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Interdisciplinary Studies in English Language Teaching (ISELT), published by the English Department at the University of Mazandaran, Babolsar, Iran, provides a platform for cutting-edge research in English Language Teaching (ELT). The journal focuses on diverse themes such as ELT methodologies, language acquisition, curriculum design, and technology-enhanced learning, as well as applied linguistics, language testing, and teacher professional development, encouraging submissions that adopt various research methods, including empirical studies, theoretical papers, and action research. As a double-blind peer-reviewed and open-access journal, ISELT aims to advance scholarship in areas like bilingualism, multilingual education, and critical perspectives in ELT, welcoming contributions with both local and global relevance. The journal is published semiannually in electronic format, allowing readers to access, distribute, and link to the full texts without needing prior permission. All submissions are checked for similarity using iThenticate to ensure academic integrity.

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Merits and Demerits of the Newly-developed English Textbooks (Vision): High School Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, research in language learning and teaching has highlighted the role of teachers' perceptions about English language teaching and learning in educational administration and materials planning. Recently, there has been a reform in Iranian high school English textbooks, developing new series of course books called "Prospect" and "Vision". Hence, the need for exploring teachers' perceptions about these newly-published textbooks is felt. Thus, the present study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions about these textbooks (Vision series) in Iranian high schools to understand both challenges and difficulties associated with this change and opportunities and advantages of the changed textbooks for teachers teaching them. To this end, a textbook evaluation questionnaire was generated based on the guidelines of Richards (2001) and distributed among 56 high school teachers. Then from the pool of the participants, ten experienced and novice teachers attended the interview. SPSS software was used to analyze the questionnaire data and the interview data was analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed that the majority of the participating teachers approved the curriculum innovation and reform. However, they stated that the experts who were involved in materials development seemed to have ignored teachers' perceptions about the necessity of this reform and their readiness for it. This study, thus, has clear implications that teachers' perspective can be included in curriculum innovation to improve the quality of the educational system.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in educational practices throughout the world, textbook evaluation has gained momentum mainly because textbooks play a vital role in education. In fact, they are considered as the means of conveying the required materials and knowledge between teachers and students. Research has indicated that textbook is an important and dominant medium in the classroom. In fact, the use of textbook can help learners to achieve their learning goals and provide a road map for them to find their way (Su-priadi, 1999; Paul, 2003). Similarly, O' Neil (1990) contends that textbooks are written in accordance with students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically

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for them. In the last decades, textbook evaluation began to construct checklists to analyze the books in detail to assure their usefulness and practicality considering such factors as learners' gender, proficiency level and needs, as well as course objectives and many other contextual factors. According to Ellis (1997) and Tok (2010), textbook evaluation helps teachers to go beyond impressionistic assessments and helps them to acquire useful, accurate, systematic and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material. Thus, the role of textbook evaluation in each curriculum is inevitable.

Moreover, textbook is the main tool a teacher uses in the teaching and learning processes and therefore, teachers' perception towards the textbook they use can have a critical role in this process. Definitely, any reform or innovation in textbooks is done on the basis of a thorough needs analysis in which the existing curriculum has been examined. It is important to remember that due to the nature of needs with a large variety of sources, material developers are required to consult various stakeholders, the most relevant ones being teachers, mainly because they are the only individuals who are in close contact with students' needs and classroom requirements. This indicates a need to understand the various challenges that teachers (experienced and novice ones) deal with as a result of such innovations. Therefore, the aim of this study is to shed light on teachers' perceptions and opinions towards the newly-published textbooks in Iranian high schools. It intends to understand challenges and difficulties associated with this change as well as opportunities and advantages, if any, that the changed textbooks might have for teachers teaching them.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the most significant changes in language learning and teaching over the past few decades has been the role of teachers' beliefs about English language teaching and learning in educational administration and materials planning. Teachers' perceptions and opinions towards changing textbooks are important issues considered in several studies (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Breen, 2001).

Beliefs are significant in every area related to human behavior and learning (Ajzen, 1988, Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Zheng (2009) has noted that significant ideas in comprehending teachers' thought processes, teaching methods, and teacher training can be defined as teachers' beliefs. Li (2012) declared that beliefs have a significant role in language teaching.

Gilakjani and Sabouri (2017) declared that beliefs help persons make sense of the world, affecting how new information is understood, and whether it is accepted or rejected. Teachers' beliefs have a greater effect than the teacher's knowledge on planning their lessons, on the types of decisions they adopt, and on classroom practice (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). According to Gilakjani and Sabouri (2017), Kunt (1997) and Wang (1996), the terms "opinions" and "ideas" or "views" refer to "beliefs." Sixty-four works in the field of foreign and second language teaching have been reviewed by Borg (2003) revealing the differences between different teachers' beliefs or opinions. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2017) stated that teachers' beliefs are very significant in comprehending the difficulty of teaching and learning issues and setting up better education programs. Donaghue (2003) noted that the acceptance of new methods has been taken effect by teachers' beliefs and it is a significant character in teachers' beliefs. Teachers should know their course content via refining it through their belief systems and teacher development programs must provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their beliefs about teachers and teaching (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Johnson, 1994).

Textbooks are commodities, political objects, and cultural representations. Therefore, they are the site and result of struggles and compromise to determine how and by whom they will be

produced, how and by whom their contents will be selected, how and to whom they will be distributed, and how teachers and students will make use of them (Mohammadi & Abdi, 2014; Shannon, 2010). Tomlinson & Masuhara (2018) contend that the textbook has a very significant and a positive role in teaching and learning of English. Regarding the multiple roles of textbooks in ELT, Cunningsworth (1995) and Tok (2010) identified a textbook as a resource in presenting the material, a source for learners to practice and do the activities. Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1994, p.4) declared that “evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning”. Tok (2010) mentioned some benefits of evaluation: “Evaluation plays a key role in education and it is important for the teacher since it can provide valuable information for the future going of classroom practice, the planning of courses and management of learning tasks by students” (p.509). He also added that evaluation is fundamental for the use of instructional materials such as textbooks.

Findings have been reported in ELT, often in relation to the introduction of communicative curriculum (Orafi & Borg, 2009). In Japan, for example, it was found that while policy emphasized the development of students’ communicative ability and attention to all four macro skills, “Japanese teachers’ current orientation toward foreign language learning seemed to be that strong teacher control was desirable and that students needed to memorize, use written mode, and be very accurate” (Gorsuch, 2000, p. 137).

In Taiwan, research also identified a strong tension between new ELT textbooks featuring communicative language teaching activities and established grammar-translation teaching practices (Wang, 2002; Orafi & Borg, 2009). For example, Levitt (2001) argues that “if teachers’ beliefs are incompatible with the philosophy of science education reform, a gap is formed between the intended principles of reform and the implemented principle of reform, potentially inhibiting essential changes” (p.1). Thus, as Breen et al. (2001) claimed, “any innovation in classroom practice from the adoption of a new technique or textbook to the implementation of a new curriculum has to be accommodated within the teacher’s own framework of teaching principles” (p. 472).

In Iranian EFL context, a new curriculum based on communicative principles was introduced in 2012 as well. In comparison to the previous curriculum, a remarkable change has occurred in teaching methodology, materials and in the assumptions about language, teaching and learning. The first official English textbooks for the Iranian context were developed by a team of Iranian and English-speaking English language teaching (ELT) specialists in 1939. The series was developed on the basis of the current trend of the time, i.e., the Direct Method (DM) and Reading Method (RM). Then, there was a shift in general trend in teaching methodology. Foroozandeh (2011) also mentioned that Situational Language Teaching (SLT) encouraged the material developers to edit the textbook based on SLT principles. The post-revolution English textbooks can be divided into three periods, namely 1982_90, 1991_2010 and the new English for school series from 2013 to date. The first revision to the English textbooks after the Islamic Revolution occurred in 1982 and remained effective until 1990. In 1991, Grade 4 was replaced by a new level named Pre-university for students intending to go to university. The English textbook for the Pre-university level was divided into Book one and Book two in a single volume. The English for schools’ series, Prospect and Vision, based on CLT principles, include a students’ book and a workbook. Prospect 1, 2, and 3 have been used in junior high schools since 2013, 2014, and 2015 respectively, and ‘Vision’ series have been used in senior high school since the beginning of the academic year (2016).

With respect to the importance of textbooks in language learning which is used as a road map to the accomplishment of instructional goals, research is still needed to look into ways to provide

insight into textbook effectiveness. The present study aims to investigate Iranian EFL high school teachers' perceptions towards the newly-published high school English textbooks. To this end, the following research questions have been posed and investigated:

1. What are teachers' perceptions towards the newly-published English language textbooks in Iranian high school?
2. What are the benefits and challenges of these textbooks from teachers' viewpoint?

3. METHOD

Participants

The participants of the present study included 56 English teachers from different cities of Iran. The teachers filled out the questionnaire through an internet link. 10 male and female teachers who were between 24 to 50 years old and with different teaching experiences were selected for interview based on purposive sampling, i.e., teachers who could provide the relevant information and were willing to be interviewed were selected. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic features of these participants.

Table 1: Demographics of the participant teachers in the interview

Participants	Age	Gender	Level of education	Years of experience
Experienced teachers:				
P #1	50	Male	PhD in TEFL	27
P #2	40	Male	MA in TEFL	19
P #3	34	Female	MA in TEFL	12
P #4	36	Female	MA in TEFL	11
P #5	34	Female	MA in TEFL	12
Novice teachers:				
P #6	30	Female	MA in TEFL	3
P #7	24	Female	MA in TEFL	3
P #8	26	Female	BA in TEFL	4
P #9	26	Female	BA in TEFL	3
P #10	34	Female	MA in TEFL	4

The instruments used in this study were a questionnaire and a qualitative semi-structured interview. The quantitative textbook evaluation questionnaire used in this study was generated based on Richards' (2001) checklist. It consisted of five parts, each focusing on different aspects of newly published English language texts books and the teachers' beliefs about these aspects. Part A focused on practical con-sideration of the new series books; it also consisted of questions in which participants were asked to state their beliefs on the practical consideration of these books. Part B was related to language content; it consisted of questions in which participants were asked to state their beliefs on the facilities required in the classes during their instruction. Part C focused on aims and approaches. In this part, participants were asked to state their beliefs on the students' different needs and the purposes of the new series books. Part D was related to teacher's books in

which they stated their beliefs on the availability and usefulness of supplementary materials, including teachers' guide book, work book and CD. Part E was related to skills and methodology and participants were asked to state their beliefs about the four main English language skills and their perceptions, opinions and readiness toward the newly-published text-books.

The questionnaire was piloted with 21 participants and the Cronbach alpha reported was (.81).

To get more detailed information from the data and to obtain teachers' viewpoints towards these series of textbooks, a semi-structured interview with questions taken from Grant's (1987) CATALYST checklist was used in this study. Interviews focused on points of interest from questionnaire. The interviewees were given the opportunity to disclose in detail and expand on any topic which seemed to be significant from their experience. The questions also attempted to focus on the difficulties, challenges, benefits and drawbacks of the newly published high school textbooks which they thought were important to share.

Procedure

The initial version of the textbook evaluation questionnaire was first given to 5 experts in the field for its content validity and its applicability to the content of the study. Then, ten teachers were consulted for the clarity of the items. The pre-testing and piloting of the questionnaire was done using the following procedures: the questionnaire was distributed among student-teachers who were doing their MA or PhD in ELT; from a total of 40 questionnaires distributed, 27 were returned. After piloting, necessary changes and modifications were made on the questionnaire.

Then, based on the result of Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the initial questionnaire (0.81), the adapted questionnaire was sent to teachers from across the country via an internet link. Then, for the next phase based on convenient sampling, some of the teachers who have responded to the questionnaire were contacted. A semi-structured interview was conducted with these teachers who had consented to be interviewed to investigate the difficulties, challenges, benefits and drawbacks of the new series of high school textbooks. All the interviews have been audio-recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected by the questionnaire was analyzed descriptively using SPSS (22). All the interviews have been audio-recorded, transcribed and content analyzed to discover the difficulties, challenges, drawbacks and benefits of new series textbooks from the teachers' viewpoint.

4. RESULTS

The results of the quantitative part of the study

The first phase explored teachers' perceptions about different sections of the new series of high school textbooks. The questionnaire included five sections of practical considerations, language content and technology, aims and approaches, teacher's books, skills and methodology. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-six statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

In the first section, teachers were asked about the practical considerations of the textbooks under question. Table 2 illustrates the results.

Table 2: Practical considerations category

		1		2		3		4		5	
1	Practical considerations	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
a	The changes in newly-published English language textbooks in Iranian high school (vision 1, 2 and 3) are useful.	5.5	3	25.5	14	5.5	3	61.8	34	1.8	1
b	The newly-published English language textbooks are more challenging for teachers.	1.8	1	25	14	8.9	5	55.4	31	8.9	5
c	The main challenges for teachers are speaking and listening skills.	1.8	1	21.4	12	8.9	5	37.5	21	30.4	17
d	The newly-published English language textbooks are more challenging for students.	1.8	1	14.3	8	26.8	15	42.9	24	14.3	8
e	The main challenges for students are speaking and listening skills.	5.4	3	14.3	8	14.3	8	42.9	24	23.3	13
f	Teachers need to design appropriate tasks to teach different skills.	1.8	1	10.7	6	41.1	23	35.7	20	1.8	1
g	Teachers need to be familiar with CLT and use suitable techniques.	0	0	7.1	4	7.1	4	51.8	29	33.9	19
h	The diversity of economic and social conditions has been considered by authors of the newly-published English language textbooks.	10.7	6	37.5	21	25	14	23.2	13	3.6	2
i	The changes cover or pay attention to the needs of different students in different areas such as, urban, rural or deprived area.	21.4	12	30.4	17	12.5	7	26.8	15	8.9	5

*1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree

Table 2 illustrates that the majority of teachers approved the usability of the new series. However, they believed that these books were more challenging for them. The majority of teachers also mentioned two skills such as speaking and listening as the main challenges.

In addition, most of the teachers did not have any specific opinions about the designing of suitable tasks for each skill while (35.7%) of teachers strongly agreed with the idea that teachers need to design appropriate tasks to teach different skills in their classes. The author of these books claimed that these books are based on CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) approach, and most of the teachers (51.8%) reinforced this claim that they need to be familiar with this concept and its techniques for ef-fective instruction. The analysis also indicated that the diversity of economic and social conditions, as well as the needs of different students in different urban, rural or deprived areas (3.6%and 8.9%) were not considered effectively.

Table 3: Language content and technology category

	1		2		3		4		5	
2 Language content & Technology	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
a The newly-published English language textbooks apply to different students with different abilities, interests and learning styles.	12.5	7	48.2	27	16.1	9	17.9	10	5.4	3
b It is possible to use media in your classes, such as computer or mobile.	10.7	6	16.1	9	8.9	5	39.3	22	25	14
c Classrooms have been equipped with the facilities (such as computer, laptop and other devices) to be used during the instruction.	30.4	17	33.9	19	1.8	1	25	14	8.9	5
d Different computer softwares and mobile applications related to the content of the newly-published English language textbooks are easily available to enhance instruction.	21.4	12	33.9	19	10.7	6	25	14	8.9	5

*1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree.

Table 3 reveals that the majority of teachers believe that students' different abilities, interests and learn-ing styles have not been recognized by the new series. Although the majority of teachers admitted the possibility of using media in classes, such as computer or mobile, they stated that different computer software and mobile applications related to the content of these textbooks are not easily available to enhance instruction. In addition, responses indicated that most of the classrooms were not equipped with facilities (such as computer, laptop and other devices) to be used during the instruction.

The students' need is divided into two categories, such as their needs for learning English as a foreign language and their needs for English for communicative purposes in the real world. Thus, based on the analysis, it is clear that neither of the needs was addressed by the authors. Moreover, the analysis illustrates that all of the teachers have their own priorities; a minority of teachers (23.6%) believed that their priorities matched the new textbooks' priorities. This is while the rest of the teachers (47.1%) did not think so, and (27.3%) had undecided opinions.

So far as Konkur (University Entrance Exam) and final exam goals were concerned, a great majority of teachers (65%) believed that the purpose of these textbooks did not correspond with that of Konkur.

Table 5 contains three aspects of availability, usability, and purposefulness of supplementary materials such as, teachers' guide book, work book and CD. The analysis reveals that the majority of teachers did not approve the availability and usefulness of the mentioned supplementary materials. In other words, these supplementary materials are not easily available for teachers to be used during their instruction and even if accessible, they are not much useful.

Table 4: Aims and approaches category

		1		2		3		4		5	
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
3	Aims & approaches										
a	The students' real needs of learning English as a foreign language have been considered by the authors.	16.4	9	32.7	18	18.2	10	25.5	14	7.3	4
b	These newly-textbooks cover the students' English needs in a real world.	10.9	6	49.1	27	18.2	10	18.2	10	3.6	2
c	The newly-published English language textbooks' priorities match the teachers' priorities.	10.9	6	38.2	21	27.3	15	20	11	3.6	2
d	The purpose of these newly-published English language textbooks corresponds with the purpose of Konkur exam	36.4	20	29.1	16	7.3	4	21.8	12	5.5	3

*1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree.

Table 5: Teacher's books category

		1		2		3		4		5	
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
4	Teacher's books										
a	All the supplementary materials such as, teachers' guide book, work book and CD are available for teachers.	12.7	7	36.4	20	5.5	3	36.4	20	9.1	5
b	All the supplementary materials such as, teachers' guide book, work book and CD are useful for teachers.	9.1	5	21.8	12	16.4	9	43.6	24	9.1	5
c	Teachers' books are well-organized, of high quality and useful in enhancing instruction.	10.9	6	36.4	20	16.4	9	32.7	18	3.6	2

*1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree.

Furthermore, all of the Vision series have teachers' guide books, but not in printed form and teachers should download them from the internet. The analysis also illustrates that most of the teachers do not find teachers' books well- organized, and do not think that they enjoy the high quality which can enhance instruction.

Table 6: Skills and Methodology category

		1	2	3	4	5					
5	Skills & Methodology										
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
a	Teachers have enough time to attend to all four main English language skills, such as Speaking, Listening, Reading and writing in their instructions.	32.7	18	36.4	20	7.3	4	18.2	10	5.5	3
b	The time per week allowance designated for teaching these newly-published English language textbooks is appropriate.	31.5	17	37	20	9.3	5	20.4	11	1.9	1
c	Teachers' readiness for the change of textbooks has been considered or investigated.	10.9	6	38.2	21	32.7	18	16.4	9	1.8	1

*1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree.

According to the analysis of skills, for teaching these newly-published English language textbooks, two times per week have been allocated (3 hours for Vision 1 and 2, 4 hours for Vision 3). The analysis reveals that based on the designated time, most of the teachers believe that there is not enough time per week to attend to all four main English language skills, such as Speaking, Listening, Reading and writing in their instructions. Some teachers stated that their perceptions and readiness have been considered or investigated by the experts involved in educational administration and material planning. However, the majority of teachers (55.6% and 49.1%) stated that the experts involved in educational administration and materials planning have ignored teachers' perceptions about and readiness for this innovation.

The results of the qualitative part of the study

Grant's (1987) CATALYST checklist was used in the interview sessions. CATALYST is an acronym for Communicative, Aims, Teachable, Available add-ons, Level, Your impression, Student interest, and Tried and tested. For each of these concepts, one question was posed to be answered by the teachers. Additionally, two parts of this checklist with five questions were used to explore ten Iranian teachers' perceptions on the books in terms of the extent to which the textbooks suit students and teachers. In addition to these, the teachers were asked to explain the benefits/points of strength and difficulties/challenges of the new textbooks as well. The following sections report the findings of the inter-views.

Experienced teachers' perceptions toward the newly-published English language textbooks

Five experienced teachers' perceptions toward the new textbooks were sought in the interview. Based on the first part of the CATALYST, all of these teachers believed that the textbooks are not communicative and that the students are not able to use the language to communicate as a result of using the textbook.

All the teachers believed that the new textbooks for senior high school students (Vision 1, 2 and 3) were well-designed in comparison with the old ones. They also mentioned that the new publications differed from the previous books in terms of the implementation of new teaching approaches into the classroom. They believed that, although there are deficiencies in the teaching approach, yet it can be considered as a progress in the educational system.

When asked whether the textbook was attractive given the average age of the students, teacher1 said: “Overall, the books are much better than the old ones in terms of their layout and appearance. However, they don’t reflect what I know about my students’ needs and interests.” This issue was also mentioned by teacher 5 who had more than 30 years of teaching experience. She was also of the same opinion that “what our high school students need to learn in English as a school subject is not communicating in English, they have far more different needs than this. Our students need some knowledge about the language to succeed in their university entrance examination”. Another issue raised by this teacher was related to the teachers’ guide. She believed that the guidebooks are not very useful especially for teachers who are not familiar with the communicative approaches. She added that “the books lack concrete and easy-to-follow suggestions for using communicative approaches in the classroom and due to this shortcoming, a lot of teachers resort to the old methods and teach the book content in the traditional methodology.” Another issue raised by these teachers was related to the vagueness of the goals of the books. They thought the books could neither improve students’ communicative abilities in the real sense of the word nor help them in improving their general proficiency to the point to achieve good results in Konkur.

Teacher 3 mentioned this and believed that it was neither clear for teachers nor for learners what exactly is meant to be achieved at the end of the instruction. He said: “I don’t really understand what exactly is being developed in the students!” Additionally, all of the teachers mentioned the shortcomings of in-service classes. They thought that some in-service classes were held for teachers every once in a while. However, they were not compulsory. Additionally, they stated that these classes were not effective and did not help their instruction. As an example, one teacher elaborated on her opinion as follows: “The ministry of education itself did not provide any special assistance or classes for teachers. Thus, I myself participated in some classes out of the ministry of education. I paid the membership cost myself and attended some of these classes which were constructive. However, the reality is that it is not easy for my other colleagues to pay because it is not cheap”.

Regarding the teaching approaches of the new publications, she also contended: “I should mention that some teachers are not familiar with CLT method completely, so they still use GTM. They need to participate in such classes. Therefore, the ministry of education should provide easy access to such classes”. Most of the experienced teachers believed that teachers’ readiness for an innovation seems to have been ignored by the experts involved in the educational administration and materials development. All in all, they thought that these problems might not be solved unless teachers’ voices and concerns are heard and responded.

Novice teachers’ perception toward the newly-published English language text-books

The five novice teachers in this study were also interviewed and their opinions were sought about the books through the questions of the CATALYST checklist. Although none of these teachers have taught the old books, they were familiar with them and especially knew how they were taught. Similar to the experienced teachers, when they compared the new textbooks to the previous ones, they believed that the new series (Vision 1, 2 and 3) were well-designed in comparison with the old ones, and they also referred to the replacement of GTM (Grammar Translation Method) with CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) method as an improvement in Iranian high school books.

Something which was both interesting and surprising at the same time was that they said when they encountered any problems and sought their colleagues’ advice, they realized that most of them still were using GTM and audio-lingual methods in their classes.

Besides, they stated that the ministry of education should provide in-service classes for all teachers from urban, rural or deprived areas to enhance their knowledge and show how to teach the new publications.

One of the things that novice teachers were concerned about was the teachers' guide. Just like experienced teachers, all the interviewees thought the books were not useful and did not provide any help for inexperienced teachers.

Benefits and points of strength of the newly- published textbooks

The results of the experienced and novice teachers' perception toward the benefits, drawbacks, difficulties, and challenges were considered together. This section focuses on the benefits and strength of this reform from both experienced and novice teachers' viewpoint.

The analysis revealed that the majority of teachers approved CLT as the main strength of these books. In other words, they declared that shifting from GTM to CLT method was a benefit of Vision series.

The majority of teachers also believe that the topics of these books are more enjoyable and interest-ing in comparison with the previous books taught in high school.

Besides, the analysis demonstrates that the majority of teachers believe that the authors tried to cover four main skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). Although the time designated for teaching all of four skills is not enough, it somehow depends on the teachers' appropriate plans to contain all of four skills.

In addition, they referred that speaking and listening are two important skills that the authors put a great emphasize on them. The teachers emphasized the undeniable role of speaking and listening in CLT. However, one teacher had a little different view about this said that: "To tell the truth, I spend most of the time on speaking and listening when I teach Vision 1 and Vision 2. However, the story is different when I teach Vision 3. Everybody, I mean the head-teacher, the students, and their parents, and even I myself, want the University Entrance Examination (UEE)-oriented way of class management i.e., multiple choice questions govern the classes. Hence, I kiss goodbye to CLT in grade 12". In other words, it seems the matter is different in grade 12 in comparison with the two previous books in high school (Vision 1 & 2) because of the Konkur exam and its related issues. Moreover, based on the analysis of teachers' opinions, the purpose of the new series does not correspond with the purpose of Konkur exam.

Furthermore, the teachers added that these books have audio files that have been prepared in the format of a CD (compact disc) to improve students' listening skill. They should be used by both teachers and students as an essential supplementary material.

Finally, the analysis indicates that majority of teachers admitted that although these books have benefits in comparison with the previous books of high schools, they still need a great deal of revisions and improvements.

Difficulties and challenges of the newly-published textbooks

This category referred to the drawbacks, difficulties, and challenges of this reform from both experienced and novice teachers' viewpoints. The analysis shows that all of the teachers believed that the new books require multi-dimension revisions and improvements. However, they referred to some points as the main challenges as below.

