memory to the long-term one, but based on the findings of this research not all the games can be useful to turn words from active to passive. They should be carefully selected based on the course and students' knowledge. Some games can turn a quiet class to a place that cannot be controlled by the teacher.

Based on Haynes (2010), vocabulary games can solve any problems that a student may face during learning, because not only do they make the situation comfortable, full of fun, but also, they help them to remember the vocabulary items faster and better. According to the result of the research some games cannot solve all students' problems which they may face during learning since they are made to be amusing rather than educational and teachers would use them to pass the extra time and keep students busy, but because teacher-made games are in congruence with the course, they have been designed for education and not just for passing time.

Linse (2006) pointed out that vocabulary knowledge, greatly affects the language ability of the learners. This result validates the theory that information processing can be more effective if it engages students. According to Foreman (2003), using games in the class is an excellent idea for students to practice new vocabulary since they have time to practice them without the risk of failure, there is the element of an information gap between teammates, and it would engage every one of the students and they are responsible for the point. In a game, two humans' skills would combine together, which are physical and mental powers. Playing games would teach them how to consider the alternatives. It makes a class a different place in which learning is the central point. Students will share their information about vocabulary through communication, but some introverted students may face problems since they are too shy to handle the pressure of games stress, so the game should not be too challenging for them to answer.

A teacher must keep in mind that kids cannot sit silently in the class without moving around. They are full of energy, so if teachers push them too hard to do these things, it would result in their inhibition. Therefore, a teacher should recognize this and use good activities in view of children's need for fun and for turning the time of learning in a class to an amusing time.

Fullagar, Knight, and Sovern (2013) stated that when students are engaged in complex games instead of being engaged in learning explicitly and face vocabulary superficially they see more connections, become more interested and also pay more attention.

Cornillie, Igor, Stefan, Paulussen, and Desmet (2011) stated that it is true that games would help students in different ways, but this does not mean all types of games are applicable in improving second language learners' vocabulary. A game should target two main goals: it should amuse learners and at the same time provide them with information to learn. According to Davidson (2008), serious games and game-based learning are different from entertaining games. While they are enjoyable, they have a design for a more primary purpose other than entertainment. They also mentioned that educational games focus on educating. They have two parts which are blended together; one of them is educational purposes and the other one is enjoyment. Since in teacher-made games, teachers are the creators of the game, they can easily add some parts to the games and make them interesting. Also, teachers can test those games in different classes and reassemble them, but conventional games cannot be reassembled and changed; they have fixed rules and teachers should obey them to reach their goals.

Teacher-made games can be different; for example, some of them can be competitive in nature and challenge students' mind. The rest can be like a map that allows learners to work with each other in order to solve a problem and in this kind of games, there is not any winner or loser. Based on MacKenty (2006), the act of problem solving makes a game exciting and if a game is based on risk or failure, it will not attract all students. Games give students the courage to engage in problem-solving. But based on the findings of this research, some conventional games do not attract students and do not even want to attend the games.

Teachers must consider when to use games, which of them are useful and how to use them appropriately in order to meet both students' needs and lesson objectives. For example, Hangman which is a well-known game is based on the foreign culture in which a man is hanged when he is guilty of crimes and they relate this issue to the loser of a game, but nowadays teachers are using them in their classes without paying attention to students' feelings. They indirectly give a message to learners that committing a

suicide is as easy as hanging a man on the board. This issue can happen because teachers are using games which are not based on students' culture, but this problem does not happen in teacher-made games since a teacher will design a game which is usual for their society.

Some teachers may neglect the usefulness of such games, because they have used conventional games and not teacher-made games and assume that the output of such games are in a low level and it is not worth the time wasted for playing games. Ge (2012) stated that choosing and using an educational game is a very hard work for teachers. He should keep in his mind that some issues like the number of students, proficiency, cultural context, timing, and learning topic can influence the learners. Games help a teacher to create contexts according to the students' level which make the language useful and meaningful. Liao and Chen (2012) stated that games are like building blocks which can boost learners' lexical growth and retention. The most important part in learning a language is the memorization of target language words. However, the problem is that these words might not be correctly recalled over a long period of time. Parle et al. (2006) stated that this is related to the human mind in which everyday words can be easily remembered but others not. The result of this study showed that teacher-made games have a great effect on students' retention and faster recall of words. They motivate students to attend the game and make sure that they remember the words since they learn them in amusing ways.