The majority of teachers declared that these books have audio files that have been prepared in format of a CD (compact disc) to improve students' listening skill. These CDs should be used by both teachers and students as an essential supplementary material. Teachers stated that although these books have audio files, these files do not come with the textbooks, so the teachers themselves must download these files for themselves and even for students, and then deliver them to the

students in a flash or CD for-mat. Consequently, they recognized this issue as a fundamental weakness.

The majority of teachers also pinpointed the unavailability of equipment as the main difficulty in Vision series. The authors put a great emphasize on technology and stated that new series should be integrated with equipment, and the teachers should use CD, short movies, audio files and other computer software during their instruction to create an enjoyable atmosphere in their classes. All of the teachers confirmed the benefits of technology in CLT during instruction in their classes while stating that the lack of facilities makes it hard to use the technological equipment in the classroom. They also mentioned that the classes have not been equipped with any computers. They presented that not all classrooms have been equipped with the facilities such as laptop or computer. Furthermore, the authors have not considered different students' economic and social conditions in different urban, rural and deprived areas. As an example, one of the teachers noted: "Most classes in urban areas have not been equipped, and teachers themselves should bring their own laptop and speakers to the classes to play the audio files and short movies. I think rural and especially deprived areas face these challenges more, be-cause the teachers may not have laptops. Thus, what should teachers do?". Another teacher explained his opinion in such a way: "IT depends on the school in which you teach. The more your school is pre-eminent, the more you will have the educational paraphernalia in the classrooms. If you teach in a re-mote mountain village, you have to close the eyes to the CLT. To me, justifying the merits of it to my head-teacher is a herculean job". Hence, teachers agreed with the great role of technology, still believing that schools still were not ready or well-equipped.

Besides, all teachers stated that the purpose of these books does not correspond with that of Konkur exam. They also noted that these books only emphasize the scoring rubric offered by the authors for the final exam. For example, two teachers' comments were noted as following: "Neither the recent version of English books nor the prior ones have cared the UEE. Actually, their missions are not the same. To me, the UEE mars and/or offends CLT", and "These books series especially Vision 3 have put a lot of emphasis on the writing skill. This is while Konkur exam contains vocabulary, grammar and reading parts. Thus, writing skill is not included in Konkur exam but the authors of the textbooks put a lot of emphasis on it". Thus, they stated that it would be better if the writing section could have been changed and revised.

In addition, a large number of teachers admitted that Vision series does not support the idea(s) be-hind Prospect series, and in effect, they do not match and they have dissimilar lines. Many students, hence, face problems.

Almost all teachers believed that the books highly emphasized the source culture and ignored the target culture. The teachers indicated that various activities and tasks need to be designed to introduce students to the target culture because if students do not know and the target culture, they may have difficulties in their relations with people from other cultures.

Furthermore, all the teachers had the same opinion about the supplementary materials, such as teachers' guide book, and work book. The teachers admitted that generally speaking, the teachers' guidebook is helpful, yet the problem is their lack of accessibility. They also thought that the work book does not have interesting, useful, and comprehensive exercises to recognize students' extra problems and concepts which students have already studied from the textbook.

One of the teachers narrated his opinion about the drawbacks of the new series in this way: "There are scores of weaknesses. Some are tolerable, some are not. To me, what is infuriating and irksome is the linguistic errors in the three volumes". Other teachers also confirmed this claim that these books have some grammatical and linguistic errors.

In addition, they stated that they have written letters or emailed the authors to transfer their comments to the educational administrator. However, the teachers' comments and opinions were not considered.

Finally, the majority of teachers believed that the experts who were involved in the educational administration and materials development seemed to have ignored high school teachers' perceptions and opinions about the necessity of this change based on teachers' current status and their readiness for such a huge reform.

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate Iranian EFL high school teachers' perception towards the newly- published high school textbooks. The findings of the study have indicated that teachers are aware of the importance of textbooks in the foreign language classrooms. Although they stated that no EFL teaching situation is ideal, they generally had expectations to be considered by the experts who were involved in materials development.

An important finding of the present study was that some teachers appeared not to be integrating CLT method in their own classes frequently. As Donaghue (2003) noted, the acceptance of new methods is affected by teachers' beliefs and it is a significant character of teachers' beliefs. In addition, re-search in Taiwan identified a strong tension between new ELT textbooks featuring communicative language teaching activities and established grammar-translation teaching practices (Orafi & Borg, 2009; Wang, 2002). Thus, this conclusion can be made that the books failed to contribute to CLT method in the new books completely.

Another finding was that most of the teachers approved that teachers' beliefs have an essential role in a text book curriculum innovation to improve the quality of the educational program. This finding is consistent with the findings of Gilakjani and Sabouri (2017), Zohrabi (2011) and Torki and Chalak (2017), stating that teachers' beliefs are very significant in comprehending the difficulty of teaching and learning issues and setting up better education programs.

Finally, teachers stated that the experts who were involved in materials have not considered teachers' readiness and perceptions toward new series of textbooks and curriculum innovation. Thus, this study is consistent with Gilakjani and Sabouri (2017) and Johnson (1994), implying that teachers should refine their course content through their belief systems and teacher development programs must provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their beliefs about teachers and teaching.

The data revealed that teachers believed that their perceptions toward the benefits and strength of the books have a key role in educational reform. Hence, the result of this study is consistent with the findings of Könings, et.al. (2007) who examined the connection between successful performance of an educational reform and teachers' concern for that. They concluded that the reform must provide a powerful learning environment that increases learners' learning and problem-solving skills. Thus, as the results pointed out, teachers have the role of a coach rather than an instructor and they are more sensitive to learners' improvements and difficulties.

Based on the findings of the previous studies such as Könings, et.al. (2007), and Zohrabi (2011), who declared that teacher's perceptions and opinions toward curriculum innovation or reform are seen as an important factor in language programs, in this study, this seemed to have been overlooked.

Teachers also stated that the experts responsible for materials development highly emphasize the source culture and ignore the target culture. According to Corbett (2003), Zarei and Khalessi (2011), Sharif and Yarmohammadi (2013), as well as Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014), one of the main goals of language teaching is to enhance learners' understanding and tolerance of two different cultures, i.e., source culture and target culture.

Finally, the findings revealed that the majority of the participating teachers approved the curriculum innovation and reform. However, they stated that the experts who were involved in materials development seemed to have ignored teachers' perceptions and opinions about the drawbacks, difficulties, and challenges of these textbooks. In addition, the teachers believe that textbook curriculum innovation achievement cannot be obtained except by considering teacher's beliefs. Therefore, the results of this study are consistent with a previous study by Levitt (2001, p. 1), arguing that "if teachers' beliefs are incompatible with the philosophy of science education reform, a gap is formed between the intended principles of reform and the implemented principle of reform, potentially inhibiting essential changes".

6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, in the case of the new publications and their aims for the reform, the nature of the change does not seem to be defined sufficiently or be practically applicable in the classroom. Teachers involved in the study pinpointed some constraints regarding implementing the books which can create a barrier to introducing a new educational approach to language studies in schools.

On the one hand, this innovation seems to be part of a greater effort by the ministry of education as an attempt to improve the standard of English language teaching in high schools. On the other hand, the goal of utilizing a communicative approach to language seems to have been problematic at the classroom implementation level. This has been indicated by teachers to be the result of a lack of correspondence between the features of this approach and the specific needs and specified aims of high school students.

Today, everything is changing and developing rapidly. Science is no exception to this rule. Therefore, both the students and teachers should be aware of the scientific developments. As Pajares (1992) contends, teachers' beliefs have a greater impact on the learning process than their knowledge. In addition, students' beliefs about language learning may have an impact on their performance in class. Students' beliefs about language learning can also impact their language learning strategies (Wenden, 1987, Fazilatfar, et.al., 2015). Therefore, further studies should consider learners' beliefs as an important factor influencing the curriculum innovation in education. Also, learners' perception towards the newly-published high school textbooks, their challenges and concerns need to be investigated in future research.

The other suggestion is to conduct further research that investigates the relation between teachers' and learners' beliefs on curriculum innovation.

Moreover, in today's developing and globalized world, both teachers and students need to become more competent in using technology in language teaching and learning. This study found the technology as a main challenge for teachers and students. Thus, it is recommended to include teachers' and students' perceptions toward the role of technology in further research.

The participants of the research were limited to the teachers of the ministry of education. Hence, it is recommended to include the material developers, authors of the textbooks, and policy makers in ELT in Iran in further research.

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Appendix: Quantitative questionnaire

Iranian High School English Teachers' Beliefs about New Series of English Language Textbooks

The purpose of this anonymous survey is to investigate Iranian high school English teachers' perceptions about the new series of English language textbooks. The data will be used for the completion of the master's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). If you are an EFL teacher at high school, you are kindly invited to participate in this project. I would be grateful for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Your age: _

Please respond to the statements as they apply to you. Decide whether you agree or disagree with each statement. For example, if you strongly agree, mark: (5) Agree (4) Undecided (3) Disagree (2) strongly disagree (1)

Strongly disagree (1) Disagree (2) Undecided (3) Agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

Please respond to each statement carefully. Try not to change your responses after you choose them. Please answer all the questions.

Practical considerations:					
I think that...	1	2	3	4	5
1. The changes in newly-published English language textbooks in Iranian high school (vision 1, 2 and 3) are useful.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The newly-published English language textbooks are more challenging for teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The main challenges for teachers are speaking and listening skills.	1	2	3	4	5

Practical considerations:					
4. The newly-published English language textbooks are more challenging for students.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The main challenges for students are speaking and listening skills.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers need to design appropriate tasks to teach different skills.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teachers need to be familiar with CLT and use suitable techniques.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The diversity of economic and social conditions has been considered by authors of the newly-published English language textbooks.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The changes cover or pay attention to the needs of different students in different urban, rural or deprived areas.	1	2	3	4	5
Language content & Technology:					
10. The newly-published English language textbooks apply to different students with different abilities, interests and learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
11. It is possible to use media in your classes, such as computer or mobile.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Classrooms have been equipped with the facilities (such as computer, laptop and other devices) to be used during the instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Different computer software and mobile applications related to the content of the newly-published English language textbooks are easily available to enhance instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
Aims & approaches:					
14. The students' real needs of learning English as a foreign language have been considered by the authors.	1	2	3	4	5
15. These newly-textbooks cover the students' English needs in a real world.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The newly-published English language textbooks' priorities match with the teachers' priorities.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The purpose of these newly-published English language textbooks correspond with the purpose of Konkur exam.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The purpose of these newly-published English language textbooks correspond with the scoring rubric offered by the authors for the final exam.	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher's books:					
19. All the supplementary materials such as, teachers' guide book, work book and CD have been available for teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
20. All the supplementary materials such as, teachers' guide book, work book and CD have been useful for teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Teachers' books are well-organized, of high quality and useful in enhancing instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
Skills & Methodology:					
22. Teachers have enough time to attend all four main English language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading and writing in their instructions.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The time allocated for teaching these newly-published English language textbooks per week is appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The Teachers' perceptions and opinions toward changes in the newly- published textbooks have been considered by the experts involved in educational administration and material planning.	1	2	3	4	5
25. The teachers' readiness for the innovation of newly-published textbooks has been considered or investigated.	1	2	3	4	5
26. The teachers' perspectives to the potential and drawbacks of the newly- published textbooks have been considered.	1	2	3	4	5

An Examination of Video Materials to Endure the Hurdles of Phrasal Verbs: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Teaching phrasal verbs (Pvs), Vocabulary, Input modalities, Monologue, Sitcom

Abstract

English Phrasal Verbs (PVs), despite their frequency and indispensability, are notoriously known to be daunting for both EFL learners and teachers. Numerous researchers have tried to resolve this conundrum; however, a definite solution to the dilemma of input type in teaching them is yet to emerge. To address the issue, this mixed-methods study investigated the instructional potential of video input in two forms of monologues and sitcoms in teaching PVs. A test of PVs with two parallel versions was custom-made, validated, and employed as the pre-test and post-test. In the quantitative phase, 82 teenage English learners in one control group and two experimental groups were exposed to textual and video input for eight weeks after taking a proficiency test and the pre-test. Upon the post-test, the results of ANCOVA revealed that the monologue group enjoyed a significantly higher gain during the treatment period, regardless of their proficiency level. For the qualitative phase, an attitude study was conducted via focus group interviews and teacher's diary. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data indicated a more welcoming attitude towards sitcoms due to a reportedly higher motivational effect. In general, the results confirm the practicality, applicability, and efficiency of video materials in teaching PVs. It was also concluded that although the entertaining aspects of tasks can lubricate their integration into classroom activities, other contributing factors including instructional value and active attention to the form must not be underestimated in the instruction of PVs.

1. INTRODUCTION

Phrasal Verbs (PVs) occur in English rather frequently and prolifically. Gardner and Davies (2007) claimed that "learners will encounter, on average, one [PV] in every 150 words of English they are exposed to" (p. 347). However, teaching idiomatic or even non-idiomatic combinations of multiple words making up phrases and expressions, have always presented serious challenges in English language teaching (ELT). Acquiring PVs has been a "traditional and recurring

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nightmare for all learners of English” (Littlemore & Low, 2006, p. 158). In fact, it has been indicated that even advanced learners of English demonstrate difficulty in mastering the accurate use of PVs and, by avoiding them, resort to single-word verbs in many cases where native speakers would more commonly use phrasal equivalences (Neagu, 2007; Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003). Therefore, proper employment of PVs has been repeatedly taken as a measure of language mastery since the confusion caused by PVs has been demonstrated to block learners’ path towards proficiency (Barekat & Baniasady, 2014; Boers, 2000; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Cornell, 1985; Kurtyka, 2001; Littlemore & Low, 2006; Yasuda, 2010).

This quandary does not limit itself to learners. Abdul Rahman and Zeher Abid (2014) reported that the use of PVs was “rare or non-existent” in the written discourse of EFL student-teachers, as compared to native speakers. Alangari, Jaworska, and Laws (2020) have shown that PVs appear less frequently and efficiently in academic writings of non-native scholars in linguistics, as compared to a broader corpus. Proficiency level, learning context, task type, PV type, frequency, semantic opacity, degree of idiomaticity, and learners’ exposure to such constructions have been listed as variables contributing to the arduousness of PVs in instruction (Becker, 2014; Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Sonbul, El-Dakhs, & Al-Otaibi, 2020). Reluctance and stumbles over PVs can make a non-native speaker’s language sound unnatural and non-idiomatic (Garnier & Schmitt, 2015; Zhang & Wen, 2019).

Given the significance of PVs in learning English, numerous studies have been conducted to study their nature as well as instructional potential and possibilities. However, despite the investigations made of the acquisition and instruction of these vocabulary sequences, the controversy persists regarding the efficacy, applicability, and practicality of the input modalities best serving the purpose of instruction. The need for up-to-date studies has been more emphatically felt since the introduction of technological advancements in educational contexts. Therefore, nowadays, it is unprecedentedly urgent to offer L2 instructors more progressive yet practical suggestions for teaching PVs and equip learners with more autonomous and self-sufficient ways of learning, leading both groups to a more independence-oriented interpretation of education. Moreover, the literature that currently exists on the role of input type in teaching PVs is not unequivocally unanimous in its findings as some have favoured more traditional approaches such as extensive reading of texts (e.g. Bishop, 2004; Wyss, 2002) while others have encouraged the integration of technology such as videos (e.g. Bal-Gezegin, 2014; Washang, 2014). Furthermore, as these divergent findings might also imply, it is quite probable that learners with varying levels of language proficiency (e.g. Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Zhang & Wen, 2019), learning styles, or age ranges (e.g. Arnon & Christiansen, 2017) may unevenly benefit from varying modes of instruction. Finally, it has been indicated that the existing research results have not been operationally transferred to classroom instruction and have not been efficiently utilized to inform textbook and materials development (Jahedi & Mukundan, 2015). This highlights the necessity of more studies on a variety of learners including various age groups in different contexts.

A review of the literature on the instruction of PVs, as the one following this brief introduction, explains why it is still important to study the potential of videos for this purpose despite the frequency of published research on PVs in general. It is also argued that, to the best of the researchers’ knowledge, no previous study has examined the possible role of proficiency level as a mediator in the efficiency of video materials for teaching PVs to teenage learners. Therefore, the present mixed-methods study adopted a quasi-experimental approach in its quantitative phase to juxtapose texts and videos in the form of monologues and sitcoms in their efficiency to teach PVs. However, to probe the issue more deeply, an explanatory qualitative phase was integrated to grasp

an idea of micro-processes of learning that affect teachers and learners. For this purpose, the following research questions were posed:

- (1) Do text, monologue, and sitcom input modalities have significantly different effects on teenage EFL learners' acquisition of PVs?
- (2) Does level of language proficiency significantly interact with the effect of input modalities on teenage EFL learners' acquisition of PVs?
- (3) What are teenage learners' attitudes towards the use of texts, monologues, and sitcoms to teach PVs in an EFL class?

The results of the present study were expected to appeal to all L2 instructors and learners who have experienced similar confusions and provide prognostic recommendations to syllabus designers, curriculum developers, and administrators by addressing these questions.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Phrasal Verbs (PVs)

Traditionally described as “a verb + particle combination that functions as a single verb, both parts giving up meaning to form a new lexical item” (Darwin & Gray, 1999, p. 65), PVs are difficult to be acquired, yet, crucially significant in language learning process. “Phrasal verbs are made up of two components: a verb and a particle which is typically homonymous with an adverb or a preposition” (Thim, 2012, p. 10). Such a definition does not imply any hurdle per se. However, the complicity often emerges with the incongruency between the individual meaning of each component and their combined connotation since “the union of two elements of the compound often gives rise to new non-compositional forms outwardly similar to idioms, in which the meaning of the individual elements a priori does not relate to the sense of the compound” (Rodríguez-Puente, 2019, p. 1). Additionally, proper employment of PVs in accordance with contextual factors, and the decision between PVs and their one-word alternatives has been shown to be challenging for non-native speakers (Chan & Liou, 2005; Neagu, 2007).

Therefore, teachers and learners, as well as researchers have paid particular attention to PVs trying to overcome this difficulty. If treated as items of vocabulary, PVs become increasingly important in the light of the fact that learners' overall lexical repertoire directly contributes to their language comprehension and production. For example, McCarthy (1990) claims that regardless of learners' grammatical and phonological competence, limited vocabulary knowledge can impede meaningful communication. Uchiaraa and Saitob (2016) found a positive correlation between learners' knowledge of productive vocabulary and their fluency in spontaneous oral tasks. Similarly, Dabbagh and Janebi Enayat (2019) noted the relationship between vocabulary breadth and depth and learners' writing performance.

Teaching Phrasal Verbs (PVs)

Regarding the instruction of PVs, sources as early as Coles and Lord (1976) as well as O'Connell (1987) focused on the complexities of teaching PVs, mainly through texts, the main medium of the day. Thereafter, several researchers have focused on the instruction of vocabulary sequences such as PVs through printed materials. For instance, Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985) introduced the incidental acquisition hypothesis proposing that vocabulary learning in general, and by comparison, acquisition of PVs, often occurs in meaningful contexts. Moreover, Pitts, White, and Krashen (1989) as well as Bishop (2004) focused on the instruction of such lexical items through reading. The body of literature in this regard, including the abovementioned pioneering studies, found positive effects for reading printed textual materials on the acquisition of vocabulary items in general and PVs in particular. Other studies showed that learners' extended

exposure to vocabulary can lead to internalization of those items (e.g. Ozturk, 2016; Pauwels, 2018).

However, as the new century approached, traditional methods of instruction began to lose favour and, with the highlighted role of meaningful communication and authentic interaction, the move towards modern contextualized language instruction seemed inevitable for teaching PVs. For instance, Wyss (2002) suggested prolonged exposure to a variety of authentic texts embedding overflowing amounts of PVs. Therefore, the next section is going to deal with the role of input modalities in the instruction of PVs.

Input Modalities in Teaching Vocabulary and PVs

Studies exclusively focusing on the role of input in instruction of PVs are limited; yet, several have tried out a variety of input modalities in teaching vocabulary items in general. As the examples in the previous section well indicated, traditionally, textual input has been the most popular modality in instructed language learning, including teaching vocabulary. This was especially the case back in the time when technological advancements had not yet introduced the current variety to the domain of education. This popularity, however, does not seem to have completely fallen out of fashion even after recent technological revolutions. For example, Nation (2015) argues for the application of extensive reading in teaching vocabulary and offers suggestions to optimally integrate this strategy in vocabulary instruction. Other studies have also confirmed the role of reading and extensive reading in building learners' vocabulary (e.g. Nation, 2014; Nation & Wang, 1999; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Pulido, 2004; Webb, 2005).

Specifically, regarding the PVs, Hare (2010) concluded that the acquisition of PVs can be facilitated through an average of eight incidental exposures while reading. Pellicer-Sánchez (2016), employing an eye-tracking methodology to scrutinize the incidental acquisition of new words while reading, confirmed that eight encounters with a new word can lead to the correct recognition of that word in 86% of cases. Bridging these single-modality methodologies and multi-modal instruction, Brown, Waring, and Donkaewbua (2008) focused on the role of reading, reading while listening, and listening to stories in incidental acquisition of lexical sequences. They concluded that although words can be incidentally learned in all these three contexts, mere exposure without proper recurrence did not prove to be a very successful method especially in case of listening and in the long run.

Multimedia and audio-visual materials, with or without edutainment intentions, have never relinquished their contributory role to language teaching since their introduction to this field. Auditory input has long been a popular medium in language learning, including vocabulary instruction. For instance, similar to Brown et al.'s (2008) findings reported earlier, it has been found that listening to stories alone can lead to successful acquisition of foreign language vocabulary items (e.g. Elley, 1989; Mason, 2004; Mason et al., 2009) at noticeable rates as high as .17 words per minute (Mason & Krashen, 2018). Teng (2018) also found advantages for reading-while-listening modality over reading-only approaches in incidental vocabulary acquisition. Interestingly, recent propositions also include teaching vocabulary through drama and drama techniques (e.g. Kalogirou, Beauchamp, & Whyte, 2019).

A third popular modality in vocabulary instruction is the use of videos. Some studies in this regard have investigated the impact of videos on word retention and the vocabulary building process (Washang, 2014) while others have compared multiple modalities, including videos and audios (e.g. Bal-Gezegin, 2014). As the present study, some have focused on the efficiency of sitcoms on vocabulary acquisition (e.g. Kohútová, 2011). These findings have collectively suggested positive outcomes for integrating videos in the instruction of vocabulary items. Furthermore, Kohútová (2011) introduced sitcom series as very appropriate tools for classroom

use since the duration of most episodes are optimally short for the limited class time and this type of series boosts learners' confidence and their ability in recognizing vocabulary items. In another study, Peters and Webb (2018) investigated the role of viewing television on incidental vocabulary learning. They concluded that watching TV can enhance vocabulary learning at both levels of meaning recognition and meaning recall depending on the frequency of occurrence, cognateness, and learners' prior knowledge. Puimège and Peters (2019) also found similar results on the role of viewing TV in incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) also attracted the attention of vocabulary researchers as early as the 2000s. Laufer and Hill (2000) as well as Peters (2007) examined the merits of using online dictionaries in vocabulary learning. In another study, Solak and Cakir (2015) found out that designing materials with Augmented Reality (AR) technology can boost EFL learners' motivation to acquire English vocabulary. Katwibun (2014) also found a positive effect for the use of interactive whiteboards on students' vocabulary knowledge, participation and attitude. Comparing the effects of computer-mediated multimedia and blackboard instruction, Rusanganwa (2013) demonstrated the superiority of CALL-driven methods over traditional approaches in teaching vocabulary to ESP learners. Also, Milton, Jonsen, Hirst, & Lindenburn (2012) explored the potentiality of 3D online environments for vocabulary uptake. In a closely related vein, video games have also been auspiciously tested in vocabulary development (e.g. Janebi Enayat & Haghighatpasand, 2019).

A number of studies have also compared the effects of different input modalities on vocabulary learning and retention. Among these, Alhamami (2016) drew a comparison between audio, images, and videos without sound and found that input accompanied by images was the most useful in the retention of L1 equivalents for English vocabulary items.

Aside from these general studies on vocabulary instruction, a number of other studies have exclusively directed their attention to teaching and learning PVs. For instance, Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012) focused on learners' avoidance strategy in using PVs. Sadri (2012) investigated traditional methods of instruction by mainly listing PVs in alphabetical order with all possible particles, or a particle with all possible verbs. Mohammadi and Mirdehghan (2014) attempted to teach PVs through blended learning, while Badri Ahmadi and Panahandeh (2016) studied the influence of input-based and output-based teaching methods on the PVs acquisition. Nassaji and Tian (2010) compared individual and collaborative output tasks in terms of PV development and found both equally effective. In a more recent study, Teng (2020) compared the effects of individual, pair, and group work with cloze, editing, and writing tasks on the improvement of PV knowledge and concluded that collaboratively accomplishing tasks with maximum productivity, i.e. writing tasks, yielded the best results. In another recent attempt to teach PVs through entertainment, Akbary, Shahriari and Hosseini Fatemi (2018) successfully utilised song lyrics as instruction materials. Chou (2019) also indicated the efficacy of task-supported language teaching in developing learners' knowledge of PVs, even though memorisation techniques proved to be the best in enhancing students' test performance.