Teacher-made games can be adjusted to students' knowledge and the teacher can modify the game to reach a specific goal based on each culture. According to Wolfe (2001), young learners are under pressure in a strict situation like class, but if a teacher tries to use a game which can bring down the anxiety it can affect their learning, because when they are under stress, their mind cannot store anything. If they attend a class the teaching of which is based on games, they will participate in the groups without any kind of stress. When a teacher uses hand-made games he will indirectly show his attitude toward teaching the course and the love of his students. But conventional games do not convey this meaning since they are bound to the course.

Teachers, too, have a vital role in classes. They can make the learning situation an exciting place for a learner by using the appropriate games since they can reduce anxiety, which is an obstacle for kids' learning. Because they fear making mistakes, learners will not try to produce any new sentences.

Games will not just benefit students, but they have some advantages for teachers too, which can be listed below.

1. In the class: The teacher can use it for teaching, reviewing, assessing students and reducing anxiety.
2. After the class: Students can go home and study more in order to win the games next time, and the instructor can be sure that her students will not forget to study.
3. At the end of the year: A teacher can be relaxed about the amount of vocabulary which has been learned by the students and that is for using games because they make learning a stable process.

During the teaching process a lot of words are taught by the teacher and games can help students to transfer them from their short-term memory to long-term memory and recall them whenever needed.

5. Conclusion

The present study investigated two hypotheses which read "There is no statistically significant difference between the effects of teacher-made games and conventional games on Iranian children's vocabulary learning" and "There is no statistically significant difference between the effects of teacher-made games and conventional games on Iranian children's vocabulary retention". The results rejected the hypotheses.

Teachers need to seek for effective methods in order to teach vocabulary to their students, so they can use the language more communicatively. Methods such as teacher-made games are not so famous in order to

teach vocabulary. Teachers use these kinds of games for just having fun in the class, but the results of this study showed that games can help the teachers to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful.

It can be concluded from the results of this study that teacher-made games have positive effects on the learning process. Using such games in the classroom results in higher motivation and facilitates the learning process of children and their cognitive achievement. The learning process becomes much more pleasant and by amusing students in such games, the anxiety involved in the learning process is extremely reduced. Teachers can use games as a tool to obsess students' mind and to cause sparks in their mind.

It was seen that the experimental group learned the vocabulary items more effectively and efficiently. They were very eager to attend the teacher-made games since they were close to their culture and they could understand them better. This shows that teachers should spend more time for creating games, because they can engage students, and learners will recall the answers of activities whenever they remember the games. In other words, they will have a memory of that course, but not just simply a memorization of that lesson.

In conclusion, EFL teachers should teach vocabulary by using different methods including teacher-made games instead of focusing on conventional games. For instance, teachers can design games based on their own cultures and environments so that students will find them useful to learn. Using just conventional games makes students bored of learning, but since teacher-made games are new they will attract their interest. Students cannot predict the results of them, and teachers can change them whenever they want. Because these games are teacher-made, they have flexible roles and are easy to manage in a class.

6. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

As in all classroom studies, there are obvious limitations in this study. One limitation is the length of the treatment sessions which was very short (approximately 20 minutes for each treatment session). It is possible that with longer treatment sessions, the participants will benefit more. Also, the researchers tested only one proficiency level of learners, namely beginning level students.

Finally, this study was restricted to two cities in Iran, namely Fouman and Rasht, and only focused on language learners who were 8 to 11 years old who had enrolled at Iran Language Institute, so the results of this research cannot be generalized to all kid language learners.

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Appendix A

Vocabulary Pretest

1. He was sad because his pants'was old.
a) shirt b) socks c) belt d) hat
2. He makes furniture. He need a/an.....to make a chair.
A) necklace b) eraser c) bracelet d) nail
3. He was sad because he lost his sister's gold.....which was/were very old.
a) teacher b) tummy c) bracelet d) grand father
4. She was wearing a silver....., but she didn't like it.
a) pen 2) gift 3) marble 4) necklace
5. May's mother is wearing a redin the party.
a) blouse b)rice c) cup d) marker
6. Ali's father said, "put on youror you will catch cold."
a) watch b) sweater c) necklace d) bracelet
7. He can't touch mybecause he is short.
a) grandfather b) house c) shoulders d) baby sister
8. There was a monster behind the tree. He was thin, but after eating the food, his.....was very big.
a) tummy b) shirt 3) pail 4) baby
9. He was walking in the jungle suddenly a thorn went in her.....
a) feel b) tail c) foot d) tooth
10. My friend and I are building a pet dog`s house. We need a..... to finish our work.
a) head b) hammer c) violin d) skirt
11. He is touching the sheep with his The sheep feels like cotton candy.
a) mouth b) tongue c) kick d) fingers
12. Ali is kicking the ball with his new.....and Nima will catch it.
a) legs b) sneakers c) fingers d) hands
13. May is hungry. She smells popcorn with herand eats it with her mouth.
a) hands b) eyes c) nose d) fingers
14. He is a naughty boy. He always tastes cakes with hisand fingers.
a) tongue b) toes c) eyes d) nose
15. The car's tires went on her..... and she screamed.
a) nose b) toes c) mouth d) eyes
16. There is a bird on the tree and Jimmy.....it.
a) sees b) tastes c) read d) drink
17. He can'tthe bird because his ears are old.
a) run b) draw c) taste d) hear
18. On December 5, he goes to the park andthe cold winds on his face.
a) sees b) feels c) hears d) tastes
19. It is 12:15 in the afternoon. Hethe food and he gets hungry.
a) drink b) smells c) hears d) pushes
20. Ali is a chef and hethe food to add a little salt.
a) play b) pop c) ride d) tastes