Most specifically, a number of studies have focused on the role of videos in teaching PVs. For example, Shahriari, Akbary, and Omidian (2019) found both reading and watching movies/TV efficient in the development of receptive and productive knowledge of PVs. Daly Eoin (2015) employed a popular sitcom series, *The Simpsons*, to teach PVs and it was concluded that learners exposed to animated videos were better capable of memorizing the meaning of PVs when compared to traditional paper-based instruction. However, Daly Eoin exclusively focused on adult learners at the upper-intermediate level of proficiency. Similarly, Spring (2019) tried out the potential of short animated movies in teaching PVs and found positive effects for integrating

videos in educational tasks. SoHee (2019) also realized that although a combination of images with texts showed superior outcomes on an immediate post-test, videos led to more significant improvements in learners' retention of PVs in the long run. The findings from SoHee emphasized the value of contextualization and the role of media in fostering learners' autonomy when it comes to teaching PVs.

As this brief literature review unravels, despite the abundance of studies on the nature and instruction of PVs, very few have focused on the role of teaching materials in the instruction of PVs and yet fewer have compared input modalities for an optimized instruction of these word sequences to different proficiency levels. Jahedi and Mukundan (2015) also made similar observations and asserted that the majority of literature on PVs falls within only four categories: analysis of syntactic and semantic properties of PVs, comparative analysis of non-native learners on avoidance of PVs, analysis of ESL learner corpora and its comparison with native speaker corpora, and corpus-based analysis of PVs in language teaching materials. Therefore, this study aimed at filling this gap by examining the efficiency of video materials in the form of monologues and sitcoms in teaching PVs to different proficiency levels of teenage learners.

3. METHOD

Participants

The present mixed-methods study targeted 82 Iranian teenage EFL learners in six intact classes of three pre-intermediate and three intermediate levels. These learners were assigned to one control group and two experimental groups covering the three input modalities of text, sitcom, and monologue in a balanced manner based on their proficiency levels. The counterbalance was also ensured by administering the Energy Placement Test prior to the study. Finally, the three groups were formed as the following: Text and Monologue groups with a total of 27 students in each and Sitcom group with 28 participants.

Instrumentation

Two quantitative and two qualitative instruments were employed in the present study for the purpose of data collection along with the materials used for instructional purposes in each class. These instruments are briefly introduced here, while, to avoid redundancy, more details are provided in the Procedure Section below, where the development and validation procedure of the PV tests is described.

Energy Placement Test (Parsons, 2004) was used at the very beginning of the study for a two-fold purpose: first, to ensure the counterbalance of the groups in a way that despite their two different levels, the three research groups did not display significant difference in the overall proficiency balance; second, to record each individual's entry proficiency to take the mediating effect of this variable into account for addressing the second research question. The test, published by Longman publication, covered all the proficiency levels (elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advance). It included 60 multiple-choice questions which tested a number of major grammatical points of English. As recommended by the developer, a 30-minute time limit was set for the students to do the tests.

As for the second quantitative instrument, a test of PVs, custom-made to cover the targeted PVs during the treatment, was developed, piloted, and checked for reliability and validity by the researchers. While the format of the test was inspired by a number of commercially available tests of vocabulary, it tried to target both receptive and productive knowledge of PVs by integrating several subsections of *pictorial matching*, *fill in the blanks*, *cloze test*, etc. in a total of 50 items. The test was developed in two parallel versions reserved as the pre-test and post-test.

In the qualitative phase of this study, two instruments were utilised to record the learners' attitudes towards experimental conditions. First, the teacher kept a journal with a focus on the feedback offered by the students after the treatment in each session. Second, a semi-structured interview comprising six simple questions was developed to be used for eliciting students' attitudes and comments in the form of a focus group on the last session of the class. The semi-structured format was selected to ensure the freedom of the discussion to grow and evolve during the course of the interview.

Finally, the teaching materials for the three research conditions were selected from reading passages in Interchange Series, episodes from the popular American sitcom series, Friends, and lectures from well-known TED Talks accordingly. A total of eight passages, and eight episodes from each of these series were finally chosen to be covered during two months of instruction. The criteria for selection here included the level of language difficulty, appropriacy and appeal of the content for teenagers, time manageability, and abundance of the most frequent PVs in English according to Gardner and Davies's (2007) list.

Data Collection Procedure

At the first stage of the study, the instructional materials for the text, sitcom, and monologue groups were selected as described above. The transcriptions of the primarily selected episodes of the sitcom and TED Talk, available in the form of subtitle files, were analysed for the frequency of the most common English PVs according to Gardner and Davies's (2007)'s list. Episodes with less satisfying frequency of desired PVs were replaced with new ones and the same procedure was reiterated. Finally, a list of the PVs appearing in all the selected videos, classified according to each episode, was created to be used both in supplementary activities as well as the pre- and post-tests. The list, made up of a total of 50 PVs was cross-checked with the content of the reading passages. As needed, some passages were replaced with new ones or underwent modifications to accommodate all the 50 PVs targeted for this study. Three random students from all six classes were exposed to randomly selected materials from this repertoire to check the comprehensibility, readability, and appeal of their content. Students' positive feedback during this piloting phase confirmed the selections.

The finalized list of 50 frequent PVs was then used to develop the test of PV retention in two parallel forms as described in the previous section. To ensure the reliability, validity, and feasibility of the tests, along with the functionality of its items, both versions were piloted with 19 students of similar proficiency levels twice. After the first pilot run, reliability indices and item statistics, including item facility (IF) and item discrimination (ID) were computed. Accordingly, deviant items with item IFs above .8 and below .3 as well as the items with IDs lower than .2 were either discarded or revised. The analysis of the second pilot administration confirmed the internal consistency of both versions with alpha values of .67 and .77 which were of a rather moderate magnitude and in an acceptable range given the length of the tests and the rather small sample size. Also, IFs and IDs of all items were once more checked and all items were found to demonstrate reasonable statistics. Finally, a correlational analysis was run to ensure whether the two forms were indeed parallel, which resulted in an acceptable Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient of .6, which was a rather desirable value due to the small sample size. The two versions were then randomly assigned to the pre-test and post-test. Oral comprehension and discussion class activities, with a focus on the targeted PVs, were also designed for both pre- and post-task stages to ensure the students' engagement during the implementation of the materials.

At the onset of the treatment, one of the three pre-intermediate and one of the three intermediate classes were randomly assigned to each of the research conditions: one control group (text) and two experimental groups (sitcom and monologue). Energy Placement test was given to all

participants and the results of ANOVA indicated no significant difference between the three groups in terms of proficiency and, hence, confirmed the counter-balance of the cohort. Upon the administration of the proficiency test and the pre-test, the treatment period began lasting eight weeks. The classes met twice a week and during the treatment, the students in the three groups were exposed to their designated materials within a controlled and balanced time interval every other session. The planned class activities, with a focus on the PVs appearing in the materials every session, were carried out to boost students' engagement. Moreover, the instructor of the classes, as one of the researchers of the present study, was required to keep a diary of class events recording the feedback received from each class, emphasising moments of joy, enthusiasm, boredom, and frustration.

Finally, after two months of instruction, the post-test was administered. Simultaneously, the semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted with all three groups. The focus group format was opted for its potential to create a more liberal opportunity for willing students to express their opinions; however, the instructor tried to engage all students and elicit responses from more reclusive ones as well. The content of all questions focused on the merits and demerits of the three instructional approaches and tried to delve into the experiences of individuals in these classes by eliciting their feedback towards the respective approaches. All focus group sessions were audio-recorded and later transcribed for thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

In the quantitative phase of the study, one-way ANOVA was used to establish the counter-balance of the three groups on their proficiency level and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to compare their achievement on the post-test while taking the results of the pre-test into account as the covariate. Students' scores on the proficiency test were also taken into account as the mediating variable. As for the qualitative phase of the study, inductive thematic analysis was used in order to probe the data from interviews and the instructor's diary. The results will be presented and discussed in the following sections.

4. RESULTS

Quantitative Results

The ANOVA based on the results of the Energy test indicated no significant difference between the three groups ($p > .05$). Therefore, it was concluded that the three groups of students recruited in this study were similar and balanced in terms of proficiency prior to the study. After the post-test, the descriptive statistics of the three groups in the cohort for both pre-test and post-test were computed in SPSS. The results indicated an improvement in all groups in terms of their PV mean scores on the post-test compared to the pre-test. To run inferential statistics, after checking the assumptions of parametric tests and ensuring their applicability by means of computing kurtosis and skewness ratios, ANCOVA was run by taking the results of the pre-test as the covariance and introducing proficiency as a mediating variable at a later stage.

Results of ANCOVA indicated a significant difference between the three groups in terms of their achievement on the post-test [$F(1,78) = 74.73$, $p = .000$] while adjusting for the pre-test, with a partial eta squared value of .48, suggesting a rather large effect size according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines. This implies that the null hypothesis to the first research question was rejected and there was indeed a difference between the performances of the three groups on the post-test even after adjusting for their differential performances on the pre-test. To locate this difference, a post hoc analysis, in this case Bonferroni test, was run. Table 1 below summarizes the results of this pair-wise comparison.

Table 1: Pairwise comparisons between three conditions

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Monologue	Sitcom	3.23*	.97	.004	.86	5.61
Sitcom	Text	-.36	.97	1.00	-2.73	2.01
Text	Monologue	-2.87*	.98	.013	-5.27	-.47

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the level of .05.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

As evident in Table 1, the difference between monologue and sitcom groups ($p = .004$) as well as monologue and text groups ($p = .013$) proved to be significant while a similar difference was not found between the sitcom and text groups ($p = 1.00$). In other words, learners in the monologue group outperformed their peers in both other groups. It was also shown that the learners in sitcom and text groups did not make significantly different improvements from the pre-test to the post-test and both had fallen behind in mastering the presented PVs when compared to the monologue group. Therefore, the monologue approach was found to be the most efficient way of instruction for teaching PVs when compared to texts and sitcoms.

To answer the second research question of the study, proficiency was introduced as a mediating variable in the ANCOVA test. It must be reminded that for the purpose of this analysis, students' scores on the proficiency test were taken into account rather than their predetermined levels of instruction at the institute. The results revealed no significant interaction between the level of language proficiency and input modality on participants' acquisition of PVs [$F(2,72) = .80, p = .451$]. To more clearly demonstrate the nature of these findings, Figure 1 below illustrates the interaction plot between these three conditions.

The interaction plot confirms the output of the ANCOVA test in Table 1 and indicates no significant interaction between the variables. However, as the small sample size of the study might have resulted in an increased type II error, it might be of interest to speculate on possible interactions between proficiency level and research conditions. In all levels of proficiency, monologue method had the highest amount of effect on PV acquisition of the students; however, it seems that students of high level of language proficiency benefited most and students of mid-level of language proficiency benefited least from this method. In sitcom and text groups, at the low language proficiency, the students benefited almost equally from their methods of treatment; however, at the mid-level of proficiency, the sitcom group students benefited more from the treatment than those in the text group. Finally, at the high level of language proficiency, students in text groups benefited noticeably more from their treatment than those in sitcom group. Nonetheless, it must be once again reminded that these interaction effects did not prove to be statistically significant; however, they might point towards some possible interaction effects to be further explored in future studies. All in all, these results confirm the null hypothesis to the second research question implying that no matter what proficiency level students came from, the monologue approach was significantly more efficient than the other two approaches and students across a variety of proficiency levels benefitted from this mode of instruction.

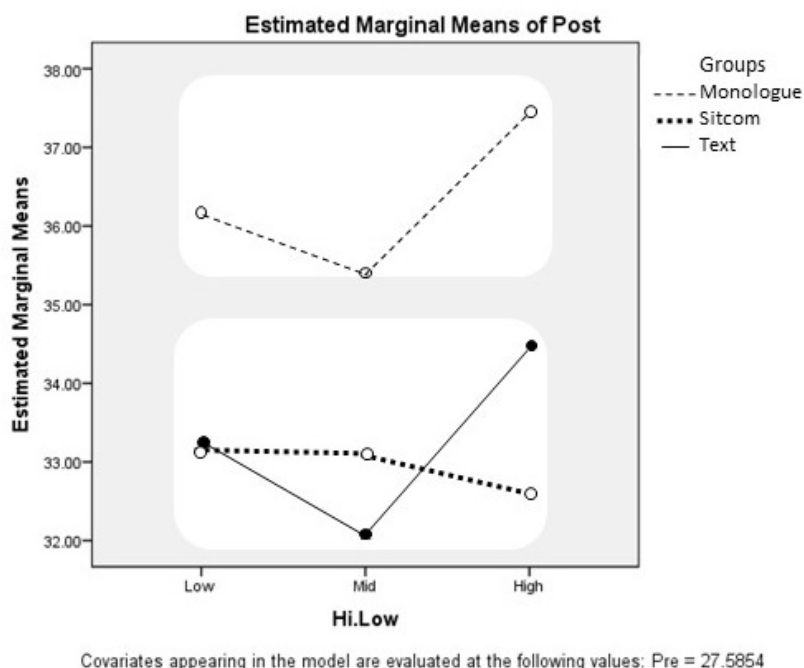


Figure 1: Interaction plot, proficiency and experimental conditions

Qualitative Results

To delve deeper into the quantitative findings, data from the qualitative phase were analysed for recurring themes to probe the pros and cons of these approaches as perceived by the learners. For this purpose, inductive thematic analysis was run, first, on the transcribed focus group interviews and, second, on the instructor's diary entries. The semi-structured interview mainly tried to elicit learners' attitudes and their feeling towards their experience. The transcribed interviews were first analysed based on the keywords employed by students in each group to describe their experience in terms of the attributes they assigned to the classroom procedures. For instance, positive adjectives such as *good*, *enjoyable*, *interesting*, *fun*, etc. or their Farsi equivalents were coded as "Efficient" while *boring*, *dumb*, *incomprehensible*, *confusing*, *difficult*, etc. were categorized as "Inefficient". Other intermediary tokens, including *so-so*, *not bad*, *ok*, *could be better*, etc. were coded as "Neutral". Table 2 below summarizes learners' feedback in each group.

As evident in Table 2, nearly half of the total comments expressed regarding the experience of students in all three groups were positive (about 48%). On the other hand, about one third (34%) of the attitudes were not very agreeable. Among the three conditions, the sitcom had seemingly attracted the most welcoming reviews (55%) while texts did not end up to be very popular with students and more than half of the comments about them were negative. Therefore, so far, it has been revealed that sitcoms were the most popular, monologues were also rather popular. However, texts were mostly disdained. In the next step, the reasons expressed by learners for these choices were coded in the transcriptions and while similar comments were clustered together, a pattern of the themes regarding the advantages and disadvantages of each method started to emerge. A gist of these themes is summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 2: Learners’ attitudes

Conditions	Attitudes	Frequency	Percentage
Texts	Efficient	7	26.92
	Neutral	5	19.23
	Inefficient	14	53.84
Monologue	Efficient	15	55.55
	Neutral	5	18.51
	Inefficient	7	25.92
Sitcom	Efficient	16	61.53
	Neutral	4	15.38
	Inefficient	6	23.07
Total	Efficient	38	48.10
	Neutral	14	17.72
	Inefficient	27	34.17

Table 3: Advantages & disadvantages of the methods from learners’ perspective

Condition	Advantages	Freq.	Disadvantages	Freq.
Texts	Instructive	17	Boring texts	25
	Interesting topics	11	Difficult to follow	22
	Inspiring	26	Limited in topics	11
Monologues	Mentally challenging	23	Boring	7
	Instructive	18		
	Entertaining	26	Long	7
Sitcoms	Instructive	22	Fast in delivery	7
	Informal	8	Outdated	5
			Culturally confusing	3

As indicated in Table 3, texts received more disapproving reviews than positive ones. In fact, some learners found texts partially instructive in improving their different skills, including knowledge of vocabulary and PVs, as well as interesting in terms of the topics, probably because the researchers enjoyed more liberty in choosing the texts from among myriads of possibilities. However, the topics could not seemingly overcome the dullness of the medium and many participants found reading texts boring. Others suggested that texts were not easy to follow, probably because the medium was not exciting enough for them to evoke their heuristic enthusiasm to overcome the challenges. For instance, one participant commented that:

- *Reading, reading, reading. There were many texts in the course book, it better try other way to learn the PVs [sic].*

Another student remarked:

- *There was no CDs to read the texts loud [sic]. It was difficult for pronounce some words [sic].*

On the other hand, monologues were evaluated as inspiring, mentally challenging, and instructive while some did not approve the range of topics and a few found watching lectures boring. As an example, a learner expressed their interest by asserting that:

- *When you watch the speeches of people like Steve Jobs or Bill Gates, you can see that they had many difficulties in life and one day the difficulties end and you see happy life [sic] and it's very helpful to guide us in our life to bear the difficulties.*

Finally, sitcoms attracted many students in terms of their entertaining nature, instructive aspects, as well as the informal and colloquial language they presented. However, a few negative comments included the length of episodes, their fast rate of delivery, and outdated content—which went back to more than 20 years ago. For instance, one of the more eloquent criticisms in this regard asserted that:

I think the movie was very old and boring. They were hard for understand [sic] and they spoke very fast.

Although part of this comment can be attributed to the nature of the specific series selected for the present study, it is illuminating for teachers who wish to integrate this type of materials into their teaching practices, especially when it comes to specific formal aspects of language such as PVs. It seems that the faster rate of delivery in authentic materials must be accounted for in any similar endeavours. Also, this experience shows that up-to-date shows and materials can better grab students' attention.

Furthermore, a few students raised concerns regarding the cultural mismatches and the confusions they caused for the class. Some students commented that:

- *Why is it ok for these people to live out of their parent house? My mom will kill me if I am late after school! [sic]*
- *Are all young people so free in other countries? They do what they like and no body controls them!*

Such cultural concerns raised by the learners, though intriguing, seem to be baffling to young learners and might even consume a large portion of their resources, constantly thinking about those differences. Therefore, it might be discussed that, in teaching formal aspects of language, including PVs, where promoting cross-cultural competence is not a pedagogical objective, teachers must be cautious in their choices of video materials and the extent to which they distract students' attention away from targeted objectives.

For the next step, the content of the instructor's diary was coded for themes in terms of how the classroom experience was described after each session. As the teacher had recorded all prominent events and feedback during classes, these encounters were classified under three major categories: *Satisfying*, *Average*, and *Non-satisfying* experiences. The final tally of the frequencies with which these categories popped up in the teacher's diary is reflected in Table 4 below.

As obvious in Table 4, the instructor had recorded mostly positive experiences for his sitcom and monologue classes while noticeably fewer agreeable encounters were logged for the texts group. These findings confirm the ones obtained from analysing students' feedback and it can be safely concluded that, all in all, the experience with the sitcom modality was the most favourable while texts did not manage to be received as positively. These findings will be more elaborately discussed in the next section.

Table 4: The experiences recorded by the instructor

Condition	Experience	Freq.	Percent
Texts	Satisfying	12	18.18
	Average	24	36.36
	Non-satisfying	30	45.45
Monologue	Satisfying	32	45.71
	Average	22	31.42
	Non-satisfying	16	22.85
Sitcom	Satisfying	44	63.76
	Average	15	21.73
	Non-satisfying	10	14.49
Total	Satisfying	88	42.92
	Average	61	29.75
	Non-satisfying	56	27.31

5. DISCUSSION

The answer to the first research question indicated that the monologues had significantly better effects on the acquisition of the PVs as compared to texts and sitcoms. Furthermore, as the second research question supplemented these findings, proficiency did not play a role here and students from all sorts of proficiency levels seemed to benefit from instruction through monologues similarly. The qualitative findings of the study partially supported these results as the sitcom and monologue groups both articulated mainly positive attitudes towards their instruction conditions with sitcom group surpassing the other two conditions in this regard. This might initially sound rather contradictory as students directed most of their enthusiasm towards sitcoms. This is while the monologue group yielded the best results. Therefore, it might be argued that although learners’ approval might lead to higher levels of engagement and consequently achievement, excessive focus on the fun aspects of an activity can just be misleading and distracting. Hence, an optimal level of entertainment and fun combined with a didactic and instructional purpose seems to be capable of producing the best results in the long run. In purely authentic tasks, such as watching full sitcom episodes, there is a possibility of students’ exceedingly attending to the entertaining aspects of the activity and consign the learning intentions to oblivion. Another possibility supported by the findings of the qualitative phase is that, the higher rates of delivery and cultural references along with cross-cultural differences—or even contradictions—might have obscured participants’ comprehension of the sitcom materials and consequently blunted their achievement.

Regarding the literature, the results might contradict the findings of some earlier studies, including Alhamami’s (2014), who employed audio, images, and video, and gained more favourable results, in terms of uptake, from image-only input than video input. In another study by Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012), it was found that proficiency level might affect learners’ use and avoidance of PVs. This is not confirmed by the present because similar effects of instruction were found across all proficiency levels among teenagers.

However, these findings seem to update those from some of the earliest studies on instruction of vocabulary items, including Coles and Lord (1976), Nagy et al. (1985), O’Connell (1987), and Pitts et al. (1989) who found impressive results by implementing texts before the widespread access to technological tools in language classes. This is also true about a number of more recent

studies, including Sadri (2012) who recommended traditional methods of teaching PVs such as creating sorted lists accompanied with connotations and applications.

Furthermore, these results appear to confirm a number of previous findings in the literature, including Bishop (2004), whose experiment with formulaic expressions had already assigned a positive role to more interactive methods of instruction in the retention of such sequences, and Katwibun (2014), who demonstrated the efficiency of newer technologies such as interactive whiteboards in enhancing instruction and provoking positively-motivated attitudes. The results also agree with those of Mohammadi and Mirdehghan (2014), who used blended learning as a progressive alternative to traditional approaches in teaching PVs, and Bal-Gezegin (2014) as well as Washang (2014) who found video materials superior to other types of input including audio-only materials in teaching vocabulary. These findings are also comparable with those of Kohútová (2011) who found a positive effect for sitcom series, particularly *Friends*, in developing students' communicative competence. The findings also seem to be in line with Peters and Webb (2018) and Puimège and Peters (2019), both supporting the role of watching television in incidental vocabulary learning, as well as Milton (2008) who found informal tasks significantly beneficial in developing L2 vocabulary. Akbary et al. (2018) also found positive effects for integrating edutainment in instruction of PVs while Shahriari et al. (2019) suggested very positive outcomes for extensive exposure through reading as well as watching movies/TV in developing learners' receptive and productive knowledge of PVs. The results are also in line with Daly Eoin (2015) and Spring (2019) who found positive effects for the application of animated videos and sitcoms in teaching PVs, as well as SoHee (2019) who found videos more effective in the long-term retention of PVs. Finally, the results support those of Teng (2018), who indicated the superiority of multimedia materials over text-only in incidental vocabulary development and Teng (2020), who corroborated the effect of more interactive activities on the acquisition of PVs.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study compared the efficacy of video materials to the traditional text-based input in improving learners' mastery over PVs and found a positive effect for videos, especially in the form of monologues as compared to sitcoms, on the acquisition of these tricky sequences in instructional contexts. It was also found that learners demonstrate more enthusiastic engagement and positive attitudes when it comes to video materials, especially when they contain more fun and relatable content. However, although studies such as Shahriari et al. (2019) prioritised extensive and recurrent exposure over explicit instruction, it can probably be concluded that sheer focus on fun cannot always lead to the most desirable outcomes as this might in fact be distracting to learners. As Milton (2008) timely warned us, although informal tasks can lead to noticeable vocabulary growth, learners' conscious attention and integration of form-focused activities are also crucial requirements. Teng (2018) has also emphasised the role of word exposure frequency and elaborate word processing in incidental vocabulary pick-up. Chou (2019), who found positive results for task-supported teaching of PVs, also concluded that memorisation activities still play a significant role in improving young learners' test results on PVs. Therefore, all in all, this study supports the use of more up-to-date methodologies in teaching PVs and argues for the integration of meaningful, thought-provoking, and engaging, authentic activities in the instruction of PVs to overcome the challenges associated with teaching them.

Teachers, material developers, teacher trainers, and policy makers can benefit from these findings by realizing that with the advent of technological advances, traditional methods—although probably still the easiest choice—are now judged as simply dated, boring, and obsolete by newer generations who are technologically-conscious digital natives. This can obviously pose challenges for a great portion of language teachers, who are mostly digital immigrants and maybe even

daunted and intimidated by the compelling forces of educational technology. However, these findings invite them to rethink their methods, most of which have been inherited from their own teachers, and take chances with at least multimedia input modalities in their instruction by giving serious attention to students' needs and attitudes. One such step could be examining video materials in teaching more obscure aspects of language, including PVs, which seem to lend themselves to instruction best via interactive, meaningful, and engaging content. The results also offer hints in selecting and implementing video materials, which, as illustrated through the qualitative phase of this study, can be a rather tricky endeavour. For this purpose, it is very important to target topics most relevant to learners' interests and immediate needs considering their age, and to resort to an optimal amount of entertainment so that the main goal of instruction is not lost. It is also crucial to take learners' culture and customs into consideration and refrain from overwhelming them with demanding materials with which students cannot establish a relationship. For this purpose, the best option might seem targeting a variety of modalities, especially inspiring and stimulating monologues and lectures along with well-organized exercises and clear instructions accompanied by occasional integration of less-controlled, more entertaining activities such as watching sitcoms. YouTube and VOD (video on demand) platforms can also serve as a rich source of engaging relevant videos. Therefore, curriculum developers, teachers, and independent learners are all invited to take the potential of these materials into serious consideration.

Similar to all other research endeavours, the present study has some limitations and delimitations. These will be discussed here along with some suggestions for further research. First of all, the present study delimited its material sampling to one type of monologues and series. Future studies might want to examine other forms and genres of videos and delve deeper into the merits each has to offer. Second, the present study focused on video materials which have been around for several decades. Future projects may set out to try other modalities, particularly the ones benefiting from computer technology and online platforms with their virtually endless options to present. This may include wikis, interactive whiteboards, social networks, podcasts, mobile applications, virtual reality, and augmented reality. Finally, this study delimited its focus on the acquisition of PVs and did not examine their effects on the communicative success of learners. The need is still felt to investigate the role of PVs in the comprehension and production of English as a second language and the personal strategies learners employ to overcome their challenges across different proficiency levels and age groups, while this study was limited to teenage learners.

All in all, teaching PVs seems to be an inevitable nuisance teachers have to deal with and video materials as well as more recent technologies appear to be alluring options currently available to teachers.

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Incorporation of Discourse Coherence Strategies into Writing Skills Instruction

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Abstract

Discourse, as an object being studied nowadays in many disciplines of humanity and social sciences, plays a special role in applied linguistics, in both theory and practice. It is characterized mainly by cohesion and coherence; the former is created by some cohesive devices while the latter is established using certain strategies rarely incorporated into and investigated in language skills development. Therefore, this study is concerned with investigating the effect of discourse coherence strategies incorporated into writing instruction on developing writing skill. To this end, 50 Iranian female EFL learners assigned in 5 groups (4 experimental, 1 control) were exposed to four coherence-based strategies, including: 1) Given/New Strategy (GNS), 2) Direct Matching Strategy (DMS), 3) Bridging Strategy (BRS), 4) Reinstating Old Information Strategy (ROIS), 5) Control group conventional instructions of writing skills, respectively. Results of the One-Way ANOVA statistical analysis revealed that using discourse coherence-based strategies in the classroom, compared to mainstream instruction, can more significantly enhance writing ability of EFL learners. In parallel, the Give and New strategy-based instruction proved to be the most effective in developing the target skill. However, cross-strategically, no significant difference was seen among the investigated discourse coherence-based strategies. The findings offer pedagogical implications for L2 practitioners, teachers, materials developers, and autonomy seeking learners. They also provide further research insights in teaching writing beside all other language skills.

Keywords

Discourse; Coherence Strategies; Writing Discourse; Discourse Instruction

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse has been addressed from various vantages and approached differently. However, Carroll defines it very simply and clearly as “units of language larger than the sentence” (2008, p. 158), characterized mainly by cohesion and coherence. Halliday and Hassan (1976, p. 230) identify cohesion as “the range of possibilities that exist for linking something with what has gone before”,

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and Carroll (2008) approaches coherence as “the degree to which different parts of a text are connected to one another” (p. 423). In other words, coherence is a feature of language which makes chunks of language standing as self-contained units distinguished from random collections of utterances.

The importance of discourse, as Carroll (2008) notes, is because of three main reasons: First, because “we rarely speak in isolated sentences, discourse seems to be a more natural unit of language to investigate” (p.158). Likewise, sentences can be ambiguous or obscure in terms of discourse. Hence, understanding discourse structure is necessary to appreciate sentence processing. Finally, because discourse provides rich source materials for those interested in how language works cognitively. Discourse is understood to be any set of statements - oral or written - interconnected in such a way as to generate a structured verbal fabric to build a unit of global meaning (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983).

Features of discourse are realized and established differently so that discourse can be meaningful. Cohesion as an “abstract underlying semantic notion denoting the overt surface linkage obtaining between sentences and parts of texts within a given discourse” (Halliday & Hassan, 1976, p. 229) is realized through cohesive devices. While, coherence, is created by a number of strategies such as Given information, Given/New Strategy, Direct matching, Bridging, reinstating old information, and Identifying New Topics of discourse (Carroll, 2008, pp. 162-165).

Direct Matching is a process where new information in a target sentence is directly matched to antecedents in a context sentence. Once we have this information, we attach it to the sentence (Carroll, 2008, p. 163). *Given Information* refers to a type of information provided by the speaker or author when presuming that the reader already knows about it, whereas new information assumes that the reader doesn't know anything (Carroll, 2008, p. 162). Given and New Strategy is more concerned with the fact that the purpose of understanding a sentence in discourse context is accomplished through three stages, namely: “1. identifying the given and new information in the current sentence. 2. Finding an antecedent in memory for the given information. 3. Attaching the new information to this spot in memory” (Carroll, 2008, p. 162). *Reinstating Old Information* refers to the information in the background (Carroll, 2008, p. 164). It is simply a process of activating the background to facilitate the foreground which altogether make the comprehension easier.

It is believed that discourse processing revolves around four main aspects, as follows: First, there are a whole set of processes responsible for identifying the exact content of the clauses and sentences that makes up the text itself. Second, there are processes connecting the actual words in the text with the ideas, objects, or events they refer to, called referential processes. Third, there are processes responsible for connecting the different pieces of the text to one another; these are the processes that establish textual cohesion or coherence. Finally, there are processes responsible for building a representation of what the text is about (Traxler, p.188). However, all these interrelated processes can be approached by Walter Kintsch's construction- integration theory, Morton Ann Gernsbacher's structure building framework and Rolf zwaon's event indexing model (Traxler, 2011).

Constructor- integration Theory: The main goal of the construction- integration system is to build a situation model describing relevant aspects of what a text is about. The system builds a surface form representation, converts that to a text-base, and then builds a situation model that reflects the contents of the text-base combined with information from general world knowledge. A surface form representation is built, propositions are extracted, and knowledge is activated to the degree associated with the words in the text and the activated propositions (Tabossi, 1988, cited in Traxler, 2011). *Structure-Building Framework*: suggested by Gernsbacher (1990 as cited

in Traxler, 2011), this theory “explains how comprehenders build mental representations of extended discourse”. The *Event Indexing Model* (EIM) is first and foremost a theory about how people build situation models from narrative texts. According to the EIM, the purpose of discourse comprehension system is to understand the “goals and actions of protagonists... and events that unfold in the real world or some fictional world” (Zwaan et al., 1995, p.292 in Traxler, 2011).

Cohesion and Coherence in Focus

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976), “texture involves more than the presence of semantic relations we refer to as cohesion” (p. 23). In addition, “texture involves much more than merely cohesion. In the construction of text, the establishment of cohesive relations is a necessary component. However, it is not the whole story” (p. 324). Cohesion is a system in itself, yet being only one component of the complex set of relations that accumulate to form texture or coherence. A text is a semantic unit composed of sentences linked by cohesive ties. Cohesive ties are defined by a dependency between two elements separated by at least one sentence boundary. The function of cohesion is to link linguistic elements across sentences to distinguish text from context. “How an edifice is constructed” is what determines cohesion according to Halliday and Hassan (1976, p. 26). An example of this is the text “Ali had been feeling depressed lately. He committed suicide yesterday”. In this case, “he” is understood to refer to “Ali”. In terms of textual structure, this textual linkage makes these two sentences “a unified whole”, or a text. The first sentence and the second sentence are called cohesive because the subject matter of the first sentence is continued in the second sentence. Therefore, “cohesive relations are classified into five main types: reference, lexical, conjunction, substitution, and ellipsis” (Meurer, 2003, p. 149).

Strategy and Discourse Strategies

Strategy: Oxford (2003) defined language learning strategies as “specific actions taken by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations” (p.8). More technically and academically, “it involves optimal management of troops, ships or air-crafts in planned campaign” (Abbasian, Birjandi and Mirhassani, 2006, cited in Oxford, 1990, p. 7). This implies that teaching by itself is a strategic action in which teacher makes a lot of strategic and on-the-spot decisions depending on the situational expediencies, i.e., teaching resembles the decisions a war commander makes in battle front; sometimes attacks, sometimes withdraws or even under certain circumstances he may conceal his troops for optimal commandment.

As a result of discourse comprehension research, four main strategies have been identified useful for understanding and memorizing discourse, including *Actively Processing Discourse*, *Connecting Propositions in Discourse*, *Identifying the Main Point*, *Building Global Structures*, and *Tailing Comprehension* Activities to Tests. According to Carroll (2008), *Actively Processing Discourse* “refers to a collection of activities that includes relating new information to information we have in permanent memory, asking questions of the material, and writing summaries or outlines of the material”. *Connecting Propositions in Discourse* refers to a situation in which “sentences overlap in content and the given information is used to introduce new information” (pp. 185-7). Carroll adds that “all of this implies that we would benefit from a strategy of explicitly looking for relationships between concepts in discourse. This includes such actions as paying close attention to anaphoric references and noting where inferences have to be drawn. This strategy leads to several beneficial results” (187). *Identifying the Main Point* is more concerned with macro level of discourse as paying attention to the local structure of discourse helps relatively (Curran, Kintsch & Hedberg, 1996). In the same vein, *Building Global Structures* focuses on the importance of detecting important points even when they are not explicitly marked (Fletcher, 1994). Finally,

Tailing Comprehension Activities to Tests is a principle dealing with any attempts to match the types of comprehension activities to the types of exams one takes (Tulving & Thomson, 1973, as cited in Carroll, 2008).

Discourse features realisation may be a function of language skill types as each skill, despite some similarities, is featured specifically as well. Skills like reading (Abbasian & Nalkoubi, 2018) and speaking have been addressed to some extent. However, writing and listening skills have been relatively left intact.

Effective writing instruction includes strategy training, providing support system, and teacher response. Teaching and learning writing is a daunting task for learners who are learning a language as a second or foreign language. As Ruan states, leaning how to write requires “much more than technical achievement in orthography, vocabulary, and syntax” (2014, p. 80). Having the ability of putting thoughts and ideas into words in a foreign/ second language in an accurate and coherent way is a great success (Celce-Murcia, 2014). Therefore, teaching writing to both native and non-native speakers of English is known as a valuable endeavor.

Writing can be known as an interactive process between the writer and the reader through the text (Olshtain, 2001). Therefore, as a communicative activity, writing needs to be developed during language teaching. Additionally, as a social phenomenon, it should be counted as a collaborative skill (Ede & Lunsford, 1992). Kellogg (2001) considered writing as a cognitive task, requiring a test of memory, language, and thinking ability simultaneously.

On developing skills, it is argued that teaching discourse focuses on “the skills needed to put the knowledge into action and to achieve successful communication.” (Cook, 1989, viii). In addition, “discourse analysis provides a new window toward teaching and learning oral language” (Wu, 2013, p. 88). Furthermore, Khabiri and Hajimaghsoodi (2012) found that discourse analysis-based instruction has a significant effect on EFL learners’ reading comprehension. Contrary to a rich literature on discourse, majority of the studies revolve around discourse analysis. There are rare empirical studies implementing discourse features in practice to develop language skills and their components.

Considering the importance of writing skill, the main problem addressed revolves around the widely researched but less explored areas of learning-teaching strategies. It has long been believed that effective language learning requires the use of learning strategies. Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) have been extensively studied (e.g., Rubin, 1987; Stern, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989).

Writing Skill: Nature and Structure

Writing is an interactive process between the writer and the reader through the text (Olshtain, 2001). Therefore, this skill, as a communicative activity, needs to be developed during language teaching. Writing, as a way of communication, goes beyond orthographic signs for speech, in that the writer should predict the reaction of the reader and try to supply them with a text relevant to Grice’s (1975) cooperative principle. By taking into account this principle, an effective piece of writing should be produced in a clear, relevant, informative, and interesting way. On the other hand, the reader should interpret the text through the writer’s intention. As a result, to make a piece of writing more communicative, some elements such as linguistic accuracy, clarity of presentation, and organization of ideas should be considered as well (Olshtain, 2001). Learning strategies have been explored explicitly through the use of a communicative philosophy oriented toward teaching learners how to learn and empowering them to become independent and autonomous learners (Wenden & Rubin, 1987). In other words, teaching and strategies are two sides on one coin in that teachers try to find their teaching strategies on the learners’ learning strategies. This notion, as being discussed in the following section, holds true with teaching writing skill.

Teaching Writing Strategies

It has been demonstrated that students can become better language learners when knowing language learning strategies. There have been some early studies suggesting that successful students employ a number of learning strategies when they learn a second/ foreign language (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1996). As discovered by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), effective L2/FL learners are aware of the types of learning strategies they employ. A student attempts to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge based on Ausubel's (2000) theory of meaningful learning. When learners integrate knowledge, they are able to find more paths to retrieve it since they have a larger network of knowledge. Strategy training entails three approaches: "[It is a] learning strategy training program intended to improve the effectiveness of learners". It can be done 1) explicit or direct training, 2) embedded strategy training, and 3) combination strategy training (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 355).

Using data from lower secondary students in Years 5 and 8 ($n = 868$) in Hungary, Habók and Magyar (2018) examined the use of LLSs in relation to language attitudes, proficiency and general school performance. The results of their study revealed that Hungarian students were mostly engaged in metacognition in both years. Furthermore, more proficient language learners and those with less proficiency used different strategies. Charoento (2017) investigated Thai EFL learners' strategies and how individual differences, including gender and level of English proficiency affected their use of language learning strategies. The study revealed that compensation strategies were most commonly used, while cognitive strategies were least common. Moreover, compared to male participants, the female ones used all six strategy categories more frequently. The results also showed that their proficiency in English was positively correlated with their use of metacognitive strategies. Nasihah and Cahyono (2017) investigated the correlation between LLSs and writing achievement and motivation.

Shifting from learning strategies in general to what makes a discourse coherent can also be attributed to employing and using a number of discourse coherence strategies. Language production and comprehension can be realized in the light of discourse strategies; however, their pedagogical values have rarely been subject to empirical investigations in developing language skills in general and promoting writing skill in an EFL setting in particular.

Regarding the purpose of teaching learning strategies, it is argued that the goal is "to enable learners attain a specific learning goal and accomplish a task more easily" (Rubin, 2013). Thus, exploring and identifying discourse strategies in general and those of coherence in particular can be considered along with LLS as their pedagogical applications seem to facilitate the development of writing ability as LLSs do. However, despite Carroll's (2008) emphasis on the role of general discourse strategies in improving comprehension and memory, few studies (e.g. Coertze, 2018, Shaw & McMillion, 2008, Watanabe, 2003, Cekiso, Tshotsho, & Somniso, 2016) have been done in the literature on the role of the coherence strategies. In other words, the effect of focusing on discourse coherence strategies while teaching on the development of writing performance is unclear. Moreover, the difference in the extent of such an effect while focusing on different strategies requires investigations. Solidly, these points can be realized in the form of the following research questions:

RQ1. Is discourse coherence strategy-based instruction more significantly effective than conventional teaching in developing EFL learner's writing ability?

RQ2. Are there any significant differences among the discourse coherence strategies-based (Given & New; Direct Matching; Bridging; and Reinstating Old Information strategies) instructions in developing learners' writing ability?

2. METHOD

Participants

The participants of this study were 50 Iranian female intermediate EFL learners whose age ranged from 15 to 40 years old, selected out of 80 learners based on an Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Then, they were assigned into five groups of 10 learners, four experimental and one control group.

Instrumentation

Oxford Placement Test (OPT): A version of OPT possessing ($r=809 > 0.05$) as its reliability index was administered whereby 50 relatively homogenous learners were selected.

Researcher-made Writing Pre-test and Post-test: To test the writing ability of the learners before and after the course, a writing pre-test and post-test were used. The tests were designed based on Top Notch Third Edition as a course book. Each test was composed of two tasks the learners had to write about for at least 120 words. For assessing the writing tests, a Cambridge FCE rubric was used. The reliability of the writing pretest and posttest was also calculated through investigating the parallel from correlational analysis ($r=704$).

Procedure

The sample first received OPT followed by the Writing pretest. Then, they were randomly divided into four experimental groups corresponding to the number of the coherence strategies and one control group.

For the first experimental group, writing instruction based on Given/New Strategy (GNS) was used as a discourse strategy. In this group, the learners went through mainly understanding the sentences in a discourse context with three sub-processes or stages, including: 1) identifying the given and new information in the current sentence, 2) finding an antecedent in memory for the given information, and 3) attaching the new information to this spot in memory. Therefore, they were helped to go ahead with these three processes in the course of the writing task.

For the second experimental group, the writing instruction based on Direct Matching Strategy (DMS) was used. In working with this group, first, attempts were made so that the group members could identify the given and new information in topics provided for them for writing and directly match them to an antecedent in the context sentence. Then, they were encouraged and helped to search their memory for a previous reference to any target lexical items and find them in the context sentence. Finally, the information related to the topic was attached to each.

For the third group, writing instruction was done based on Bridging Strategy (BRS). In this group, attempts were made to raise the participants' attention to the situations in which there were no direct antecedents for the given information in the text while the hidden antecedents could tie the sentences together. The learners were helped to make bridging inferences to understand the inter-sentence and intra-sentence relationships.

Finally, for the fourth group, the writing instruction based on Reinstating Old Information Strategy (ROIS) was used. In working with this group, attempts were made to activate the information available in the learners' background or the foreground. An example of this is as follows:

I am trying to find a black dog.
He is short and has a dog tag on his neck that says Fred.
Yesterday that dog bit a little girl.
She was scared but she wasn't really hurt.
Yesterday a black dog bit a little girl
It got away and we are still trying to find it.

However, what was different for the control group was that they received the conventional teaching of writing skill based on the writing section of the Top Notch course book as assigned by the Institute. After the treatment, the writing post-test was administered to measure the achievement.

3. RESULTS

Homogeneity Measures

Initially, out of 80 learners, those whose scores lied between with -1 and +1 standard deviation were placed as the subjects of the study as a homogenous sample.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of OPT Scores

			Statistic	Std. Error
OPT	Mean		46.4714	1.03154
	95% Confidence Interval for	Lower Bound	44.4136	
	Mean	Upper Bound	48.5293	
	5% Trimmed Mean		46.4603	
	Median		47.0000	
	Variance		74.485	
	Std. Deviation		8.63045	
	Minimum		33.00	
	Maximum		60.00	
	Range		27.00	
	Interquartile Range		16.25	
	Skewness		-.010	.287
	Kurtosis		-1.284	.566

Table 2: Tests of Normality of Pretest Scores

Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov-Shapiro-Wilk					
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Given & New	.236	10	.120	.886	10	.151
Direct Matching	.189	10	.200*	.891	10	.172
PretestBridging	.136	10	.200*	.923	10	.384
Reinstating Old Information strategies.	.228	10	.149	.864	10	.086
Control Group	.157	10	.200*	.907	10	.261

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Testing The Normality Assumptions

To carry out the one-way ANOVA procedure, the assumptions of normality of the data and homogeneity of variances are necessary to be tested. Therefore, they were tested before conducting the main analysis. If the assumptions are met, carrying out the one-way ANOVA is possible as a parametric test of analyzing the data. The following table shows the normality of the data.

Table 3: Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Pretest Scores

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest	Based on Mean	1.581	4	45	.196
	Based on Median	1.642	4	45	.180
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.642	4	37.141	.184
	Based on trimmed mean	1.622	4	45	.185

As presented in Table 2 above, the Shapiro-Wilk statistics shows that there is no significant value and all the significant values presented in the Sig. column are above 0.05. This means that the pretest data are normally distributed. Therefore, this assumption is met. The other assumption was the homogeneity of variances, presented in the following table.

Table 3 above shows that there is significance value (> 0.05), which indicates that there is homogeneity between the variances of the five groups in pretest. Therefore, this assumption is also met for the pretest. Furthermore, the same procedure was run on posttest scores, the normality of which is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Tests of Normality of Posttest Scores

Group		Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
posttest	Given & New	.285	10	.020	.893	10	.183
	Direct Matching	.161	10	.200*	.949	10	.662
	Bridging	.212	10	.200*	.889	10	.163
	Reinstating Old Information strategies	.214	10	.200*	.902	10	.228
	Control Group	.140	10	.200*	.950	10	.666

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4 above indicates that the data are normally distributed for the posttest with significant values for the group. Therefore, this assumption is also met for the posttest. The following table shows the homogeneity of variances of the results in the posttest.

Based on Table 5, it can be seen that the variances are homogeneous in the posttest. The significance value supports the hypothesis, and therefore the assumption of homogeneity is met for posttest.

Table 5: Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Posttest Scores

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
posttest	Based on Mean	.152	4	45	.961
	Based on Median	.154	4	45	.960
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.154	4	38.570	.960
	Based on trimmed mean	.143	4	45	.965

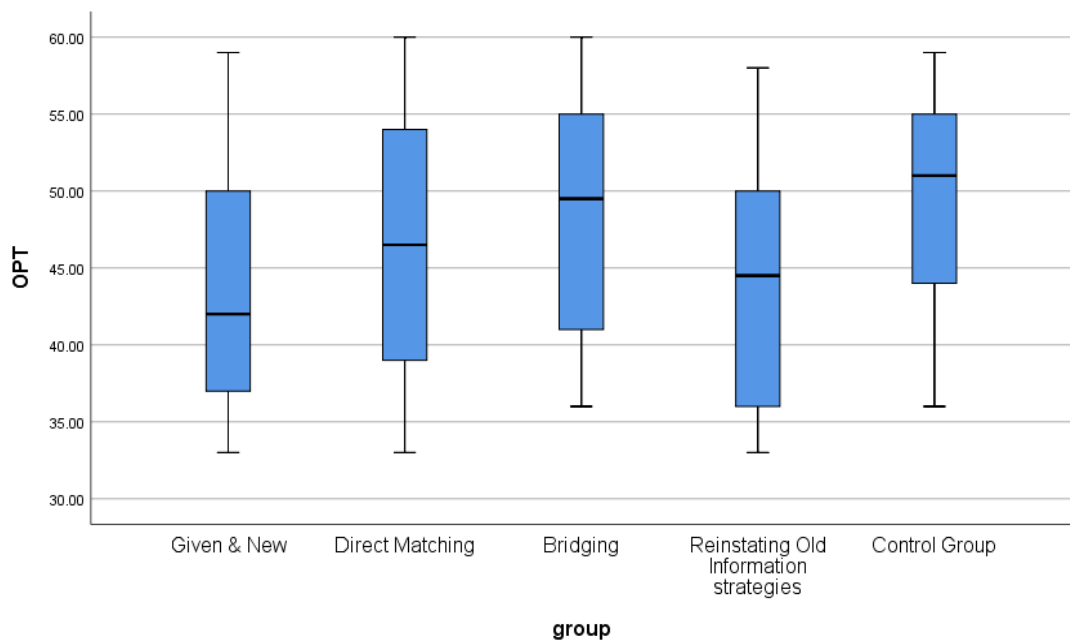


Figure 1: Box Plot of OPT Scores

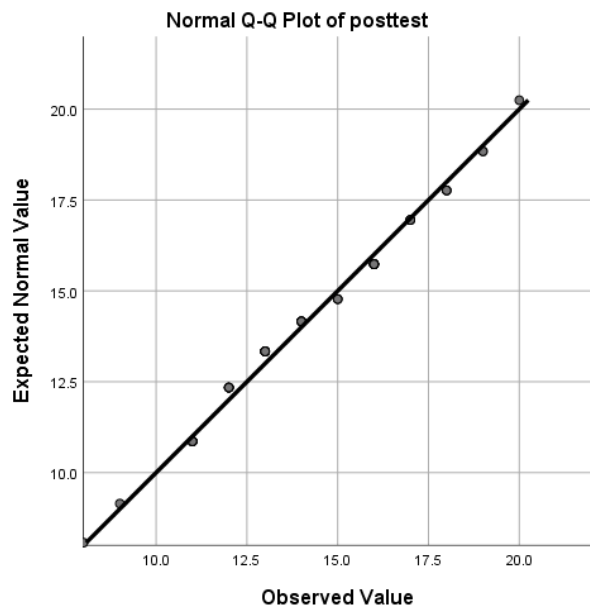


Figure 2: Normal Q-Q Plot of Posttest Scores

Pretest Results

After the assumptions of the one-way ANOVA were met, the test was run on the pretest results to make sure that the groups did not have significant difference with each other in terms of writing. The descriptive results of the test are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Pretest Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Given & New	10	14.50	1.43	.45	13.47	15.52	12.00	16.00
Direct Matching	10	13.80	2.74	.86	11.83	15.76	10.00	17.00
Bridging	10	13.30	2.83	.89	11.27	15.32	9.00	17.00
Reinstating Old Information strategies	10	12.60	2.63	.83	10.71	14.48	9.00	16.00
Control Group	10	14.10	2.72	.86	12.14	16.05	9.00	17.00
Total	50	13.66	2.51	.35	12.94	14.37	9.00	17.00

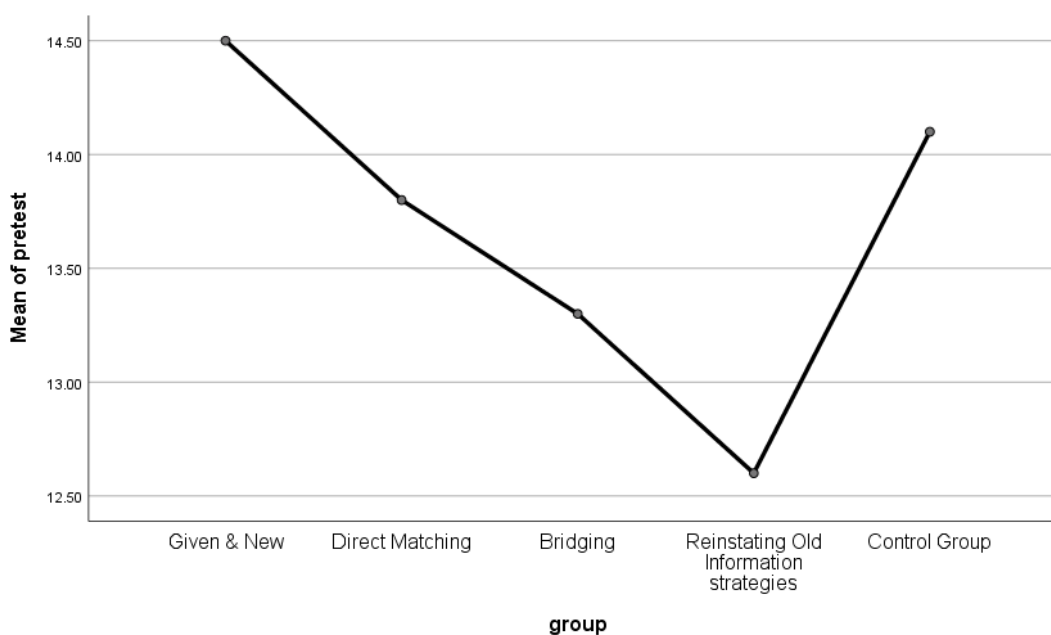


Figure 3: Means Difference Plot of Pretest Scores

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum of scores in all five groups. The mean score of the Given & New group was 14.5, the mean of Direct Matching was 13.8, the mean of Bridging group was 13.3, the mean of Reinstating Old Information strategies group was 12.6, and the mean of control group was 14.1. To see if these mean differences are significant, the one-way ANOVA test in Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7: ANOVA of Pretest Scores

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21.720	4	5.430	.850	.501
Within Groups	287.500	45	6.389		
Total	309.220	49			

As shown in Table 7 above, there is no significant difference among the five groups and the Sig value is 0.501. Therefore, it can be concluded that the groups were not significantly different from each other in terms of writing before the treatment.

4. INVESTIGATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: “Is discourse coherence strategy-based instruction more significantly effective than conventional teaching in developing EFL learner’s writing ability?” To investigate the two research hypotheses, a one-way ANOVA was run on the posttest results. The descriptive analysis of the results is presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum of scores in all five groups. The mean score of the Given & New group was 16.10, the mean of Direct Matching was 14.20, the mean of Bridging group was 14, the mean of Reinstating Old Information strategies group was 14.10, and the mean of control group was 12.4. The results of the ANOVA test are as follows to see if there is a difference between the five groups.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Posttest Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Given & New	10	16.10	2.72	.86	14.14	18.05	11.00	20.00
Direct Matching	10	14.20	2.25	.71	12.58	15.81	11.00	19.00
Bridging	10	14.00	2.26	.71	12.38	15.61	11.00	17.00
Reinstating Old Information strategies	10	14.10	2.80	.88	12.09	16.10	11.00	19.00
Control Group	10	12.40	2.63	.83	10.51	14.28	8.00	16.00
Total	50	14.16	2.71	.38	13.3	14.9	8.00	20.00

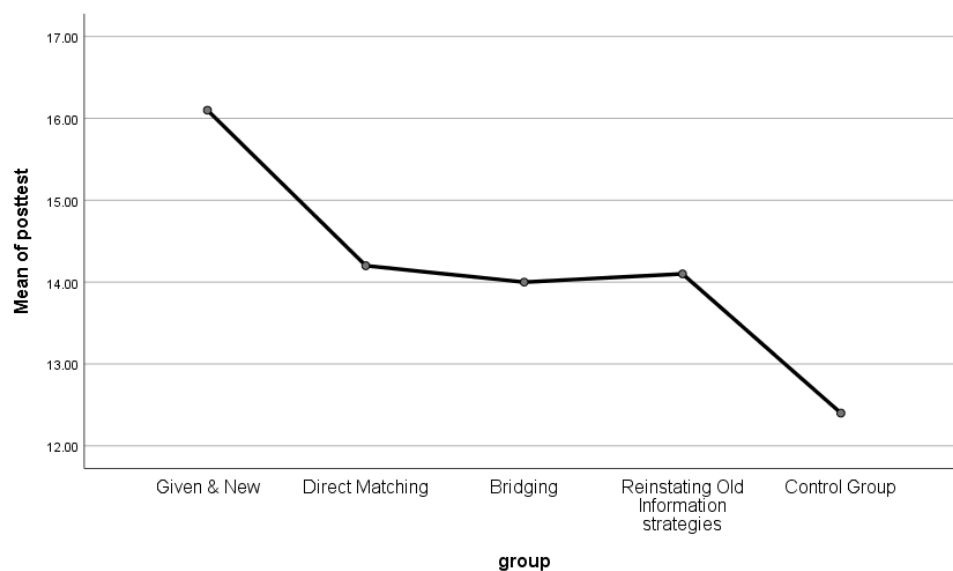


Figure 4: Mean Difference of Posttest Scores

Table 9: ANOVA of Posttest Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	68.920	4	17.230	2.657	.045
Within Groups	291.800	45	6.484		
Total	360.720	49			

As shown in Table 9 above, the difference between the mean score of the five groups is significant as indicated in Sig. value ($p = .045$). This significant value shows that there is a significant difference between the five groups. However, these results do not show exactly where the difference was. To find the exact differences between the five groups, they were compared to each other in pair-wise comparisons through a post-hoc test. The post-hoc test of Scheffe was also carried out, the results of which is presented in Table 10 below.

As shown in Table 10 above, there was a significant difference between the results of the control group with only one of the experimental groups which was the Given and New group. However, no significant difference was found in the results of the other groups with each other. In other words, the mean difference between the control group and Given and New group was significant ($p = .04 < .05$).

Table 10: Multiple Comparisons Scheffe Test

Dependent Variable: post-test						
Scheffe						
(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Given & New	Direct Matching	1.9	1.13	.59	-1.75	5.55
	Bridging	2.1	1.13	.50	-1.55	5.75
	Reinstating Old Information strategies	2.0	1.13	.55	-1.65	5.65
	Control Group	3.7*	1.13	.04	.04	7.35
Direct Matching	Given & New	-1.9	1.13	.59	-5.55	1.75
	Bridging	.2	1.13	1.00	-3.45	3.85
	Reinstating Old Information strategies	.1	1.13	1.00	-3.55	3.75
	Control Group	1.8	1.13	.64	-1.85	5.45
Bridging	Given & New	-2.1	1.13	.50	-5.75	1.55
	Direct Matching	-.2	1.13	1.00	-3.85	3.45
	Reinstating Old Information strategies	-.1	1.13	1.00	-3.75	3.55
	Control Group	1.6	1.13	.74	-2.05	5.25
Reinstating Old Information strategies	Given & New	-2.0	1.13	.55	-5.65	1.65
	Direct Matching	-.1	1.13	1.00	-3.75	3.55
	Bridging	.1	1.13	1.00	-3.55	3.75
	Control Group	1.7	1.13	.69	-1.95	5.35
Control Group	Given & New	-3.7*	1.13	.04	-7.35	-.04
	Direct Matching	-1.8	1.13	.64	-5.45	1.85
	Bridging	-1.6	1.13	.74	-5.25	2.05
	Reinstating Old Information strategies	-1.7	1.13	.69	-5.35	1.95

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

In conclusion, the first null hypothesis, “coherence strategy-based instruction is not more significantly effective than conventional teaching in developing EFL learner’s writing ability” **was rejected**, meaning that there IS a significant difference.

The second null hypothesis, indicating that “there are not any significant differences among the discourse coherence-based strategies (Given & New; Direct Matching; Bridging; and Reinstating Old Information strategies) instructions in developing writing ability”, was also checked using the same analysis for the first research question.

The results of the statistical analysis showed that the second null hypothesis was **approved**, meaning that there is no significant difference between the four experimental groups in writing. The statistics revealed that although the means of the four experimental groups were slightly different from each other, this slight difference was not significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference among the discourse coherence-based strategies (Given & New; Direct Matching; Bridging; and Reinstating Old Information strategies) instructions in developing writing ability.

5. DISCUSSION

This study found that coherence strategy-based instruction is more significantly effective than conventional teaching in developing EFL learner’s writing ability. Results also revealed that the mean difference between the control group and the Given and New strategy group was significant. In fact, it was the only group that had significantly higher performance in writing ability.

In a similar study, Liu and Qi (2010) conducted a pilot empirical study to examine the deficiency of textual cohesion and coherence reflected in genre-based English abstract production of the engineering discourse by most Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) advanced learners, using cohesive theory, text linguistics, and intercultural theory as the theoretical framework. The problems were addressed typically from the perspective of intercultural communication, aiming to help Chinese EFL advanced writers achieve effective communication in the interaction with International English readers (IE). They compared the data obtained from 30 abstracts written by Chinese advanced EFL writers and another 30 abstracts written by English as Mother Language (EML) writers in terms of structural cohesion and non-structural cohesion. The contractive results of their study showed that Chinese and English were surprisingly different in strategies of cohesion and coherence, and that the major cohesive and coherence errors made repetitively by most Chinese EFL respondents were more associated with their cultural transfer as fossilization.

In another study, Greenfield and Subrahmanyam (2003) described the way participants in an online chat room carried out chat features to secure coherence and establish a new register. They suggested two requirements for coherence in their study, namely ‘conversation interlocutors and response components’. Their study revealed that the visual aspects of the chat channel helps participants modify communication strategies and make new set of strategies. These findings yield support to the findings of the present study in that the positive effects of the independent variables may be attributed to the notion of ‘*secure cohesion*’ as happened in Greenfield and Subrahmanyam’s study.

Furthermore, Leo (2012) conducted a study in which she examined how Chinese ESL learners used two types of cohesive devices on a standardized essay exam. The researcher conducted a discourse analysis of 90 first-year students’ expository writing samples to ascertain how factors such as first language (L1) and length of residence in Canada influenced a student’s ability to create cohesive and coherent writing. Her key writing variables to measure the academic writing proficiency were quantitatively analyzed to compare the expository writings. Results of her study indicated that synonymy and content words distinguished the writings of the Canadian-born

Chinese students from those of their later-arriving peers. A qualitative analysis of one Canadian-born Chinese students' essay revealed that a more flexible and contextualized approach to evaluating writing by long-term Generation 1.5 students is required to acknowledge fully the productive lexical and discourse strengths of these students.

By comparing and contrasting the results of the current study with those of the above-mentioned ones, it can be concluded that using coherence-based discourse approach to teaching writing is an effective strategy that can be used by the teachers. This can maximize the writing outcomes of the learners, which they have problems with (as stated in the Statement of the Problem). Therefore, these results can be discussed as supported by the previous literature regarding the effectiveness of discourse coherence-based strategies.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this research, using discourse coherence-based strategies in the classroom can increase the writing ability of EFL learners. In details, there was a significant difference between the results of the control group and one of the experimental groups which was the Given and New group. However, no significant difference was found in the results of the other groups with each other. In other words, the mean difference between the control group and the Given and New group was significant. In conclusion, the first null hypothesis, implying that "coherence strategy-based instruction is not more significantly effective than conventional teaching in developing EFL learner's writing ability" was rejected, meaning that there IS a significant difference.

The second null hypothesis, indicating that "there are not any significant differences among the discourse coherence-based strategies (Given & New; Direct Matching; Bridging; and Reinstating Old Information strategies) instructions in developing writing ability" was also checked using the same analysis for the first research question. The results of the statistical analysis showed that the second null hypothesis was maintained, meaning that there is no significant difference between the four experimental groups in writing.

The statistics revealed that although the means of the four experimental groups were slightly different from each other, this slight difference was not significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference among the discourse coherence-based strategies (Given & New; Direct Matching; Bridging; and Reinstating Old Information strategies) instructions in developing writing ability.

The findings of the current study can have a number of pedagogical implications for L2 institutes, teachers, curriculum designers and also materials developers. Second language institutes may benefit from the current study through its policy-making implications. They are suggested to maintain a more flexible view towards the use of discourse coherence-based strategies in their classes and allow their teachers to use the strategies and techniques to increase their L2 learners' writing skills.

Other beneficiaries of the findings of the current study, as stated above, are L2 teachers who are concerned with improving their students' writing. They are recommended to include discourse coherence-based strategies in their lesson plans and predict the areas of difficulty the learners may encounter, using discourse coherence-based strategies as facilitating tools for overcoming hurdles on the path of learning the target language. In other words, this study helps instructors to introduce techniques to students to improve their writing skills. In fact, it is the teacher's task to introduce suitable strategies and approaches to their students to help them solve their writing problems. By comparing the five strategies, teachers can understand the students' attitudes towards applying these strategies and can use them in their curricula to improve the students' writing skill.

Instructors can take advantage of the findings of this study by finding a teaching strategy that fits their learners the best at different proficiency levels.

Moreover, materials developers can also exploit the findings of the study in developing course books and other supplementary materials to be taught in language classrooms. Using discourse coherence-based strategies can be applied to course books to maximize learners' grasp of the materials taught in the classroom, especially writing skills, through using these strategies. By taking advantage of the findings of this study, they can become aware of the comparative effect of the four different techniques and use them properly.

Finally, this study may also help curriculum designers appreciate the importance of discourse coherence-based strategies to writing to improve the writing achievement of EFL learners. In other words, it helps them to find out which strategy develops the writing skill better in EFL learners. Curriculum designers can use the findings of this study and design curriculums that put emphasis on different techniques for the improvement of writing skill.

For the researchers who want to do research in this field, some suggestions are made based on the findings, limitations and delimitations of this research, as follows:

1. This study was conducted on 50 students with 10 students in each group due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further research can be conducted on more students to maximize the validity and reliability of the studies.
2. This study was conducted only on female learners of EFL. In fact, the researcher chose only female learners in her study. Other research studies can investigate males and also examine the difference between males and females in this regard.
3. Regarding the level of the participants, this study only investigated the intermediate learners. It would be better for further studies to include other proficiency levels as well to compare the results across the different proficiency levels.
4. Among the skills and sub-skills that can be studied in this regard, this study was conducted only on writing skill. Therefore, further studies can investigate such discourse coherence-based strategies on other skills such as speaking.

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Phonics vs. Whole Language in Teaching EFL to Young Learners: A Micro-Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to young learners is gaining increasing significance given many parents' interest in EFL learning by their pre-school children. In this micro-ethnographic study, in light of a long-held debate in literacy education, we examine the nature of the little-explored current practices of EFL teaching to young learners from two instructional perspectives: Phonics (Ph) and Whole Language (WL). Data collection was carried out through micro-ethnographic observation of an EFL teacher training course for teachers of young learners as well as four classes at a private language institute in Tehran over a period of three months. Data bodies, including audio-recordings, fieldnotes, reflective memos, teaching materials, and young learners' writings were analyzed based on a grounded theory perspective. The findings illustrate detailed accounts of teaching and learning involvements in this context and indicate that the instructional practices labeled as PH-based teaching are in fact an uneven mix of PH and WL. On this basis, we argue that a conscious and coherent combination of perspectives from the two approaches can provide opportunities for more balanced teaching and more meaningful EFL learning experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear teacher, would you please introduce me a good language institute? My child has been learning English in a language institute for two years. However, she has no motivation to go on learning it anymore. (Mother of a 7-year-old EFL learner)

English teachers frequently encounter such requests by pre-school children's parents who had the experience of changing different language institutes, resulting in frustration in learning English. Such educational contexts may be attractive for Young Learners (YLS) at the beginning, while causing their gradual loss of interest and withdrawal afterwards. Therefore, a few questions may come to mind in this regard: How do YLS become engaged and motivated in these contexts? What kinds of interaction exist among teachers and learners in language institutes since students are too young to know and follow the rules and orders in such classes? Addressing some aspects

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of such questions, studies on young EFL learners' language learning worldwide have considered issues such as motivation (e.g., Wu, 2005), using songs and games (e.g., Butler et al., 2014; Paquette & Rieg, 2008), technology influence (e.g., Hockly, 2013), psychological aspects (e.g., Carreira et al., 2013; Wu, 2005), and teaching materials (e.g., Ahmed, 2017).

Moreover, there has been increasing interest among scholars in how literacy education to YLs in an additional language should be approached (Norton, 2012). While some suggest approaches based on non-segmented language learning experience (e.g., Whitemore & Crawell, 2005), others such as Smith (2011) concur with the idea of employing highly structured, teacher-directed activities that rely on drill, practice and memorization and assert that students should learn language bit by bit. Currently, proponents of each approach convincingly defend both approaches, and this may confuse educators and administrators to choose the effective literacy teaching (Hempenstall, 2005; Liaw, 2003). There are also scholars who prefer using a blend of methods and techniques, drawing from both the Whole Language (WL) approach and the skills-based approach (Blaiklock & Haddow, 2007; Hempenstall, 2005).

Nonetheless, as the overall approach to language and literacy education for young EFL learners in Iran has not been widely examined, there is little in-depth evidence on such concerns in our context. Therefore, this study pursues two purposes: First, we aim to provide a thick description of young EFL learners' involvements to shed light on what is going on in their English language classes. In this regard, we consider the educational context of young EFL learners, including teaching and learning processes, different kinds of interactions between teacher and students, and materials used in class, as well as children's attitudes towards learning a foreign language. Second, in line with Ken Goodman's (1997) belief that language is invented by children within the dynamics of the language conventions as expressed by the society and culture, this study tries to reflect on these teaching and learning processes from the Whole Language (WL) versus Phonics (Ph) points of view. More specifically, we address two research questions:

1. What are the PH-labeled processes of teaching EFL to YLs in a selected English language institute in Tehran?
2. What are the rewards and challenges of such language education processes from the Ph perspective versus the WL one?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Approaches to Literacy Education

While YLs are considered at the core of literacy education concerns in educational policy development, "there has been intense public interest for decades in how children learn to read. This interest has often been realized in the form of vociferous argument over how children should be taught to read— a period of exchange that has become known as the "reading wars"" (Castles, 2018, p. 5). Over many years, the debate went on between those who favor the Ph approach, in which the sound letters are taught explicitly (Chall, 1967; Flesch, 1955) and those who advocate a WL approach, in which the child's discovery of meaning through experiences in authentic literacy-rich activities is emphasized (Goodman, 1997; Smith, 1971).

Phonics

Phonics was introduced in the 19th century and continued to be the predominant method until the second half of the century (Watson, 1998). Some scholars like Adams (1990) regard Ph as "a system of teaching reading that builds on the alphabetic principle, a system of which a central component is the teaching of correspondences between letters or groups of letters and their

pronunciations” (p. 50). The National Reading Panel (2000) defines Ph as a way of teaching reading in which the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling is its primary focus. Popular forms of Ph instruction in the 1960s included synthetic and analytic instruction (Aukerman, 1981). In synthetic or explicit Ph instruction, children are taught to ‘synthesize’ the sounds existing in written words by blending the sounds together. In this regard, some “commercial Ph programs such as Letter Land, Jolly Phonics and Ants in the Apple” became widely used in the early years of school (Campbell et al., 2011, p. 369).

In an analytic instruction process, also known as implicit Ph, the known words are broken down into their component parts. Through this kind of instruction, learners often have the images in mind and can identify words by their shape, their first and last letters, and the context in which they are used in the frame of sentences. Watson and Johnston (2000) explain in brief that analytic Ph breaks down the whole to parts, whereas synthetic Ph builds up from parts to whole. Indeed, both synthetic and analytic Ph are included as systematic Ph (Shepherd, 2013). It is claimed that using a systematic approach is considered as the preferred method of Ph instruction for teaching literacy in the first years of school in countries like Australia and the UK (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005; Rose, 2006).

Whole Language

In the era that educational studies revolved around behavioral psychology, the emergence of the WL approach paved the ground for considering more humanistic studies (Goodman, 1989). The WL approach which “emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century was to a large extent, a revolt against the skills-based approach” (El-Koumy, 2004, p. 17). Studies show that there is no universally accepted definition for the WL. According to Maddox and Feng (2013, p. 6), there are various studies that “describe WL as a theory, an approach, a method, a philosophy, a belief, or even a curriculum”. Hempenstall (2005) believes that since the WL classrooms are not the same, it is not an easy task to explain definitely what happens in these educational settings. Goodman (1986) describes the WL as a philosophy rather than as a series of prescribed activities. Goodman (1991) further mentions that comprehension, reading and writing ability can develop side by side with the speaking ability. In other words, the WL proponents pay more attention to the integration of language.

In the same vein, Ling (2012) asserts that “taking the aims, motives, and environments of learning foreign language into consideration, we can develop the students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities at the same time” (p. 150). Using the WL theory would lead to the invention of new ways of thinking and new methods to foreign language teaching in which the activities pave the ground for creating a meaningful environment of language learning and students can learn and use English with more enthusiasm. This is in line with what Goodman (1989) refers to as a sense of empowerment through which learners “are invited to take ownership over their learning and given maximum support in developing their objectives and fulfilling them” (p. 209). In other words, students become the directors of their own learning processes.

Integration of Ph and WL

Some advocates of the WL argue that decoding instruction had always been part of the WL teaching. Considerations of interconnected Ph and WL vies have led to an argument for a *balanced literacy* that is intended to incorporate the best elements from both Ph and WL approaches (Church, 1996; Goodman, 1993; Moats, 2000; Routman, 1996). Furthermore, the new approaches to Ph instruction by the 1990s relied on constructivist principles such as spelling-based approaches (Cunningham & Cunningham, 1998) and embedded Ph approaches (Hiebert et al., 1992) which engaged learners in active construction of knowledge about orthographic patterns. The outcome

of such approaches somehow support the integration of Ph instruction with the ideas of the WL approach.

Moreover, some scholars believe that using the Ph instruction would engage learners in more challenging materials to read compared to that of the WL classrooms (e.g., Stahl et al., 1996). Therefore, “an effective program might involve elements associated with WL as well as more direct instructional approaches” (Stahl et al., 2006, p. 147). However, depending on YLs’ needs and interests, these elements might be managed. For instance, the learners with a low literacy background in early stages may need more direct instruction to develop concepts compared to those who can foster their literacy knowledge through print-based activities whether at home or in class.

Second/Foreign Language Literacy Education

Many EFL teachers, as well as researchers, seek effective ways to teach English and in particular, literacy. Although learners of English as an additional language can experience additional challenges when they start to learn reading and writing in English, “there exists a consensus among second language educators that young learners need to be engaged in literacy instruction” (Gordon, 2007, p. 95). Considering the great debate, several studies were conducted around the world to find which approach is the best for the EFL learners. Many scholars advocate both the WL and Ph approaches, leaving educators, administrators, and parents in dark about effective ways to teach reading to beginners (Blaklock & Haddow, 2007; Hempenstall, 2005; Liaw, 2003).

Ph in Foreign Language Education

There are arguments in favor of Ph instruction and the effectiveness of phonological training in second/foreign language/literacy education (Purewal, 2008). It has been argued that first and second language learners use similar strategies in reading (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Similarly, scholars such as Smith (2011) assert that Ph is a compulsory component in Western and Eastern countries although the researcher does refer to the complexity of implementing Ph instruction and focuses on a crucial question of how we can ensure maximum learning outcomes for EFL students implementing Ph instruction. In this regard, while Smith (2011) considers basic approaches, progression, assessment and teacher preparation as the key aspects necessary in developing a successful Ph program, he mentions two issues that have important implications for policy and practice, namely selecting the best type of PHh instruction and the existing unique position of teaching Ph in an ESL context.

Among the commercial Ph programs of teaching Ph to YLs, Jolly Phonics series (Lloyd & Wernham, 1995) has been widely used in first language literacy education in early years of school (Campbell et al., 2011). However, as pointed out by Derakhshan and Faghani (2016), this commercial program is also the main textbook at many institutes in EFL contexts. Despite its popularity in EFL literacy education, Mullins (2013) questions some issues in teaching Jolly Phonics such as the lack of teacher’s knowledge. A related study by Tibi (2005) in the United Arab Emirates also shows that teachers were often inadequately prepared in teaching phonological awareness. In this regard, Ariati, Padmadewi, and Suarnajaya (2017) suggest a variety of activities such as story reading, games, whiteboard blending, free writing tasks, and outdoor activities to improve YLs’ English literacy skills through Jolly Phonics strategy.

WL in Foreign Language Education

The effectiveness of using the WL principles in teaching English as a foreign language at different levels has been attested by several studies. Some of the arguments in this regard focus on

the effectiveness of the WL approach in improving learners' foreign language learning through using the skills holistically (Qiang et al., 2008), and the advantages of using the WL approach in teaching reading such as increasing students' independence in learning (Alhaddad, 2014). Describing his WL Foreign Language Class (WLFLC) as a practical example, Schwarzer (2001) mentions "three basic components needed to establish a WLFLC: (1) the classroom setting; (2) the resource books used in the class; and (3) the schedule of instructional activities for the class" (p. 52). Similarly, considering instructional activities in a WL classroom, Gordon (2007) argues that these literacy pieces should be similar to authentic written texts that children might encounter outside the classroom.

Ling (2012, p. 152) believes that using the WL in these educational contexts has some advantages and disadvantages as well: "Firstly, with this theory, it becomes easier and more possible for the students to understand the whole text. Secondly, it blends the practices of listening, speaking, reading and writing into an organic unity, avoiding developing the reading ability only in the teaching of English reading. Thirdly, it adopts informal assessment so that the students can get a more objective score". Furthermore, in another study conducted by Erlina, Mayuni, and Akhadia (2016), EFL materials were evaluated from a WL point of view. They provided new materials consisting of a course book and a teacher's manual to make reading more holistic and meaningful. Focusing on learners' needs and interests, they suggest that educational institutions need to provide a rich learning environment with a variety of reading sources to let learners select the materials that suit their interests.