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COOPERATIVE GAMES AND COMPETITIVE GAMES IN LEARNING NEW VOCABULARY LEARNING OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

THE AIMS OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH IS TO INVESTIGATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORD GAMES SUCH AS COOPERATIVE AND COMPETITIVE GAMES IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING AND WHETHER GENDER HAS ANY EFFECT ON LEARNING NEW VOCABULARIES OR NOT. TO THIS END, 60 INTERMEDIATE EFL MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS, WHO WERE STUDYING AT ZABANSARA INSTITUTE IN BUSHEHR WERE CHOSEN. THE STUDENTS AGED BETWEEN 13-16 YEARS OLD. THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS. ONE WAS THE CONTROL GROUP AND THE OTHERS WERE THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS. SINCE THE MAJOR AIM OF THIS STUDY WAS TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF COOPERATIVE AND COMPETITIVE GAMES ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE, THE RESEARCHER SELECTED 5 UNITS OF OXFORD WORD SKILL BY GRAIN AND REDMAN (2010). FIVE SESSIONS WERE DEDICATED TO TEACHING NEW VOCABULARIES. THE STUDENTS IN COMPETITIVE GROUP LEARNED THE WORDS USING WORD DEFINITION GAMES AND THE STUDENTS IN COOPERATIVE GROUP LEARNED THE VOCABULARIES USING MATCH DEFINITION GAMES IN GROUP OF 5. TO COLLECT THE DATA, A PRETEST AND POSTTEST WERE USED. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY REVEALED THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COMPETITIVE AND COOPERATIVE AND CONTROL GROUPS IN PRE AND POSTTEST WERE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT. THE RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST SHOWED THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COOPERATIVE AND COMPETITIVE GROUPS IN PRE AND POSTTEST WAS ALSO SIGNIFICANT. THE RESULTS REVEALED THAT COOPERATIVE GAMES FACILITATED LEARNING VOCABULARY MORE THAN THE COMPETITIVE ONE. THE STUDY HAS ANOTHER RESULT AND THAT WAS; GENDER HAD NO EFFECT ON LEARNING NEW VOCABULARIES.

KEY WORDS: COMPETITIVE GAMES, COOPERATIVE GAMES, GENDER, DEFINITION GAMES, MATCH- UP GAMES

INTRODUCTION

"Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write" (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 255). For a long time, an important challenge for language teachers was to make EFL classes more interesting. Teachers know that a large

number of learners are failing to attend to the lesson. Since learning vocabulary seems to be difficult to learn and they are boring for many learners. In order to facilitate learning vocabulary using games can be effective. Evidences from research works in Iran indicated that very little research efforts had been directed at cooperative and competitive learning. The most teachers are not sensitized on the advantages of the use of cooperative and competitive learning. Many researchers (e.g. Derakhshan& Khatir, 2012) found that students learned new words in cooperative and competitive groups are better than in traditional methods. However, research on the prevalence of cooperative learning and competitive learning in EFL classrooms show that these strategy are underused. In other words, cooperative and Yu competitive learning do not have the place they deserve in EFL education. In order to improve vocabulary language learning, this paper has some implications for students and teachers to use cooperative and competitive games. It is supposed that teachers should choose methods and strategies that engage their students in a creative language use. Using games are rarely used to teach and learn vocabulary. However, they can help the teachers to create contexts in which the language is effective and meaningful the aim of the current study is to investigate and compare two types of word games (cooperative versus competitive games) that may influence as effective tools for learning new words and see which one as a significant superiority in learning vocabulary.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of games is rather a new issue in teaching English as a second and foreign language field that may enhance the acquisition of vocabulary and attitudes of the learners. Games are considered a powerful educational tool for teaching and learning vocabulary (Godwin-Jones, 2014).