Integrating Ph and WL in Foreign Language Education

In practice, teachers may prefer neither the traditional skills-based approach and teacher-directed view of literacy teaching only, nor the strict version of social interaction proposed by the WL view of literacy teaching and learning. In the era of effective language teaching, the classroom processes "might involve elements associated with WL as well as more direct instructional approaches" (Stahl et al., 2006, p. 147). In this regard, many scholars believe in using a blend of methods and techniques, drawing from both the WL approach and the skills-based approach (e.g., Blaiklock & Haddow, 2007; Hempenstall, 2005). Similarly, Freppon (1991) conducted a study and proclaimed that students who were taught Ph in a context could apply their knowledge and sound out words more successfully than students who were taught Ph in isolation.

In the same vein, Hornsby and Wilson (2009) refer to the evidence supporting the view that Ph is best learned when taught in the context of learning to read and write. Similarly, Maddox and Feng (2013) asserted that the WL approach would be most effective with the integration of Ph instruction. Stressing on using authentic and meaningful text, the scholars mentioned Ph instruction as "daily, specifically planned, teacher-directed" activities (p. 19). Since there is a need for learners to overcome unknown Ph patterns to decode them efficiently, working on explicit Ph lessons seems to be of great importance among classroom activities. Although the scholars recommended the integration of the Ph and WL into one curriculum, they place greater emphasis on Ph development believing that Ph instruction will most effectively build literacy skills for all young readers.

3. METHOD

Context and Participants

Considering the guiding questions of the study, this research aims to provide a thick description of YLs' educational environment. Then, these classroom processes are going to be analyzed from two perspectives, namely Ph versus WL. In this regard, two related settings shape the context of

the study, namely a Teacher Training Course (TTC) and an English language institute. After observing the TTC that was mainly based on teaching the procedure of sound letters, in a language institute that worked in line with the TTC, four classes were selected for observation. The second author of this article participated in the TTC as the first setting of the study. The course was held for 11 teacher trainees and comprised four three-hour sessions. All the sound letters of Ph1A–Ph3B along with their related story, actions, words, and sentences were taught during the course.

The language institute was a branch of major institute with more than 50 branches around the country. This branch is located in the west of Tehran and its courses for different ages include *Phonics for YLs* (for children aged 4–7), *Take Off* and *English Time* (for children aged 7–12), as well as *Cambridge Exam Preparation* course and *Free Discussions* (for students aged 12 and above). Teaching materials for YLs provided by the central institute are student books, flashcards, and CDs. The course materials are based on Ph system (adopted from Jolly Phonics series) in which children do reading and writing activities.

After the TTC, four classes of the institute were proposed by the institute for observation, namely Ph1A, Ph1B, Ph2B, and Ph3A. In this regard, the teachers as well as the YLs of these classes are considered as two groups of participants of the study. The four female teachers (aged 21–36) have all passed the TTC held by the main institute. Some have a university degree related to teaching English and some have acquired English in private language institutes. Students of the four classes included 18 young boys and girls aged 4–7.

Data Collection

Data was collected based on an ethnographic approach (Murchison, 2010) using multiple methods, including participation, audio recording, and field notes so that it would “reduce the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method” (Maxwell, 2005, p.112) and help gain more credible results. Data bodies were collected within three months, first through participation in the aforementioned TTC and then through observation of those classes that were in line with that course. The second author of this article first participated in the TTC of the institute and then conducted observations of YLs’ classes to be able to see the realization of the TTC in these classes. Based on practicality and availability, five sessions of each of the four classes (overall 20 three-hour sessions) were observed and audio-recorded by the permission of the institute manager.

Field notes were recorded during the observation to keep track of non-verbal expressions, physical reactions in different situations, and all other aspects of data that could not be audio-recorded. They were written as soon as possible after each observation session to record the details. Furthermore, since memo-writing can help researchers be actively engaged with materials, generate new ideas, and modify the subsequent data-gathering (Charmaz, 2014), the observer’s own thoughts and attitudes were written in reflective-memos. Some learners’ writing samples were also gathered as the secondary data of the study. Moreover, the second author of this article also talked with parents about issues related to YLs’ learning experiences and challenges. During these interactions, they let her cast a look at children’s English books and notebook and take photos of their writings. These often consisted of quizzes, dictations, and other writing activities.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory and coding procedures were employed to explore the data (Charmaz, 2014). In grounded theory, “rather than approaching the data with pre-existing theories and concepts and applying these theories to the data (a deductive or etic approach), researchers begin by collecting data, engaging in open line-by-line analysis, creating larger themes from these data, and linking

them together to create an emergent explanation or theory.” (Tracy, 2020, p. 63) In this regard, coding was used as a process of extracting themes from EFL YLs’ educational settings. Based on Tracy’s categorization, we analyzed the data in the two rounds of *primary-cycle coding* and *secondary-cycle coding*. The former provides a summary of “what’s going on” in the context, whereas the latter seeks to ask ““why” and “how” empirical materials are interesting and significant” (Tracy, 2020, p. 232). Based on this categorization, the word ‘cycle’ in the aforementioned coding procedures reveals that these processes are not simply a one-trial stage but, repeated and recoded for a couple of times through several phases. For trustworthiness, Tracy’s (2010) eight criteria were considered to take care of the quality of the study.

4. FINDINGS

The themes that emerged out of the coding procedures are presented in this section and are illustrated by examples. The main emerging categories of teaching and learning involvements in these contexts include: Whole-Institute Activities (including four kinds of exercises in which all teachers and students are involved before starting their classes); Class Warm-up (including YLs introducing themselves and talking about their favorites at the beginning of each session); and Literacy Teaching (including different parts of teaching these YLs how to read and write). Following the illustration of each main category, brief notes are presented based on TTC discussions related to that category, and then some reflections on the activities of that category are provided from the Ph versus WL perspectives.

Whole-Institute Activities

Every morning before the start of classes, teachers and students of all classes stand in the middle of Class C (the largest one) to sing and do some whole-institute activities together. These activities consist of four main ones, namely, Thank You God, Morning Exercise, Show Me, and Super Songs. The details of each activity are explained below. (All ***bold-italic*** parts of the paragraphs as well as the block quotes in the rest of this section are excerpts of the data, and all names are pseudonyms.)

Thank You God

Thank You God is the first subcategory of the whole-institute activities. It is a one-minute preschool worship song for kids to recite and learn. It is around 9 o’clock. The children say goodbye to their parents and often enter the institute with sleepy faces, go to the biggest class, and put their backpack on the chair around the class. One may expect to see all the 6 boys and 12 girls for the whole-institute activities, but rarely can we see more than 10 students at the beginning of the activity. Three or four children often join the group in the middle or near the end. The teachers of all four classes start greeting students. There is a Master teacher (MT), Miss Mona, with long-term experience of teaching in that institute (about 10 years).

The MT starts the whole-institute activities exactly at 9 o’clock: ***Everybody hand in hand.*** Teachers and students stand in the middle of the class, take each other’s hand and make a circle. Then she goes on: ***Ok, raise up your hand [as if you want to pray]. In the name of God. Thank you God, for the world so sweet Thank you God for the birds that sing. Thank you God for the food we eat. Thank you, God, for the water we drink. Thank you, God, for everything.*** All four teachers sing the song as it seems there is just one voice. Raising the hands up, children mostly try to do the actions of flying, eating, and drinking as they hear the words in the rhyme.

Morning Exercise

Morning exercise is a three-minute activity through which children review different parts of body such as head, hand, foot, fingers, and the like. This section consists of two main parts: Up &

Down and Do & Count. In the former, YLs gradually become familiar with right and left hands, and in the latter, they learn numbers from one to ten by doing some exercises at the beginning of every session. In Up & Down, the MT asks the group (all students and teachers) to move their heads, hands, and legs up and down. What the MT asks the group to do are in a fixed order as follows: *Hands up, hands down, right hand up, right hand down, left hand up, left hand down, right foot up, right foot down, left foot up, left foot down*. While doing the actions, some of the students wrongly raise their right or left hand. However, the MT pays no attention and with a smile on her face shows her approval towards children.

During the activity, Miss Mona tries to respond to children's actions: *Excellent! Thank you!* Furthermore, she sometimes asks for children's help to complete the order while the MT is doing the action in advance. As an example, once the MT put her hands on her shoulders and said: *Put your hands on your...?* The children replied together, *shoulders*. While the teacher was taking all the children's actions under consideration, she showed no reaction as she noticed that Aida was doing wrongly. Taking a look at the teacher, the child took the hands off the knees and put them on the shoulders as well.

Show Me

Show Me takes about five minutes and is performed in two sections, namely Feeling Actions (dealing with different kinds of feelings like being sad, happy, angry, surprised, etc.) and Daily Actions (related to simple verbs and daily actions such as washing, sleeping, walking, running, etc.) While Miss Mona asks the group *Show me you are tall*, the group responds while they try to stretch themselves upward: *I am tall*. When the MT says *Show me you are surprised*, the group pretends to be surprised and says, *Vow!* Then, the MT asks the group: *Show me you have a headache*. The group answers putting their hands on their forehead: *Ouch!* etc.

In Daily Actions as the second part of the activity, children review the routine verbs used in one's life. They do whatever Miss Mona asks and verbalize the action verb three times. As an example, when the MT says *Show me you are eating*, the group replies: *eat, eat, eating* while doing the action of putting something in their mouth with a spoon. Most of the children perform the orders together and imitate what the MT does. In case a child does not cooperate with others, the MT indirectly helps her/him do the action with the group. For instance, when the MT noticed that Aisana, a 4-year-old girl had stopped doing the actions and just was watching other children, she looked at the child, raised her voice to grab her attention while pretending cutting her own nails. Then the young learner repeated the action and did whatever the whole group were doing.

Sometimes the children want to attract their teacher's attention. For example, as the MT says *Show me you are sneezing*, all students make a sneezing sound while keeping hands in front of their nose. Then, teachers together say: *Bless you. Thank you*. Once, Helia kept doing the same action and looking at her teacher. A big smile appeared on her face and stopped sneezing after the teacher said: *OK, bless you!* Usually, girls are more active than boys in doing exercises. Occasionally, the MT says to the boys: *I just hear the girls' voice*. Afterwards, the boys try to raise their voice while the girls are encouraged more and do the rhymes eagerly. Some children give a different personal answer to the orders but see no reaction from the teachers. For instance, once the MT said: *Show me you are happy*, the whole group answered, *I am happy*. But Aida replied: *I am sad*, saying the word 'sad' louder, still receiving no reaction from the teachers.

Super Songs

The last part of the whole-institute activities is Super Songs. Children sing together the songs chosen from the book Super Songs. It is a collection of 27 traditional action-songs and chants for very young learners accompanying audio CD with lively recordings of all the songs (Figure 1). It

is expected that YLs sing nine songs of this collection among which three songs are the most popular ones, namely The Wheels on the Bus, Head, Shoulder, Knees, and Toes, and Wind the Bobbin up.

Unlike the previous sections of whole-institute activities in which teachers' voice is heard more and children mostly do the action while murmuring the rhymes in low voice, in this part, children often sing louder and do the actions together. It seems that this part is more interesting to them. For instance, once Miss Mona noticed that one of the students is singing the song in a very loud voice, she turned to him and said, *Nima, why are you shouting?* The MT starts with: *Everybody! Are you ready to sing Super Songs?* All of the children reply together, *Yes, I'm ready.* Then, she plays the CD. During singing the songs, the MT may stop the audio file and let children sing the songs without the CD. Occasionally, some students (often boys) may give their own idea about the content of the song. For instance, in the song The Wheels on the Bus, the students sing:

The children on the bus go riggle, riggle, riggle
The mummies on the bus go don't do that, don't do that
The babies on the bus go wah, wah, wah
The daddies on the bus go read, read, read...

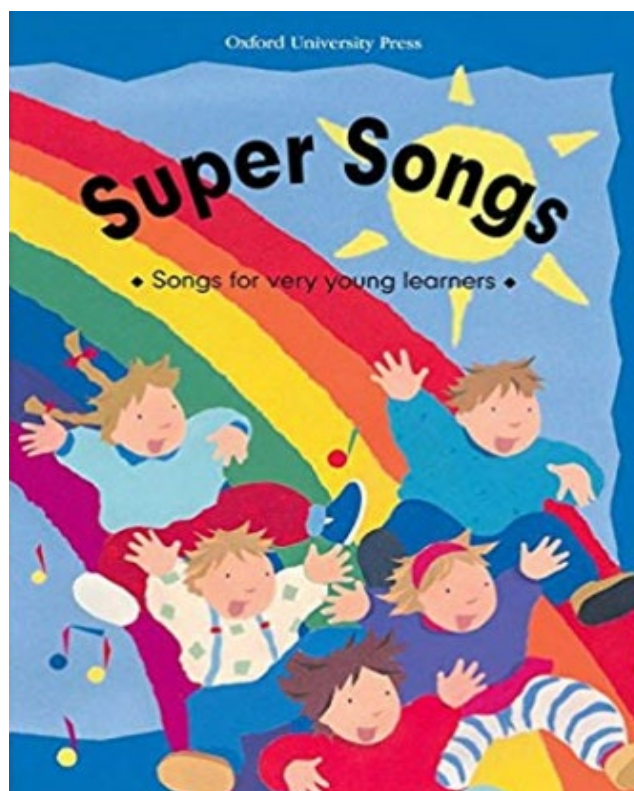


Figure 1: Cover of the book 'Super Songs'

Once the children were singing a song that did not belong to the collection of super song. They raised their right hand up and started singing: *Daddy finger, daddy finger, where are you?* Then, they raised their left thumb and went on: *Here I am, here I am, how do you do?* They went on the same procedure with mommy finger while showing their point finger and the like. At the end of the activity, the MT said: *Clap for yourself.* The children clapped and said in group, *Goodbye!*

Thank you, teacher. As the songs are finished, the students take their backpacks, line up and go to their own class getting ready for about three hours of activity.

TTC Evidence: Starting the first session of the TTC with a brief explanation of pre-phonics, the instructor, Miss Alavi says: Young learners participate first in a course called pre-phonics to get ready for Ph1. They will get familiar with some colors, fruits, animals, family members, parts of body, numbers 0 to 10, and simple questions. In the further explanation of group exercise, Miss Alavi, goes on: Do not correct students' sentences directly, they will gradually know how to do them in a right way. She adds that: Through imitation, practice, and repetition young learners will gradually get to know them. The instructor emphasizes: As a teacher, try to admire young learners all the time as they listen to your orders with the words such as, Excellent, Good boy or Good girl, I love you, Thank you, and the like. She goes on with a brief introduction of Super Songs saying that: The students will sing about 9 songs. All of them are in a book with a CD called Super Songs.

Ph vs. WL Perspective: Exposing the YLs to a language-rich environment contrasts with the idea of decontextualized language learning in Ph that defines class activities for the sole purpose of instructing language forms. Immersing students in an authentic speech asserts the idea of *relevance* in the WL. Children learn meaningful information connected with their lives, as their exercises in the whole-institute activities are somehow relevant to the children's daily lives. However, in some cases the content reminds the behavioristic theory of do and practice drill in the Ph point of view in which the main focus is on language not on real experiences and background knowledge of the learner. In line with this point of view, the YLs first have a sense, then practice, imitate until they learn it. From the *empowerment* point of view in the WL, these YLs have no power to use the activity in which they are more interested. The prescribed curriculum and teacher's authority in doing the activity asserts features of the Ph approach in these educational settings.

Class Warm-Up

After completing the whole-institute activity, the YLs enter the class, sit around the tables in a circle or semi-circle while putting their backpacks beside themselves on the floor (Figure 2). The number of girls is more than that of boys in all four classes. Moreover, the students often call their instructor *teacher* or add *Miss* to the beginning of her first name. At the beginning of each session, approximately 30-45 minutes are devoted to warm-up. It makes up a large part of class activity in which the learners introduce themselves one by one to their classmates. In this part of the activity, the children find the opportunity to speak and talk about themselves. However, the teacher tells them what to talk about. Depending on the level of students, warm-up is divided to two stages, Answer Me and Introduce Yourself.

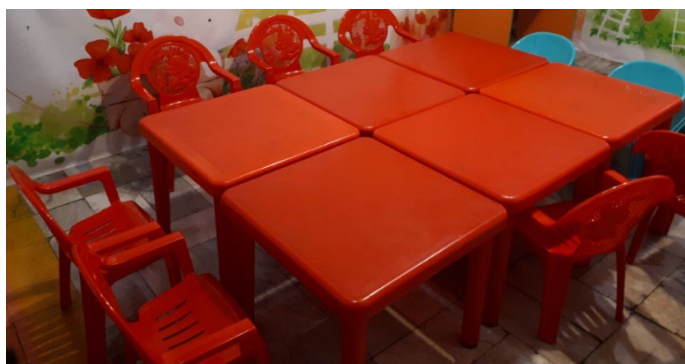


Figure 2: Setting of chairs and tables in one of the classrooms

Answer Me

At the beginning of every session, students of Ph1 and Ph2 should answer the questions asked by the teacher about their first name, last name, mother's name, father's name, and age. For instance, as Miss Mahsa wants to teach YLs how to introduce themselves, she goes towards Hasti, shakes hands with her and says: **Hello, my name is Mahsa. I am Mahsa. What is your name?** The student says nothing while looking at the teacher surprisingly. Then Miss Mahsa goes on with the same question while saying some male names to make the child react: **What is your name? Ali? Reza?** At the same time, the young girl answers: نه، هستی! Miss Mahsa says: **Aha, your name is Hasti.** Then the teacher goes on with repeating the same question and its answer, word by word: **What is your name? My... name... is... Hasti.** Afterwards, the teacher does the same for the rest of the students. While students have problems in answering the questions, they are often helped by reminding the familiar songs or activities.

Warm-up activity has its own disciplines. During a teacher-student dialogue other students should be silent, put their hands on the table, listen to their classmate and wait for their own turn to speak. They are not allowed to make noise whether with their body or by speaking with each other. For example, when Parsa was answering the questions, Miss Elham interrupted him, looked at Diana and said: **Don't talk to Negar! Be quiet! Listen to your friend's speaking.** Silence filled up the class with a heavy look towards her. The child looked at the classmates and started playing with fingers while her head was down. Again, the teacher said angrily: **Diana don't play with your fingers. Put your hands on the table. Listen to Parsa carefully. The next turn is yours.** Keeping the child's attention all the time is so important for the teachers that Miss Neda, for instance, frowned at Mobina as she was yawning to the child's embarrassment.

Introduce Yourself

As mentioned before, from Ph3A on, the warm-up activity becomes much longer. Learners should introduce themselves to their classmates and talk about their parents as well as their favorites (e.g., color, animal, food, sport, cartoon, and car). Finally, the teacher gives some orders using on, in, and under to the students. The students are always expected to follow a fixed order of the statements. In other words, they should first talk about their appearance, then their parents. Afterwards they would shift to their favorites. The following is an example:

Elena: My mother's name is Elham. My favorite color is....

Miss Mona interrupted her, **She is tall and thin.**

Elena: She is tall and thin. My favorite ...

Miss Mona: **My father's...**

Elena: Aaaaah! My father's name is Reza.

She seemed to decide for the YLs when to talk and what to say. For example, when Hanieh said, **My mother's name is Maryam. He is young and strong,** Miss Mona interrupted her and said: **Is your mother a boy?** All students laughed except Hanieh. Miss Mona corrected the answers: **Your mother is tall and thin. Your father is young and strong.** The young learner stopped talking any more, then Miss Mona helped her saying, **OK, talk about your favorites.** The student was still silent staring at the teacher. Thus, the teacher went on, **My favorite cartoon is?** Getting no response, Miss Mona continued, **My favorite cartoon is Sponge Bob.** Trying to show her disagreement with the teacher, Helia added, نه! اون گیسو کمند رو دوست داره. Insisting on her idea, Miss

Mona repeated her statement: *No, Her favorite cartoon is Sponge Bob*. Helia and Elena said nothing but looking at each other in astonishment.

As the sentences are repeated every session over and over with no variation, it seems that children feel bored with introducing themselves parrot-like and using fixed statements. Teachers often do not let other students speak while their classmate is doing the activity. They ask them to listen and wait for their turn. As an example, once Roham was talking about his favorite color, his classmate Bahar went on: *My favorite color...*, Miss Neda interrupted her seriously: *It's not your turn. Next turn is yours. You should wait*. Bahar said in a low voice while playing with her fingers: *آخه من هم می‌خوام رنگی که دوست دارم رو بگم*. The teacher showed no reaction and again asked the child to wait for her own turn.

The learners often get encouraged in three ways, getting happy face, sticker and postman's gift. Happy face would be dedicated to those who do writing activities which will be explained later. Whenever students have few or no mistakes in their dictation (at most one or two), they get a sticker. Teachers often let them select their own ones. Girls often get stickers of heart or flower while boys prefer to have those of cars or characters like Spiderman and Batman. Moreover, once in a term, parents are asked to provide a gift for their child and give it to the teacher as a postman's present for those who have followed teacher's orders and class disciplines. The children are told that there is a camera in each class in which the postman can see all the students to decide which student would deserve a gift.

TTC Evidence. Finishing with the explanation of whole-institute activities on the first session of the TTC, the instructor goes on with talking about warm-up: *Each session the students have warm-up questions like 'What's your name?', 'Are you tall or short, etc.?'... As a teacher, you should try to teach them the true structure and gradually help and motivate the young learners to use the correct structure*. She devotes most of the session to talking about class management: *Make a list of your own rules and stick to them firmly*. She further asks the apprentices to draw a sad face on the right and a happy face on the left of the board to clarify some disciplines for children. The teacher also specifies a few other rules, including one about the language of instruction: *Don't speak Farsi!* The focus of the TTC instructor is on the syllabus: *The syllabus defines for you what to do, what to ask, and what to teach*. Nothing is mentioned about variations in answering warm-up questions, but she suggests stickers as an encouragement tool for children.

Ph vs. WL Perspective. Warm-up is performed in the way defined by the TTC instructor. Accomplishing such prescribed practices without any variation reveals the Ph assumptions in such educational settings. The WL perspective is at odds with mechanical processes in which students imitate language. From a WL point of view, the sense of the activities takes priority over imitation and practicing. Moreover, based on the idea of *relevance* in WL, the content of warm-up activity is somehow relevant to YLs. Yet, in terms of *meaningfulness*, repeating the same words and statements over and over for the entire term makes little sense to learners anymore. In addition, keeping quiet for about 30-45 minutes and just listening to the one who is speaking or answering teacher's questions may be acceptable in Ph that believes in repetition. However, it seems questionable in the WL approach which sees language learning as a dynamic form of meaning-making in the context of purposeful social interactions.

Literacy Teaching

After warm-up, the teacher goes on with working on literacy. The aim of this part is teaching YLs all English letter sounds (not just the alphabet) in a defined order through 15 levels of phonics. Based on Jolly phonics series, every sound follows a defined action along with a brief storyline to

build the child's interest. Since all branches of the institute follow a fixed prescribed curriculum with the same syllabus for teaching new sounds, teachers' priorities are working on the pages of the student book and covering the syllabus of each session. Therefore, trying not to run out of time was one of the main concerns of most teachers.

The Review Section

After warm-up activities, the teacher goes on with reviewing lessons; first letter sounds, then words and sentences. The teacher starts the activity with drawing two lines on the board. Then, she goes on with writing both capital and small letter sounds taught before. Afterwards, she asks children to read them first, chorally then, individually. In Ph1 and Ph2, the teacher just writes the known letters; however, every session in Ph3, while all capital and small letters are written by the teacher on the board from A to Z in blue and red respectively, learners try to sing the alphabet song together along with the teacher. After writing all letters on the board, the children are all asked to take their hands up, verbalize the sounds, and do the related action together. For instance, for 'p' the action is pretending to puff candle and saying *p-p-puff the candle* twice. Focusing students' attention on the activities is of great importance to the teacher. Nobody is allowed to just sit and watch others. Those who do not cooperate with other classmates in doing the activity will be warned by teacher facing statements such as, *Are you sleeping? Where are your hands?* and the like.

Reading activity for Ph1 and Ph2 students relies on reading isolated morphemes and vocabulary words. Two types of words are to be worked on: the words out of the known letters and tricky words which have to be memorized and learned as a whole word. For instance, for teaching the sound letter 'o', Miss Mona wrote some words on the board and asked Helia to read. She started reading the words first part by part, then as a whole in: *g-ot, got; p-ot, pot; h-ot, hot*. Sometimes learners have some suggestions for special words to read. The more students learn the sound letters, the longer words they are asked to read to get proficient in reading words. Such activities are not confined to just reading the meaningful words. Focusing too much on combinations of sounds in blending activities, teachers even work on meaningless words as a further practice. For instance, once Miss Mona made some meaningless words out of the known letter sounds on pieces of paper (Figure 4.5), she asked students to come to the board and read them as fast as possible.

When blending is finished, the teacher starts reviewing words and sentences using Flash Cards (FCs) which are used as one of the main learning tools for teaching English to YLs. It bears a word on one side and the image of it on the other. Teachers often follow a routine procedure for FCs. For instance, once, Miss Neda showed the image of *dog* to students and asked them: *What is it?* All children answered: *dog*. Then, she showed the written side of FC to them and went on with another question: *Dog begins with?* The learners replied while doing the action of beating on a drum, *ddddddrum*. Finally, she asked children to make sentences. They all together made two sentences: *Dog is an animal. Dog has short tail*, as if a tape recorder was making the sentences.