.Many reserchers believe that games as a good tool can promote learners to actively participate in learning activities (Baid & Lambert, 2010; Kirikkaya, İŞERİ, & Vurkaya, 2010;).In addition, game-based learning approach might provide a good chance to stimulate children's abstract thinking during the process of cognitive development, and further foster their higher order thinking ability (Carbonaro, Szafron, Cutumisu, & Schaeffer, 2010). According Huyen and Nga (2003) games bring in relaxation and fun for students, thus help them learn and retain new words more easily. They usually involve friendly competition and they keep learners interested and vocabulary games bring real word context into the classroom, and enhance students' use of English in a flexible, communicative way. Kebritchi (2010) poses the concern that games are becoming such innovative learning tools that teachers may conclude that they don't need to lecture, and instead they may "rely on the game and use it as a teaching replacement and not as a supplement" (p. 263).

Games can direct effectively young learners' energy into language learning because young learners prefer to be physically active, also, they are imaginative and creative and learn subconsciously (Ashraf, Ghanei Motlagh& Salami, 2014). Nguyen and Khuat (2003) believe that in an interesting and communicative class learners can learn 80 percent of what they exposed to do, students prefer to learn language in a relaxed environment such as vocabulary games.

Using games can capture the learners' attention, motivate them and smoothes their learning. A good and energetic teacher can encourage the creativity and imagination of the learners by using games because they are fun and children like to play them, instead of making students do a lot of homework in a threatening environment after class and repeating after the teacher all the time aimlessly (Schmitt, 2008).

A major controversy in the world of education is over using games in English language classrooms. Naderi (2002) investigated the effect of 20 language games on English learning improvement. The results of the study indicated the effectiveness of games in learning English in middle schools. Marzano and Brown (2007) engaged in over 60 studies conducted in order to investigate the effect of using games in the classroom students' accomplishment. The results of the study indicated a 20 percentile increase in

students' achievement. Liu, Horton, Kang, Kimmons, and Lee (2013) support that games are beneficial to learning, and claim that you should not make a game too hard. In their research they found that middle school students learn better in playful environments. Therefore, it is necessary to put the element of fun in the game. Alemi (2010) investigated the role of using word games in expanding the learner's vocabulary. She used five word games, named (Twenty Questions, Charades, Definition Game's, passwords, and Crossword puzzles. The results of the study confirmed that games had a positive effect on expanding learners' vocabulary benefits and value of communicative game activities in the teaching of English language. Jafari, sprrott, Golpayegani (2013) conducted a study to explore the effect of teaching vocabulary items through instructional games. Considering that the participants in study were successful in instructional games approaches to vocabulary instruction, one could conclude that it is best for the teachers to use these approaches in the classroom contexts. Dolati and Mikaili (2011) examined the effects of instructional games on facilitating of students' vocabulary learning. The purpose of their study was to gain information about the role of the games in the level of vocabulary learning among students. The participants of their study were 70 female students in the age of 12-13 years old which were selected from one of the Iranian primary schools in Iran. To conduct this study they use pretest and posttest. By analyzing the pre-test and post- test they found that applying games has the important role in teaching vocabularies to the language learners, they also found that game has its potential as an educational tool for literary training; and can motivate and engage learners especially the quiet and passive ones in the whole learning process (p.1218). In a similar line of inquiry, KalayCioglu (2011) investigated the effectiveness of the educational games on the preschool- level English vocabulary learning of four years old. The results indicated that there was no significant gender effect was found for both experimental and control groups in learning English vocabulary. Rahmawati (2012) used snake path games which provides pictorial cards, cue cards, and repetitive game tasks in order to help students memorize vocabulary easier as well as understand the words and texts better. As the result, she concluded that there was significant difference on students achievement in the post test. The experiment group had better achievement on vocabulary test than the control group. Sari (2012) reported how study on developing snake and ladder game board for the fifth grades of elementary school in Malang. Based on tryout process, she noticed the majority students interested in playing games that she developed. She found that using the games, students learn to have cooperative work since they should work in group. Aslanabadi and Rasouli (2013) conducted a study on the effect of games on improvement of Iranian EFL vocabulary knowledge in kindergartens. The aim of their study was to find a way to help young EFL learners fix the novel vocabulary in their minds. The study was conducted at two kindergartens. They divided the students into the experimental and control group. The experimental group gives an online language teaching game and the control group gives regular teaching. The result of their study revealed that games not only bring fun for learners to the class, but they also motivate learners and improve their confidence. Efendi (2013) conducted a study on the use of games to improve vocabulary mastery. The aim of his research was to describing the way of "got it game" and "back to the board game" in improving vocabulary mastery of the seventh grade students. The findings of the study showed that "the use of "Got It Game" and "Back to the Board Game" with the topics vocabulary of daily English communication, people's occupation, and personal care and appearance can improve students' vocabulary mastery achievement" (p.78). Another study that focused on both cooperative and competitive word games concluded that the cooperative word game section was relaxed and encouraging to many of the students, but that the competitive game section of the study heightened student understanding of the second language (Fotovatnia & Namjoo, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of the study were 60 intermediate EFL male and female students, who were studying at Zabansara institute in Bushehr. The students aged between 13-16 years old. They were divided into the experimental and control groups. All these students passed 3 levels of Four Corners books. To capture