From Ph3 on, the YLs practice reading an 8-page story book titled *Did It Fit?* (Figure 4). In the story, three animals (a dog, a cat, and a pig) and a man try to have something on their head as a hat. None of the stuff mentioned in the book such as *tin pot, pot lid*, and *pan* fits the animals. The learners are asked to practice reading pages through a term while defining Tricky Words (TWs) by drawing a circle around them. A few words of the story may be new to students; however, no new letter sound can be found there. It seems that the book is selected based on children's phonics level. At the beginning of the activity, the teacher explains the whole story while trying to clarify some key words such as 'fit' for them. Then, she goes on with reading the book.

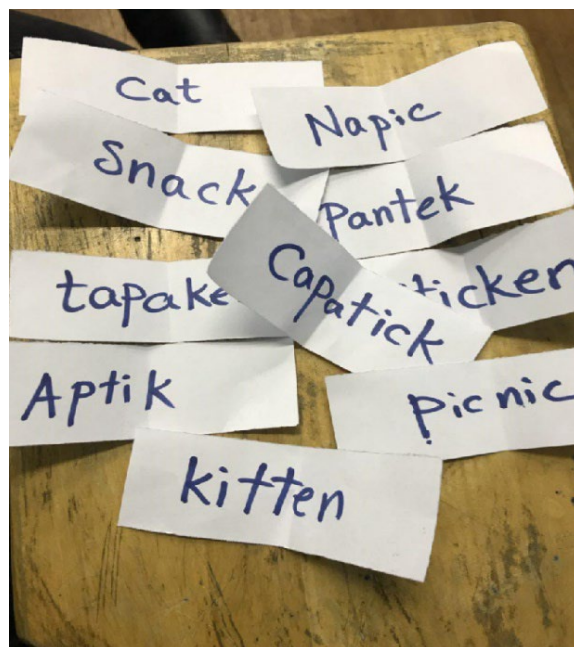


Figure 3: Teacher-made cards for blending

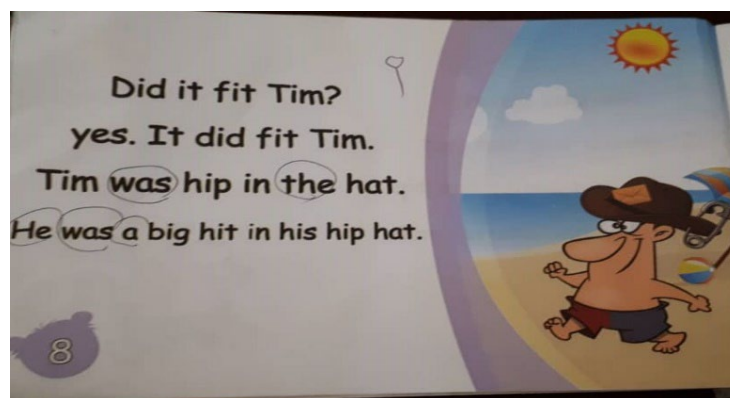


Figure 4: Sample page of the story book

Teaching a New Lesson

Teaching new letter sounds and numbers is often the main focus of YLs' classes. Students are always taught a new item after snack-time which is around 11 o'clock. The process of teaching and learning a new letter sound mainly consists of four parts: story, action, formation, and blending. Every sound has its own story and action derived from Jolly phonics series. Three characters, namely Inky Mouse, Bee, and Snake make different stories for each letter. First the story is read out and then, students become familiar with the formation (capital and small) and blending of the sound with the vowels and consonants taught before. Afterwards, new words and sentences are introduced through flash cards. As an example, to teach 'd', Miss Neda first points to the related picture and asks the students: *Look here, what do you see on this page?*

She goes on with the questions followed by negative answers such as, *what are they doing? Are they sleeping? No. Are they reading? No. Are they eating? No. So, what are they doing?* The students keep looking at the picture in silence. The teacher continues while drawing the students' attention to the drum on the page: *Look here, there is a drum, yes? They are banging at the drum.* Then, she starts doing the action of banging at the drum while verbalizing, *d-d-d-drum, d-d-d-drum.* Making the students familiar with the action of new letter sound, the teacher then goes on with teaching the 'formation'. She first draws two lines on the board and writes the capital and small form of the letter while performing and verbalizing its action. As an example, for the formation of 'd', Miss Neda said: *up to down, round. Capital d-d-d-drum.* Then she went on with the small letter, *up to down, down to up, round. Small d-d-d-drum.* Repeating the formation for a couple of times, the teacher asked the students to come to the board one by one and read, trace and write both capital and small forms of 'd'. Afterwards, the teacher continued with blending. She wrote the new sound with a red marker and started blending with other sounds, *m-ad, mad; d-ad, dad; r-ed, red*, and the like, which are later assessed in dictations (Figure 5).

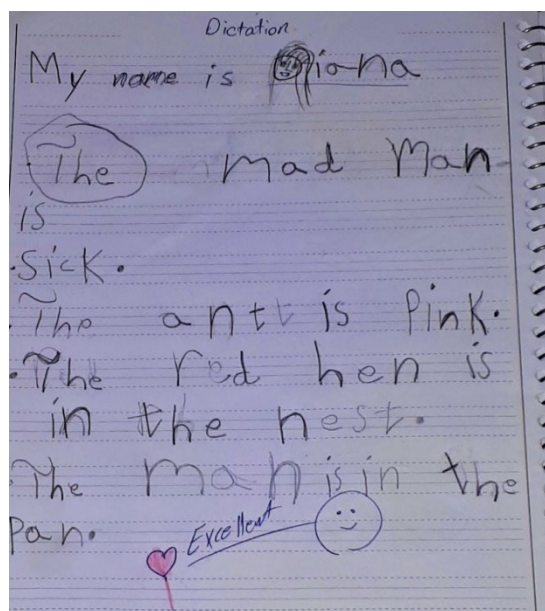


Figure 5: Sample dictation of a 5-year old learner in Ph2A

Finishing with formation and blending, the teacher shows a few flashcards of the last sound taught. For instance, for the sound 'i', Miss Elham shows two FCs of *Ink* and *Igloo* to the students. Then, she asks the young learners to repeat each one three times while focusing on the beginning sound. The teacher tries to correct children's pronunciation whenever it is needed. On the next session, after reviewing the FCs, Miss Elham draws a line with a black pen on one of her fingers. Then she shows it to the students and says: *Ink is black. Ink is in the pen.* Afterwards, she asks learners to repeat each sentence three times. Then, she goes on with making sentences with *igloo*: *Igloo is white. Igloo is made of snow.*

There is no text for students to extract meaning. In Miss Neda's class, she often tries to introduce new words to the learners in a known context such as songs. As mentioned before, singing the songs and rhymes are the routine of every session in the whole-institute activities. Back to teaching 'd', while introducing the word 'hand' to YLs, the teacher first starts doing the rhyme with action:

Wash your face. Students pretend to wash their face and say, *wash wash wash, wash wash wash*. Again, the teacher does the same with the word, hands. Then, the teacher draws a hand on the board, makes two sentences, and asks the learners to repeat: *We wash our hands in the sink. We have two hands.*

Making simple sentences is acceptable only in Ph1A and Ph1B. From Ph2 on, the teacher expects the students to go beyond that and make more complex ones. For instance, in the review section Miss Mahsa asked Aida: *Can you make a sentence with hen?* Aida answered: *It is a hen?* The teacher asked for a more complex one: *Don't you remember the last session I drew a hen on the board?* Then, Aida went on: *Hen has two legs. Hen lives on the farm.* The teacher: *Excellent! Good girl!*

There is also a defined syllabus for teaching *numbers* to YLs. The days on which YLs are not taught a new sound, they work on learning a new number. Children are expected to count numbers from 0 to 10 without being able to write them. Then, each term they learn writing 5 new numbers. Regardless of the fact that students do not know all the numbers, every session the teacher writes numbers on the board from 0 to 10. Afterwards, the teacher draws two lines on the board and shows the formation of the corresponding number. She tries to write the numbers in the shape of a boy or a girl as if it is a human being. Miss Elham draws eyes, hands, and feet for number 6. Then, she says: *What number is it? Number six.* Then, the teacher asks the students for a couple of times: *What number is it?* The students answer, *number six.* Therefore, the teacher starts greeting with the number: *Hello number six.* Then, she asks the students to repeat the statement with a rhythm two or three times.

TTC Evidence. In the second session, while Miss Alavi is explaining stories and actions of letter sounds in Ph1A and Ph1B, Sima, one of the apprentice teachers, interrupts the instructor: *Can we use games in class?* She answers: *Yes, at the end of the class after finishing writing activity.* Focusing on literacy, she goes on with reading activities: *Ask the students to read words in FCs and workbook provided for them by the institute. Say their beginning and ending sound. Just in Ph1A and Ph1B, we are allowed to tell YLs meaningless words and sentences to read and write.* Then, she mentions the story book used for students as another reading activity: *From Ph3A children are given a story book to practice reading. It is based on Jolly Phonics syllabus and all the letters in the book are known to YLs of this level. As you go for observation you will know how to work on it.*

Ph vs. WL Perspective. Confining the review section to repetition of known words and sentences reveals the Ph assumptions. Such activities, that stop children like Hasti and Bitra from making their own sentences out of their previous knowledge contrast with the idea of *creativity* in the WL approach, which sees these educational settings a chance to talk freely in class and generate new sentences. Moreover, reading meaningless words illustrated in Figure 3 might be questionable based on the idea of meaningfulness in the WL perspective. It seems that teaching literacy in the TTC as well as in classes under observation is strictly based on the Ph assumptions since raising phonological awareness and explicit instruction of sound-symbol correspondence are the main focus. Such decoding practices in language learning might be questionable from a WL view.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In line with what the National Reading Panel (2000) points out regarding the importance of Ph instruction and its use in the early stages of reading, in the context of our study, the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling appear to be prioritized. Besides, the popularity of using Jolly Phonics for young EFL learners (Campbell et al., 2011) is observed in these classes. The materials are based on this commercial Ph program, and in line with

understanding language learning as practicing fragmented elements (El-Koumy, 2004), the classroom activities of the context under study often include working on separate language skills. However, as Ling (2012) claims, “taking the aims, motives and environments of learning foreign language into consideration, we can develop the students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities at the same time” (p. 150). Moreover, the importance of raising cultural awareness of YLs also appears to be ignored in the context under study. While language learning in these classes is restricted to sound letters, blending, memorizing words and making sentences, many scholars consider culture as an integral part of teaching second language to learners.

Although the activities in the context under study are basically claimed to be Ph-based, a few features of the WL seem to be embedded in classroom processes, like group activities, warm-up, and learning students’ own names. While Goodman (1989) basically rejects “part-to-whole views of literacy development, insisting on real reading and real writing from the very beginning” (p. 210), a more balanced Ph-WL literacy teaching activity can consist of both decoding and wholistic practices (Stahl et al., 2006), and teachers should use a variety of techniques such as “retelling the story, discussing the context and characters of the story, and performing a play” (Ling, 2012, p. 151) with the main focus on exchanging ideas and using language for communication. However, the focus of reading and writing activities in these educational settings is practicing decoding skills through reading and writing decontextualized teacher-made sentences. What scholars such as Hempenstall (2005), Blaiklock and Haddow (2007), and Moghadam and Adel (2011) point out about the importance of integrating the WL and Ph approaches is only partially realized in these classroom processes.

Although Jolly Phonics is said to be popular among scholars and effective in EFL literacy education (Campbell et al., 2011), some basic issues regarding YLs such as their age, needs, interest, creativity, empowerment, and the like seem to be ignored in the context under study. Implementing the predefined syllabus step by step on the one hand, and pressuring learners for doing exactly what the teacher orders on the other hand, may lead to children’s exhaustion and disappointment. In such educational settings, the YLs may have difficulties in learning the language effectively. More importantly, they might become frustrated and might even abandon language learning. Considering the great debate and the integration of the Ph approach in which the sound letters are taught explicitly (Smith, 2011), and the WL approach in which the child’s discovery of meaning through experiences in authentic rich-literacy environment is emphasized (Mirhosseini et al., 2020; Whitemore & Crawell, 2005), our illustrations of these YLs’ EFL learning can hint at possibilities for the integration of these two at this level of education for more balanced literacy (Moats, 2000).

Considering that “policy is hugely important in the YL context as it directly influences the lives of millions of children” (Copland et al., 2014, p. 229), the findings of this study can provide policy makers and material developers with important insights into a more holistic view towards language teaching in ways other than strict Ph-based instruction. As a result of such awareness, the authorities may provide for YLs more authentic, meaningful, and interesting materials considering their age and culture based on a *balanced literacy* approach (Moats, 2000). Moreover, the results might invite researchers and scholars to open the floor for further studies and deepen the knowledge about literacy development and educational theory and practice in the Iranian context of teaching EFL to YLs.

Managers of TTC courses for EFL teachers of YLs can pay more attention to raising teachers’ level of competency in these courses regarding both pedagogical and psychological matters towards young EFL learners not only in pre-service TTCs but also through on-going job training

workshops. Our findings have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the language teaching approaches commonly used in these educational contexts for directors of language institutes. This study could lead to the revision of the current syllabus based on the integration of language skills, learners' empowerment, and using relevant and authentic materials. The study also provides teachers with better insights into their critical role regarding young EFL learners. They may reconsider and prioritize YLs' feelings and interests as the core of their teaching and learning objectives. Teachers could also be aware of the benefits of non-fragmented language teaching, using contextualized materials and relevant activities.

Finally, this study can be insightful for parents in terms of their attitude towards their young children's language learning. The findings may draw parents' attention to the idea that practicing isolated words and sentences over and over is not the utmost purpose of learning a language. As a result, they may not select a language institute just based on the popular label it bears. Presenting the perspective of the WL in these EFL settings may enhance parents' understanding of effective language learning and purposeful activities. This may help them establish more appropriate criteria for selecting a language institute, let their children learn language in a more friendly environment, and pave the ground for YLs' interest in more meaningful learning in the future.

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An Investigation of Male and Female ESP/EAP Teachers' Professional Development Activities

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Abstract

EFL teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has always been of much concern to all applied linguists and EFL teachers. The present study investigates Iranian ESP/EAP teachers' kinds of CPD activities. To this end, a mixed -methods research design has been applied. In the first phase, a phenomenological research method was used. Seventeen participants were interviewed, and the main CPD activities were extracted through content analysis of the interviews. The participants argued that they developed their profession through teaching (work), continuing their education, attending CPD events such as conferences and workshops, presenting their works in CPD events, and self- study activities such as reading journals, books, and watching films and movies, etc. In the second phase, a researcher-developed instrument was administered to 60 male and female ESP teachers who were selected through convenience sampling among all those who taught ESP at the State and Azad Universities in Tehran. The data were collected and analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that male and female teachers do some common CPD activities. However, male and female teachers are different in terms of some other CPD activities. The findings have several implications for administrators, higher education institutes, teacher trainers, and teachers of the other majors.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers mostly face some common challenges worldwide under the influence of educational setting problems. They prefer to teach their students independently from their colleagues. Sometimes, they become very overwhelmed by the demands of school bureaucracy, and if they do not receive insightful feedback or regular supervision, they might become frustrated; this case is especially true for novice teachers (Murray, 2010). It has been argued that professional development activities are alternative solutions to these problematic issues (Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001).

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Teacher development has been defined as a consistent cycle of teacher learning which begins with initial/pre-service teacher training and lasts for as long as a teacher may remain in the profession (in- service training). Teaching as a profession persuades teachers and enhances their societal expectations to think of finding ways to improve and contribute to the students' academic outcomes (Castle, 2006; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Olson & Craig, 2001).

It has also been argued that teachers need a combination of professional knowledge and specialized skills along with their personal qualities and experiences. Moreover, acquiring new skills and adding to their understanding are primary reasons teachers endeavor to attend activities designed for professional development (Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001). According to Murray (2010), learning about new techniques and ways to empower teachers in English language teaching seems to motivate and encourage both experienced and novice teachers. Like teachers in the other fields, English language teaching experts believe that ongoing professional development is of much significance, particularly in today's rapidly, constantly, and technologically- changing world. Teachers of English as a foreign language are more likely to try the recent innovations in language teaching theories and educational technology with their students (Chisman & Crandall, 2007).

Teacher professional learning is a fairly complex process that requires teachers' emotional and cognitive involvement, both collectively and individually, and their capacity and willingness to investigate where each one stands (Reis-Jorge, 2007; Romano, 2006; Runhaar, 2008; Runhaar, Sanders, & Yang, 2010.) Teachers' professional development has been studied and presented in the relevant literature in different ways (e.g., Craft, 2000; Kelly, 2006; Mann, 2005; Roberts, 1998). However, it has always been attempted to understand that professional development is greatly related to teachers' learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice so that they can contribute to their students' growth (Bolam, 2000).

As Day and Sachs (2004) argue, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) implies all the activities teachers engage in during a career to enhance their work. As Kelly (2006) believes, such activities are intended to result in a process, ongoing teacher learning, through which teachers become expertise.

Teachers' professional learning is a fairly complex process that requires teachers' emotional and cognitive collective and individual involvement, as well as their capacity and willingness to investigate where each one stands (Burbank & Kauchak, 2003; Reis-Jorge, 2007; Romano, 2006; Runhaar, 2008; Runhaar, Sanders, & Yang, 2010).

Teachers of English for Specific/Academic Purposes (ESP/EAP) seem to be no exception. Therefore, to be successful and effective in teaching ESP and EAP to graduate and postgraduate students at the tertiary level, they need to be engaged in professional development activities. It seems that teachers' perceptions of CPD and the activities which they undertake to develop professionally have been investigated in different contexts; however, it is yet to know how Iranian ESP/EAP teachers perceive CPD. The next question, which needs further exploration, deals with the activities ESP/EAP teachers in Iran to develop professionally. Furthermore, it is not known whether male and female teachers do the same professional activities or not.

More specifically, the following research questions are raised;

1. What kinds of CPD activities do Iranian ESP/EAP teachers engage in?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female ESP / EAP teachers' CPD activities?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

A mixed-method design has been used in the present research. To answer the first research question, a qualitative research design (phenomenological method) was designed. The qualitative phase was used to explore the professional development activities that ESP/EAP teachers employ to develop their teaching profession. As a complement, a quantitative research design (survey method) was used to answer the second question aimed at validating the developed questionnaire.

Participants

The study participants consisted of two groups: participants for qualitative and quantitative phases. The participants for the qualitative phase included 17 male and female (9 and 8 respectively) teachers with more than ten years of experience in teaching EAP/ESP at the universities in Tehran. They were selected through purposive sampling. The data saturation point was reached when the seventieth participant was interviewed. They were male and female participants with two degrees: master's and Ph.D. in teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The main reason for including such a selection of full-time experienced teachers was to generate a broad range of perceptions, insights, and experiences of EFL teachers about CPD.

The participants for the quantitative study consisted of 60 male and female ESP/EAP teachers who were selected through convenience sampling among all those who have been teaching ESP/EAP courses to undergraduate and graduate students at the State and Azad Universities in Tehran. The participants were all aware of the purpose of the study. They were assured that the data would be kept confidential.

Data Collection

The data for the present study were collected through two phases. The first phase of the study required qualitative instruments that can deeply explore ESP teachers' perspectives about CPD and CPD activities they engaged in. Hence, semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews with open-ended questions were conducted to collect the study's data. Semi-structured interviews helped us understand the phenomenon of CPD from the interviewees' perspectives with the assumption that the critical reality is what people perceive to be.

Moreover, open-ended questions helped the researcher develop rapport with participants, explore the research questions deeply, elicit information, and generate answers that accurately assess participants' beliefs. Also, face-to-face interviewing helps understand participants' verbal responses via their nonverbal cues. The data for the study's second phase (quantitative) were selected through a survey, i.e., the researcher's developed questionnaire was administered to 60 participants. The participants' responses were computed and transformed into an interval scale.

Data Analysis

Different data analysis techniques were applied. For the first phase of the study, content analysis techniques were applied. The interviewer allowed the conversation to move on smoothly in a more interactive manner to elicit teachers' in-depth perceptions. Each interview consisted of questions that addressed the main activities that the participants do to develop professionally.

Radnor's (2001) guide to qualitative data analysis was employed for analyzing the data. Interviews were first transcribed, and multiple copies of the transcripts were printed. The transcripts were then read for topic order to draw out and list topics linked to the original research questions of the study. A second meticulous reading of transcripts helped the researcher identify the explicit and implicit categories which emerged within each topic. The categories were color-

coded. In the case of more than one category in a topic, numeric coding was used. The third reading for content helped identify quotes aligned with each category within the topics. The quotes were labeled according to the categories they represent.

The data collected for the study's second phase were analyzed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. An independent sample t-test was used as the data analysis method.

3. RESULTS

Qualitative Results

To explore the CPD activities of Iranian ESP/EAP teachers, 17 teachers were interviewed. Their responses were content-analyzed, and the following themes and sub-themes were extracted, which are explained in detail in the following sections: Participants of the present study argued that they were engaged in a wide range of CPD activities to develop professionally. These are grouped under five categories and illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: ESP/EAP teachers' professional development activities

CPD ACTIVITIES	N	P
Professional development through work	17	100
Continuing education	13	78
Attending CPD events and workshops as members	11	66
Self-studies	10	60
Attending CPD events as presenters	5	30

The interviewees were engaged in CPD activities, such as work, formal higher education, membership in professional associations, informal learning, attending CPD activities, participation in CPD events, and engaging in formal higher education as part of professional development.

Professional development through work

Almost all participants stated that they developed their profession through teaching, they viewed teaching and daily engagement with their students in class as a significant source of learning that helped them to gain knowledge from practical experiences in the classroom. The following quotations from the participants illustrate this theme:

"The administrator required me to make use of computers in EFL classrooms. So my students and I are using the computer, and while working with the laptop, I learn something new about the implication of the computer and how it works (T10).

"I'm an active participant in the association of EFL teachers in my city in terms of planning and delivering CPD for EFL teachers. We believe in cooperative learning *and developing communities of practice for the sustainability of professional learning via follow up*" (T9).

"I also attend the other teachers' classrooms sometimes as a teacher of in- service courses. I find it quite interesting that I can work with both students at school and the colleagues who attend my classes. Sometimes I learn a lot from them (T1).

Hence, it is clear that in addition to their daily jobs, several teachers were involved in other professional roles that were either voluntarily (such as working with institutional CPD centers or

teaching external programmers) or assigned by the institution (such as CELTA training) based on their professional needs.

Continuing higher education

Engaging in formal higher education emerged as the second most preferred type of CPD activity among the study participants. Several interviews revealed that they were either studying for a higher degree such as a Masters's or Ph.D. or getting prepared for higher education degrees. Some had also already completed their B.A. or higher degrees. The following quotations illustrate this theme:

"I completed my Masters in TEFL, and right now I am getting prepared for Ph.D." (T1).

"Ten years ago, I was a BA holder of English language literature, but now I have the Masters in TEFL" (T3).

"I registered for the Ph.D. entrance exam, and I am studying hard to get prepared for the examination" (T6).

Attending CPD events

The majority of participants argued that the third-most preferred CPD activity was participation in CPD events. Generally, it was shown that teachers participated in in-house events organized by the education department of their city or province. Some participants also argued that they attended off-site CPD events held by other universities and the Teaching English Language and Literature Society of Iran (TELLSI).

Among the in-house CPD events which interviewees participated in are workshops or theoretical courses perceived to be immediately applicable to their teaching. The following interviewees reveal this issue:

"In the monthly PD sessions, we have the chance to learn different sorts of computer- related things" (T2).

"Recently we had an assessment workshop where teachers were trained to do sessions and last month we had a one- day workshop where we were trained up to re-think our testing skills" (T13).

Some interviewees also claimed that they had participated in the conferences that off-site institutions organized. The following quotations exemplify this theme:

"I attended TELLs annual conferences and workshops. I found some of the presentations beneficial and quite related to my job" (T13).

"We have a teaching forum where EFL teachers, particularly university lecturers, present research. For example, recently someone did some research on the implication of translation tasks in EFL classrooms" (T10).

Self- studies

About 50 percent of the participants argued that they could improve their profession through self-studies such as reading journals and books related to their job. One of them mentioned, "I sometimes read some interesting books such as grammar and vocabulary books" (T13).

Presenting at CPD events

The following preferred CPD activity by the participants had presentations at CPD events. Presenting at CPD events occurred at two levels - off-site at local professional development events organized by teaching English language and literature society of Iran (TELLS), and in-house

where teachers worked. For instance, as one interviewee revealed how he assisted colleagues in searching e-materials in Google and Yahoo search engines;

"After the workshop was over, some people came to me and asked how they can search for e- materials, I taught them, and I think they all learned."(T2)

Among the off-site events, most interviewees indicated that they presented at the TELLSI annual conference and its special interest groups significant. One of the participants argued:

"I presented a lecture on the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of technology in their English language classes. The teachers came to me and commented on my presentation" (T11).

Quantitative results

The quantitative phase of the study aimed at validating the developed questionnaire. In the following sections, the results for the reliability and validity of the questionnaire are presented.

Internal consistency of the questionnaire

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was estimated by running Cronbach alpha, and the yielded alpha was 0.83, which was acceptable.