their language proficiency, the researcher first distributed *Oxford Language Test* and decided to select students whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and below the mean.

Instruments

Different types of instruments were used in this study like Oxford Placement Test, pre and posttests.

Oxford Placement Test (OPT):

The test developed by Oxford University was used to determine participants' level of language proficiency. It consists of 60 multiple-choice items. According to this test, participants were divided into 3 groups of low, middle and high regarding their language proficiency. Those candidates whose scores are from 0-29 are regarded as the low group, 30-47 as the middle group (lower and upper intermediates) and advanced students are in high group with scores from 48-60.

Pre-test and Post-test

The second instrument was pretest and posttest. The pretest and posttest had two parts namely A and B. In the part A the participants were asked to write the definition of the words. This part contained 10 words. The reliability of the scoring rubrics was assessed by Cronbach's alpha ($r=0.87$) which shows acceptable consistency of reliability.

Teaching Material

Since the major aim of this study was to investigate the effect of comparative and competitive games on students' vocabulary, the researcher selected 5 units (65, 66, 67, 68, 69) of *oxford word skill* by Grain and Redman (2010). The book contains 80 units of vocabulary presentation and practice. Units are between one and three pages long. Depending on the topic, new vocabulary is presented in manageable quantities for learners, with practice exercises following immediately. The units are grouped together thematically in modules of four to nine units. At the end of each module there are further practice exercises in the review units, so that the learners can revise and test themselves on the vocabulary learners.

Procedure

In order to collect the data, the following steps were administered which are described in details:

First phase

At first, Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was given to students for the purpose of homogenizing the participants and those students whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were elected from the study.

Second phase

Then, the participants were given a teacher-made test. The students should have been defined 10 words in the first part of the study and make suitable sentences in the second part of the test in forty five minutes. Two raters were asked to score the participants' answers. Both of them were experienced English teachers with at least 12 years of experience in teaching English and with expertise in teaching *oxford word skill*. The calculated inter-rater reliability was $r=0.82$.

Third phase

In the next phase, which was the experimental part of this study, the participants were divided into three equal groups containing both male and female students namely control and experimental groups. In groups vocabulary was taught based on *oxford word skill* book. The reason why the researcher selected this book as the teaching material was that it suits the participants' level of proficiency. In addition, this

book was widely taught for academic purposes and was regarded as one of the main books for teaching vocabulary to the students of English. Two groups were taught new vocabularies with the same condition. Five sessions were dedicated to new vocabulary. In each session, the following steps were taken: (a) students studied the presentation for 5 minutes, (b) teacher answered any queries the students may have about the items, and provided a pronunciation model of the items for his students to repeat (c) students did the first exercise, which could check for themselves using answer key (d) when they had completed the written exercises, students in competitive group reviewed the words using word definition game. The teacher gave two students 5 cards and asked them to say the definitions of the words. Each student who was able to define more words was winner. The students in cooperative group reviewed the vocabularies using match-up games in group of 5.

Each of the above mentioned groups received 10 new words every session. Each week both control and experimental groups attended their regular English class, two times a week and 90 minutes each session the experimental groups attended oxford word skill This class was held once a week and the time of each session was 90 minutes.

Fourth Phase

At the end of the experiment the post-test was be run and again another version of vocabulary test was given to the students to answer. Their answers were evaluated and the results were compared to those of pre-test. Data collected from pre and posttest was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics was used to represent to what degree the students have increased their abilities from pre-test to post-test by calculating mean and standard deviation. After calculating descriptive statistics, the researcher analyzed the inferential statistics. To this end, *t-test* , ANCOVA and MANOVA which were run to show whether the treatment was effective and the students' scores were significantly changed or not.

RESULTS

The sample consisted of 60 students divided into Competitive, Cooperative and control groups. Each group includes 10 male and 10 female students.

Table 1 presents statistics for vocabulary scores of Competitive, Cooperative and control groups in pre-test and post-test.

Table 1. Statistics for Vocabulary Scores in Different Groups

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_test	Competitive	20	7.35	3.631	0.236	0.653	2	15
	Cooperative	20	8.10	3.401	-0.831	0.226	3	15
	Control	20	7.95	2.235	-0.921	0.509	5	12
	Total	60	7.80	3.113	-0.215	0.399	2	15
Post_test	Competitive	20	14.25	1.333	-1.046	-0.065	12	16
	Cooperative	20	17.15	1.531	-0.984	0.014	15	20
	Control	20	7.95	2.438	-1.269	0.306	5	12

Total	60	13.12	4.271	-0.783	-0.549	5	20
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To illustrate results of table 1 consider the Pre-test in the Competitive group. The mean was 7.35 out 20 with standard deviation 3.631, ranged between 2 and 15. The Kurtosis and Skewness were 0.236 and 0.653, respectively, in the accepted range (between -1 and 1).

Only for Competitive and control groups in Post-test, Kurtosis violates the range -1 and 1. In this case there might be some deviation from normal distribution. To ensure about normality of data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test will be performed in the next section.

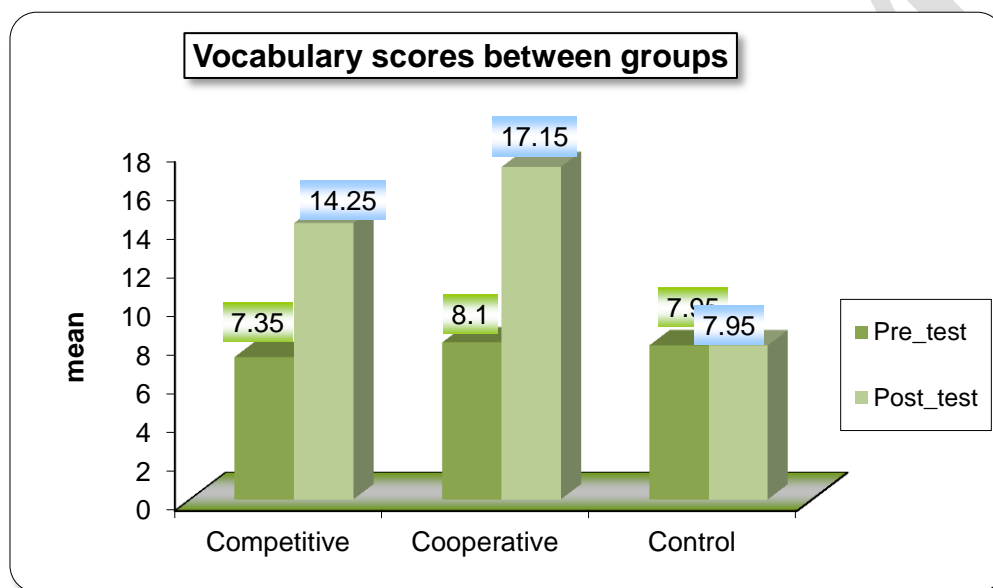


Fig. 1. Comparison of means between groups

Figure.1 demonstrates means of vocabulary scores in Competitive, Cooperative and control groups. It shows that Pre-test means in three groups were close to each others, while for the Post-test, Cooperative group had the greatest mean and the control group had the lowest mean.

Table 2. Statistics for Vocabulary Scores in Different Groups

Variable	Group	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_test	Competitive	Male	10	8.10	3.479	0.455	0.549	3	15
		Female	10	6.60	3.806	1.701	1.050	2	15
	Cooperative	Male	10	8.00	3.162	-0.895	0.000	3	13

Post_test	Control	Female	10	8.20	3.795	-0.791	0.356	3	15
		Male	10	7.20	1.989	3.525	1.669	5	12
		Female	10	8.70	2.312	-1.188	-0.286	5	12
		Male	30	7.77	2.873	0.110	0.578	3	15
		Female	30	7.83	3.384	-0.365	0.291	2	15
		Total							
	Competitive	Male	10	14.60	1.174	-1.457	-0.041	13	16
		Female	10	13.90	1.449	-0.987	0.214	12	16
		Male	10	17.40	1.430	-1.163	-0.319	15	19
		Female	10	16.90	1.663	-0.447	0.377	15	20
		Male	10	7.10	2.234	1.379	1.191	5	12
		Female	10	8.80	2.440	-1.338	-0.399	5	12
	Total	Male	30	13.03	4.709	-1.075	-0.577	5	19
		Female	30	13.20	3.863	-0.371	-0.486	5	20

In this section we study research hypotheses by t-independent, ANOVA and ANCOVA statistical tests. These tests require the normal distribution for variables. Thus firstly, we investigate the normality of the variables distribution by Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality for WTC and EI Components

Groups	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Z	Sig.	Z	Sig.
Competitive	0.558	0.915	0.780	0.577
Cooperative	0.756	0.618	0.718	0.681
Control	0.736	0.651	0.841	0.479

Male	0.759	0.612	0.993	0.277
Female	0.541	0.932	0.632	0.820

The above table shows results for Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. Since sig. -values were greater than 0.05 (Sig.>0.05) for all variables (scores in pre- and post-test) and in all groups (control, experimental, male and female), the statistics were not significant which means that the distributions were normal.

RQ1: Is there any difference between cooperative games and competitive games in learning new vocabulary items?

To investigate this research question, the homogeneity of vocabulary scores between three groups in pre-test was studied by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) test as presented in table 4.4.

Table 4 The ANOVA test for Comparing Pre-test between Different Groups

Statistics Variables	Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.300	2	3.150	0.318	0.729
Within Groups	565.300	57	9.918		
Total	571.600	59			

The results of ANOVA test in the above table indicated that the vocabulary scores was not significantly different between groups in the pre-test ($p=0.729>0.05$). This indicated that control and experimental groups' scores were statistically the same in the pre-test.

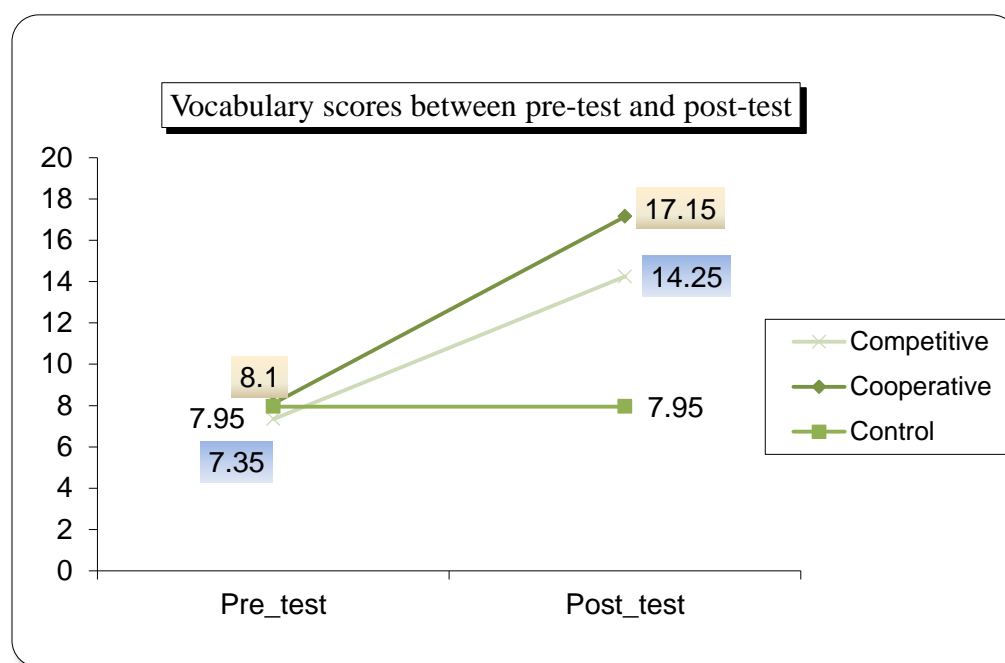


Fig 3. Mean scores of groups in pre- and post-test

The above diagram shows that three groups were the same in pre-test, but dramatically differed in the post-test.

To find the effect of different strategies in groups on improving scores, instead of a simple comparison between groups in the post-test, the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used as reported in Table 5. In ANCOVA we incorporated individual differences which were inevitable, by including the pre-test scores as covariate variable in the ANCOVA where comparison of post-test between two groups can be done including the modifying the role of pre-test.

Table 5. The ANCOVA for the Effect of Different Strategies on Vocabulary Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pre-test	24.174	1	24.174	8.103	0.006
group	885.809	2	442.905	148.451	0.000
Error	167.076	56	2.983		
Total	11399.000	60			

The results of ANCOVA presented in table 5 and can be interpreted like an ANOVA result. In an ANOVA table, dependent variable is compared between different groups. In contrast, in the above ANCOVA table, two important results were reported. Firstly it showed that there was a significant (Sig.

<0.01) linear relationship between the pre-test and the post-test scores. Thus it was legitimate to consider the pre-test as a moderator variable in the analysis to incorporate individual differences existed before training. The second result was the main effect of the group which was significant on scores in the post-test after controlling for the effect of the pre-test ($F=148.451$, $df=2$, 56 , $Sig<0.001$). This implies that scores differed significantly between three groups (controlling for the pre-test effect).

Table 6. Adjusted Means for Comparison of Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Competitive	14.343	0.388	13.567	15.120
Cooperative	17.088	0.387	16.313	17.863
Control	7.919	0.386	7.145	8.693

As seen in table 6, the confidence intervals indicated that there was no overlap between confidence intervals of groups.

This means that three groups were significantly different. The cooperative group had the greatest score mean, the competitive group was in the second rank and the control group had the lowest score mean.

It is worth mentioning that adjusted means are slightly different with means reported in table 1. The concept of adjusted mean comes from the modification which is done for including the pre-test as a covariate variable in the ANCOVA. In other words, in the ANCOVA means get modified by the effect of pre-test and then compared as given in table 6.

Consequently, it can be inferred from the analysis that vocabulary scores were increased by the cooperative games more than the competitive and both were greater than the control group.

Discussion

the purpose of this study is to promote a safe, positive, relaxed, stress-free atmosphere, student-centered learning environment rather than teacher-centered learning, meaningful learning rather than rote learning and use of innovative strategies instead of traditional method through the cooperative and competitive word games and to investigate whether the using different types of word games such as cooperative and competitive games make progress in English vocabulary. According to the results, this part concludes the study with a restatement of the research question and its response.

Research Question:

Is there any difference between cooperative games and competitive games in learning new vocabulary items?

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether there was any difference between cooperative and competitive games in learning new vocabulary items or not. The finding clearly suggest that there was. The students who learned new words using cooperative games outperformed those who learned new vocabularies using competitive games on the posttest. They showed particular strengths in the posttest, the results suggested that cooperative games help the students to learn new words more successfully.

Cooperative vocabulary games seemed to improve achievement. Both cooperative and competitive games improve learning new words but the games which were played through cooperation were more effective. These kinds of games create cooperative learning environment, so the participants had an opportunity to work together. The results of the study showed that students in the cooperative group even those who were shy were able to participate in vocabulary games eagerly rather than those who worked competitively.

Sari (2012) claimed that besides the games can be used for teaching vocabulary, it was also a good media to teach the moral value since snake and ladder games represented the fortunate and unfortunate events in life.

Wang (2011) believes that using games may promote children's motivation, vocabulary acquisition, and reduce their anxiety from peer pressure.

Bradley (2010) states that games engage all students in the learning process. When students play games in pairs or groups, they have the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the contributions of others and use team- building skills. He also states that, games engage all students in the learning process. When students play games in group or groups, they have the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the contributions of others and use team- building skills. Some classroom games focus on individuals working to win against all other peers in the class. This type of game works well with students who are highly motivated and competitive.

The results of the present study in line with the results of the studies done in the literature show that to play cooperative games helps the learners to learn new words easily and successfully (e.g.; Bradley, 2010; Fotovatnia & Namjoo, 2013; Sari, 2012).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study suggested that teachers should engage their students in a creative language use. Learning vocabulary through games is one of the effective and interesting ways that can be applied in classrooms. To facilitate learning, teachers should encourage students to make use of games in their learning process. They also need to monitor effectively their students' use of these vocabulary games.

This study investigated the effectiveness of cooperative and competitive games; namely, definition and match-up games in improving the vocabulary learning at intermediate level in Bushehr, Iran. The effect of other types of games on other language learning skills such as speaking or reading can be conducted by interested researchers in this field.

This research has some implications for teachers and students to use competitive and cooperative games in order to improve vocabulary learning. It is suggested that by using vocabulary games, students can use the language more communicatively. According to findings of the study, teachers should engage their students in a creative language use.

This study investigated the effectiveness of cooperative and competitive games in improving the vocabulary learning at intermediate level in Bushehr, Iran. The effect of other types of games, i.e. puzzle was not within the scope of this study, therefore these aspects can be investigated in further researches. Moreover, the effect of cooperative and comparative games on other language learning skills such as speaking or reading was not considered in this study, in this regard, more studies can be conducted by interested researchers in this field.

Future research should attempt to study the effects of this method with students in various levels of education and with different levels of English proficiency to determine the most appropriate levels of the students for the implementation of language vocabulary games. Since the selected participants of the

present study were all intermediate EFL learners, and learners with other language proficiency levels were not considered to take part in this study, future studies of the same kind are recommended to include lower and higher proficiency level students, to investigate the effect of given variables on them. Finally, further studies can enjoy larger pool of subjects if they are to enhance the generalizability of their findings.

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