Construct Validity of the questionnaire

Confirmatory factor analysis was run to investigate the construct validity of the questionnaire. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of exploratory factor analysis

Items	Factor Loading
I have tried to develop my profession through teaching ESP courses to students at university	0.9
I have tried to develop my profession by continuing my education at the university	0.84
I have tried to attend local conferences as a participant	0.83
I have tried to attend international conferences as a participant	0.81
I have tried to attend local conferences as a presenter	0.79
I have tried to attend international conferences as a presenter	0.78
I have tried to read books and journals on my own	0.9
I have tried to watch movies and TV programs on TV and satellite.	0.7
I have tried to attend workshops on ESP/ EAP related issues such as teaching and material development	0.7
Eigenvalue	60
The total percent of variance explained	80

As seen in Table 2, this factor consists of activities that ESP/EAP teachers do to develop their teaching profession. The Eigenvalue of this factor is 60 and explains about 80% of the total variance. It consists of 9 items. The highest and lowest factor loadings are 0.90 and 0.7, respectively. Items 1 and 7 had the highest factor loading (.9), followed by items 2, 3, and 4. Items 8 and 9 had the lowest factor loading of 0.7.

Comparing male and teachers' CPD activities

To compare male and female teachers' CPD activities, 30 male and 30 female teachers of ESP were selected and invited to fill in the questionnaire. Each participant's questionnaire was scored, and their responses were entered into SPSS. Then, the scores on each item were computed. The results, including descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (independent sample t-tests) for each item, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the participants' scores on the questionnaire

	Groups	Mean	SD
I have tried to develop my profession through teaching ESP courses to students at university	males	4.4	.50
	females	4.2	.88
I have tried to develop my profession by continuing my education at the university	males	4.43	.50
	females	4.46	.50
I have tried to attend local conferences as a participant	males	3.76	.56
	females	3.50	.50
I have tried to attend international conferences as a participant	males	3.23	.43
	females	2.6	.49
I have tried to attend local conferences as a presenter	males	3.50	.93
	females	3.2	.68
I have tried to attend international conferences as a presenter	males	2.63	.66
	females	2.20	.61
I have tried to read books and journals on my own	males	3.6	.71
	females	4.6	.49
I have tried to watch movies and TV programs on TV and satellite.	males	3.63	.71
	females	4.6	.49
I have to attend workshops on ESP/ EAP related issues such as teaching and material development	males	4.2	.73
	females	4	.66

As it can be seen from Table 3, the mean scores of males and females on items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9 were to some extent close to each other. However, the males' mean scores on items 4 and 6 exceeded the females' mean scores. On the contrary, the females' mean scores on items 7 and 8 exceeded the males' mean scores on these items. To see whether the mean difference was statistically significant, the data were submitted to independent sample t-tests (the assumptions of t-tests such as equality of the variances were all met). The results are shown in the Table 4.

Table 4: T-tests for comparing participants' mean scores on CPD activities

	T	df	p
I have tried to develop my profession through teaching ESP courses to students at university	1.4	58	0.15
I have tried to develop my profession through continuing my education at university	0.2	58	0.93
I have tried to attend local conferences as a participant	1.9	58	0.07
I have tried to attend international conferences as a participant	5.7	58	0.001
I have tried to attend local conferences as a presenter	1.7	58	0.52
I have tried to attend international conferences as a presenter	2.6	58	0.01
I have tried to read books and journals on my own	6.1	58	0.01
I have tried to watch movies and TV programs on TV and satellite.	6.2	58	0.01
I have to attend workshops on ESP/ EAP related issues such as teaching and material development	1.3	58	0.19

As could be seen from the Table 4, the male and female groups' means on items 1,2, 3, 5, and 9 were not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). The results also showed that the males' and females' mean scores on items and 6 were statistically significant ($p=0.01<0.05$), favoring male participants. Moreover, the male and female groups' means on items 8 and 7 were significant ($p=0.01<0.05$), favoring the female group.

4. DISCUSSION

This study aimed at investigating the Iranian ESP teachers' CPD activities. The study was carried out in two phases. First, 17 participants were interviewed. The interviews were content-analyzed, and the main CPD activities were extracted. The participants argued that they developed their profession through teaching (work), continuing their education, attending CPD events such as conferences and workshops, presenting their works in CPD events, and self-study activities such as reading journals books, watching films, and movies, etc. The findings of the present study are consistent with a number of related studies (e.g., Alibakhshi & Dehvari, 2015; Hoban, 2002; Kennedy, 2002; Stuart et al., 2009).

The second part of the present study dealt with developing and validating the questionnaire, which measured the ESP teachers' CPD activities. The developed questionnaire consisted of 9 items. It had an acceptable level of internal consistency. It also had a good construct validity. All items had good factor loadings, indicating that the items were highly correlated with the construct, and all the items measured the same construct.

The third phase of the study dealt with comparing the male and female participants' scores on CPD activities. The results showed that male and female participants attempted to develop their profession through attending workshops, working as ESP teachers, continuing their education, and attending local conferences as presenters and participants equally. Teachers' gender did not make a difference in the CPD activities mentioned above, i.e., both male and female teachers had the chance to teach ESP, continue their education, attend the local conferences, and attend workshops.

However, the results showed that, compared to the males, the female teachers had more chances to do self-directed CPD activities, such as reading journals and books and watching movies, films, and TV programs. This might be due to the cultural issues of the context of the study, where the female teachers spend more time at their homes compared to the males. Self-directed CPD activities are more suitable for females because of their free time at home.

Finally, the results showed that the male teachers attended internal conferences as both participants and presenters more than the females. This might be due to the fact that the married

female teachers do not like to leave the country without their husbands, and they need to take care of their kids. There might be some other reasons which need to be explored by the other researchers.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study has several implications for EFL teachers, institutes, teacher- training centers, in-service training program organizers, and professional associations, which are briefly explained as follows. First of all, EFL teachers, as a kind of discourse community, through attending conferences and workshops, can express their interests, expectations, and needs. They should also bear in mind that professional development is an essential part of the professional life of teachers. As members of the TEFL community, teachers can take the initiative to make their voices heard constructively.

Second, teacher training centers should inform teachers that teachers' learning has no end and their current knowledge may not meet the requirements of the next years. Therefore, through CPD events, they can revitalize their profession.

Third, institutes should support their employees to attend the CPD events and if possible, to continue their higher education. They can also provide them with the hardware and software instructional materials to develop through self-studies.

Finally, professional associations should analyze the members' needs and provide them with appropriate workshops CPD events through which teachers can take the courses they may need.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Through the process of the present research, male and female ESP teachers' CPD activities have been explored. However, considering the scope of this study, some aspects could not be explored and covered which are suggested here as the potential areas for further research.

One of the areas that require to be further explored is that this study was carried out in a university in Tehran (Capital of Iran); the same studies can be carried out in other higher education centers, e.g., State and Azad Universities, to examine the EFL teachers' views toward CDP in these institutes.

Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate the role of all CPD activities on teachers' professional development as well.

Finally, because informal CPD is deemed as considerably significant in shaping teacher development and informal communities are perceived as a need, it would be worth exploring the role of informal communities of practice in teacher development and the interplay between the practices of the formal and informal communities.

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The Effect of GBI Training on Translation Ability of Translation Students in Mazandaran Province Based on Pak's Analytical Framework

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of Genre-Based Instruction (GBI) on Iranian Translation students' translation ability. In this study, 60 students of intermediate level were selected randomly and assigned to two groups, experimental and control groups. The pre-tests of translation were administered to both groups. The test was designed to afford a potential measure of learners' translation quality. While the participants in the experimental group were trained to translate through genre-based translation, the participants in the control group received translation instruction just through mainstream translation activities. After providing the specific instructions, both groups received a translation post-test. The results of test scores, rated by two raters, were compared to ascertain the effective instructional treatment. Upon reviewing the results of the paired samples t-tests, it was revealed that both types of instruction were significantly effective in improving the Iranian translation learners' translation ability. However, the results of the independent samples t-test showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group after the intervention, indicating that using the GBI was quite successful in enhancing the students' translation quality. The findings of this study offer some theoretical and pedagogical implications for teachers, translator educators, curriculum and material developers, and policymakers in an EFL context.

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation is transferring message from one language (Source Language (SL)) to another language (Target Language (TL)). The purpose of translating is to convey the original tone and intent of the message, taking into account the cultural and regional differences between the SL and TL. Nowadays, the study of translation has been developing. The use of translation, as one of the means of communication in new era, has become almost a part of the routine of human's life in various ways. Meanwhile, more specialized translations require a deeper look, which depends on understanding the different aspects of a text and translating it. Translation is, above all, a process of text reproduction, during which a Target Text (TT) is produced to fulfill its specific purpose. In

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many cases, such equivalence might not be obtained and sometimes may not even prove to be a desirable goal in translation across cultures and languages.

One of these aspects is the genre, which seems to have significant effect on translation. It can be said that one of the main problems in translation is not knowing and understanding the genre of the Source Text (ST), which can eventually lead to not seeing the final message latent in the text. It lies hidden in the text and causes the message of the ST not to be conveyed correctly. A chosen TL-form may well be correct according to the rules of the language system. However, this does not necessarily mean that the text, as a whole, appropriately fulfils its communicative function in the TL-situation and culture (Schäffner, 1999). In such a prospective view of translation, the structure and the actual linguistic make-up of the TT then are determined by the SL, and more importantly, by other various factors such as "the intended purpose and function of the TT, the text-typological and/or genre conventions, the addressee's background knowledge and their communicative needs"(Schäffner, 2000, p. 2). One of the new forms of translation study is genre-based translation. It is a translation created based on a specific use of language. Genre-Based Instruction (GBI) for translators can be one of the solutions to this problem that has not been addressed much in the Iranian translation community. Accordingly, taking translation into account, Choi (2010) believes that familiarity with genre, text typology and rhetorical organization of discourses will help language learners and users both theoretically and practically. Since the source discourse is highly conventionalized and rhetorically and structurally organized, translators may fail to pinpoint these rhetoric and conventions, and as a result, bring an inadequate translation into life. Choi (2010) also believes that it is important for a translator to enjoy an adequate amount of particular knowledge on the particular genre features in the SL and TL because this knowledge is a necessary criterion for evaluating the quality and equality of translation. The importance of genre knowledge has been underscored by many researchers. However, the GBI consciously applies genre and genre analysis theories to classroom teaching and carries out teaching activities around the schematic structure of discourse. Its fundamental aims are: 1) to guide students to master the different communicative purposes and discourse structures belonging to different genres; 2) to make students realize that discourse is not only a linguistic construction but also a social construction of meaning; 3) to guide students to master the schematic structure of discourse; 4) to help students to understand the construction process of discourse; and 5) to comprehend and write discourse in a particular genre.

One of the most important aspects of the genre-based theory deals with move analysis, initiated by Swales (1981, 1990), to investigate academic genres, and introduced later in professional settings (Bhatia, 1993). It is concerned with the identification of rhetorical moves in a genre, which is regarded as a recognizable communicative event "characterized by a set of communicative purposes" (Bhatia, 2004, p. 23). Rhetorical moves, which are definable and largely predictable functional components in a text (Biber et al., 2007, p. 32), take effect in various ways to realize the communicative purpose of the genre. Originally, the move analysis was used to identify the rhetorical pattern of a genre to provide practical guidelines for genre writing (Flowerdew, 2015, p. 102; Swales, 1990). With further developments, the move analysis, combined with other methods such as lexica grammatical analysis (e.g., Bhatia, 2008) and a corpus-based approach (e.g., Upton & Cohen, 2009), have been considered as a useful method to explore the functional and communicative aspects of a genre which can contribute to providing insights into the genre nature (e.g., Bhatia, 2008, p. 172). In the structural analysis of a genre, moves are often categorized into two types: obligatory move and optional move; the former is a core and essential element used to achieve the main communicative purpose of the genre, and the latter is a complementary element enhancing the communicative effects (e.g., Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 2001; Swales,

1990). Obligatory moves are considered as elements which determine the nature of a genre (Hasan, 1989, p. 62), “in the absence of which the text would not be interpreted as the genre to which the text belongs” (Ansary & Babaii, 2005, p. 215).

The main theoretical model of this study is Pak’s analytical framework (1998) which consists of 6 moves as follows: move one: head, move two: preparatory comments, move three: main topic, move four: main thesis, move five: analysis, and move six: directive. The first move is the title, the one that establishes a theme around which the translation is centered. The second move is the preparatory comment which is a kind of writing that prepares the mind of the readers for the things to be followed. The third move is the main topic which is the central topic or issue discussed in the translation. The fourth move is the main thesis which summarizes the position of the translation on the main topic. In other words, the main function of translation is to present the translator’s view on a particular issue, which is performed through this move. The fifth move is analysis or argumentation which provides the reader with more explanations on the main topic and main thesis through different steps. Finally, there is the last move which presents a restatement of the main thesis or a summary of the elaboration on the main topic. The directive may also be a prediction or recommendation.

Duff contends that translation tasks provide training in accuracy, grammatical complexity and flexibility of language. Also, the results of the study may help teachers to understand the possible positive effects of the GBI for translation teaching. If learners are going to be able to render high quality translation and become a member of academic community, they need to familiarize themselves with the writing conventions in translation field. To achieve this, the GBI seems to be a great way to help teachers to illustrate particular aspects of language usage as it is practiced in real professional settings. Policy makers may also need to invest more on formulating policies which help teacher education courses financially and pedagogically to conduct teacher education courses on GBI and its efficacy for translation field. Such courses can better support teachers to apply the GBI for translation instruction. The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of the GBI on the translation ability of the senior Translation students in Mazandaran Province to see if it is a viable teaching method to help EFL Translation students improve their translation quality and make themselves familiarized with various field-specific genres assisting them at practical translation endeavors. Thus, this study partly focuses on translation as an important and independent field of study in applied linguistics. In addition, although the GBI has been applied to teach many features of language skills, yet the effect of this method to instruct translation remained somehow underexplored. Therefore, it is well worth trying to understand the effect of the GBI on the Iranian learners’ translation quality.

Translation competence of learners is the dependent variable of the study and GBI is the independent variable. Functionalist and communicative approaches began to emerge in translation studies in the 1970s, going beyond the traditional narrow linguistic approach. Translations were then examined from the perspective of genre or text type with specific genre features and communicative purposes. Translation, as one of the means of communication in the new era, has become almost a part of the routine of human’s life. Meanwhile, more specialized translations require a deeper look, which depends on understanding the different aspects of a text and translating it. Translation is, above all, a process of text reproduction, during which a TT is produced to fulfill its specific purpose. Translation seemed to have witnessed a shift within theory and practice from an overall concern with equivalence between the ST and TT to a recognition of the need for adaptation to the target situation and purpose (Trosborg, 1997). In many cases, such equivalence might not be obtained and sometimes may not even prove to be a desirable goal in translation across cultures and languages. In such a prospective view of translation, the structure

and the actual linguistic make-up of the TT then are determined by the ST and also other various factors such as “the intended purpose and function of the TT, the text-typological and/or genre conventions, the addressee’s background knowledge and their communicative needs” (Schäffner, 2000, p. 58). The GBI can be one of the solutions to this problem that has not been addressed much in the Iranian translation community. Accordingly, taking translation into account, Choi (2010) believes that familiarity with knowledge about genre, text typology and rhetorical organization of discourses will help language learners and users both theoretically and practically. Since the source discourse is highly conventionalized and rhetorically and structurally organized, translators may fail to pinpoint these rhetoric and conventions, and as a result bring an inadequate translation into life. Choi (2010) also believes that it is important for a translator to enjoy an adequate amount of particular knowledge on the particular genre features in the SL and TL because this knowledge is a necessary criterion for evaluating the quality and equality of translation. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to answer to the following question:

RQ: Does GBI have any significant effect on Iranian Translation students’ translation ability?

H0: GBI has no significant effect on Iranian Translation students’ translation ability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Today translation is the best way for rendering information among people and nations all over the world. The quality of a translated text as realized in performance is a reflection of the translator’s competence (Campbell, 1998, p. 8). While translation competence is measured through performance, translation performance is judged through criteria of assessment. House’s definition of “good” translation is “one that does not read like one”, (1997, p. 12). To Lauscher (2000, p. 151), a translation is “deemed good if it achieves optimum equivalence”. However, Maier (2000, p. 139) argues that a definition of what constitutes “good” translation, whether as admirable as House’s model or not, is perhaps a more abiding concern when approaching literary, rather than non-literary translations. Hatim and Mason (1997, p. 197) stress the need to distinguish between the activities of assessing the quality of translations (e.g. House, 1982), translation criticism and translation quality control on the one hand, and those of assessing performance (e.g. Nord, 1991, pp. 160-163) on the other. Their distinctions can be clarified by Hartley’s (1991, p. 56) own differentiation between translation for professional purposes and academic purposes. He believes a professional translation is the translated text that enters into a network of existing texts and is different from translation for academic purposes. In his view, this type of translation is an ill-defined activity in which students are instructed to translate a short extract of text for an unspecified purpose or person into the TL (ibid.) Different methods and strategies are used to improve the quality of students’ translations, but there are still problems in rendering the message.

Of particular interest and complexity is the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) L2 classroom. The GBA was first developed in the 1980s as a teaching method based on genre identification. It consciously applies genre and genre analysis theories to classroom teaching and carries out teaching activities around the schematic structure of discourse. Its fundamental aims are: 1) to guide students to master the different communicative purposes and discourse structures of discourse belonging to different genres; 2) to make students realize that discourse is not only a linguistic construction but also a social construction of meaning; 3) to guide students to master the schematic structure of discourse; 4) to help students to understand the construction process of discourse; 5) and to comprehend and write discourse in a particular genre. Although genre refers to a category, type, kind or style in the dictionary definition of the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005), a variety of genre classifications and conceptualizations are found in its applications. The term genre has been employed to categorize literary writing, e.g., ballads, novels, plays, poems, prose, and short stories since the 1960s (Abdullah, 2009). Swales (1990) defined

genre as “a set of communicative events the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p. 58) in the social and cultural context of speech and writing.

Genre analysis and genre have generally been less prominent in Translation Studies compared to linguistics. However, they have gained importance since the 1990s and the terms “genres” and “text types” have been frequently and interchangeably used by translation scholars since then. Text types appear in Holmes’s map of translation studies as one of the strands within ‘pure’ theoretical translation studies, i.e., ‘text-type (or discourse-type) restricted theories’, which study translations within specific domains, such as legal translation or medical translation (Holmes 2004, p. 187). Translation-related research into text types coincides with the emergence and growth of the discipline of translation studies in 1970s. Functional theories of translation have also been considered in Germany, especially in Katharina Reiss’s work (2000[1971]) on text types (Texttyp) and text varieties (Textsorte), which correspond to Anglo-Saxon genres (cf. Schäffner 2002, p.4), in the context of translation criticism. Reiss argues that a text type is the primary determinant of translation strategies (though not the only one) (2000, p. 17). The relation between text types and translation strategies was observed by St. Jerome as early as in the 4th century A.D. Jerome noted that nonreligious texts should be translated more freely than religious texts (Chesterman 1997, p. 23). Reiss’s work is based on Bühler’s three functions of language, which she relates to the following text types: informative/content-focused (communication of facts, i.e. a press release), expressive/form-focused (aesthetic, creative content, i.e. a poem), operative/appeal-focused (persuasive content, i.e. an advertisement), and audio-medial (a complementary ‘hyper-type’ — audiovisual texts). According to Reiss, translations should respect the function of the ST type. Thus, translations of informative texts should completely transfer the information content of the ST (‘invariance’), translations of expressive texts should transfer the artistic aspects of the ST, and translations of operative texts should have the same psychological effect on the target readers’ behavior as the ST readers (Reiss, 2000, pp. 24-47).

With genre being one of the main analytical tools in discourse analysis, the growing interest in genre (rather than text type) was a natural consequence of the application of discourse analytical methods to translation studies in the late 1980s and 1990s (Hatim & Mason, 1990, 1997; James, 1989; Neubert & Shreve, 1992; Trosborg, 1997, 2002). James was among the first to promote the use of the concept of genre in translation studies, in particular in translator training (1989). The application of genre analysis to translation intensified, following rapid developments stimulated by seminal books within the English for Specific Purposes approach by Swales (1990, 2004) and Bhatia (1993, 2004). The growing interest in research on genres was confirmed by Zhang et al.’s bibliometric study of discourse-analysis research on translation in eight major translation journals in the period 1990-2013. The study shows that interest in genre and register analysis peaked between 1996 and 2005, before being overtaken by interest in such extralinguistic factors as power, ideology and context (2015, p. 229). Overall, the 1990s mark a shift in research into cross-linguistic differences between comparable genres in the SL and TL, especially for specialized translation purposes.

GBI is one of the methodologies used in the classrooms for different purposes. Studies shows that this model can be beneficial in improving the translation abilities of the learners. Li Yongqing (2013), who studied genre-based translation in hotel advertisement texts in Malaysia aimed to use a GBA to explain the use of advertising language in hotel advertisements in Malaysia to attain their objectives. Their findings showed the usefulness of this method.

Dabaghian and Soleimany (2013) applied Baker’s (1992) taxonomy to a task of translation of literary texts. This study aimed at evaluating the Persian translation of an English literary text, namely, *Animal Farm*, written by George Orwell and translated by Ali Akbar Akhondi. After a

brief discussion on literary translation and its relevant issues, they evaluated the Persian translation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* on the basis of Baker's taxonomy of translation in which five levels of equivalence were recognized: on the word level, above the word level, on the grammatical level, on the textual level and the pragmatic level. Finally, a conclusion was drawn based on the assessment of the Persian translation of *Animal Farm* and frequencies and percentages were reported in terms of those five levels of equivalence.

Hafizi (2011) has also conducted a translation quality assessment research on two English translations of Sadegh Hedayat's "Boof Koor" by Bashiri and Costello based on Julian House's (2001) model. In their study, five raters evaluated these translations based on House's model and their own experiences as translators. The results of their assessments showed that Bashiri's work was valuable, but Costello's translation was more appropriate because it kept track of the original work quite faithfully.

Ornella (2011) presented an analysis of the abstracts from research articles found in *Linguistics* and *Translation Studies* journals. He first presented some theoretical background on discourse community and genre analysis, and then showed the analysis carried out on 18 abstracts, 6 written in English, 6 in Portuguese and 6 being their translations into English. The analysis aimed at verifying whether the rhetorical patterns of organizations and the moves found in abstracts coincide with those proposed by Swales (1993) in his study of research articles and introductions. Besides, it was intended to identify the verb tenses and voice preferably used in this kind of text as well as mechanisms used to indicate presence or absence of the writer in the text. The analysis revealed that the rhetorical patterns and some moves proposed by Swales are found in abstracts in a different order. It was also shown that there is a high occurrence of present simple tense and active voice in all moves while passive voice occurs only occasionally. It was argued as well that the absence of the writer is a distinctive feature of scientific discourse and it is obtained by means of passive voice and typical statements used as resources to avoid the use of personal pronouns.

Taking the above-mentioned review of the related literature into account, this study intended to employ a genre-oriented method to academic translation of students majoring in translation. More precisely, the purpose is to unravel part of the problems concerning translation in EFL settings to pave the way for a high-quality transmission of information from the SL to the TL.

3. METHOD

The Design of the Study

In an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of the GBI on the Iranian EFL Translation students' translation ability, this study used a quasi-experimental research design. In doing so, 60 participants were selected through OPT and assigned as the experimental group and the control group. Before the treatment sessions, both groups received a pre-test of translation. Then, they were both instructed translation via various methods. Translation quality was the dependent variable of the study and GBI was the independent variable. While the participants in the experimental group were trained to translate through Genre-oriented method, the participants in the control group received translation instruction just through mainstream translation activities. After the specific instruction for each group using Pak's model, both groups received the post-test. The design of the present study is illustrated below through schematic representation, where G1 and G2 represent the study groups, T refers to the pre- and post-tests, X1 represents the GBI of translation and X2 refers to the mainstream translation instruction method.

G1 E: T X1 T
G2 C: T X2 T

Figure 1: The design of the present study

Participants

The target population of the study consisted of Translation students who have been studying at several universities in Mazandaran Province. Subjects were both male and female selected by OPT as the intermediate level with scores between 120 and 140. There were thirty members in each group, the experimental group (Female: 23, Male: 7) and the control group (Female: 20, Male: 10). Their translation ability was at the intermediate level based on the mean pre-test scores and it was hypothesized that it would improve through the GBI.

Instruments

To collect the necessary data for the study, two instruments were used, consisting of two samples of reading passages selected from Longman Preparation course for TOEFL (Philips, 2006) and Pak's analytical framework (1998) for translation quality assessment.

Reading passages selected from Longman Preparation course for TOEFL (Philips, 2006)

Four reading passages on various topics were selected by the researcher from Longman Preparation course for TOEFL (Philips, 2006) to be translated by the learners. These passages were used as the pre- and post-test of the study to measure the learners' translation ability with some rearrangement of passages in each measurement.

Pak's analytical framework

The theoretical model for translation instruction and assessment is Pak's analytical framework (1998) consists of 6 moves as follows: move one: head, move two: preparatory comments, move three: main topic, move four: main thesis, move five: analysis, and move six: directive. The first move is the title, the one that establishes a theme around which the translation is centered. The second move is the preparatory comment which is a kind of writing that prepares the mind of the readers for the things to be followed. The third move is the main topic which is the central topic or issue discussed in the translation. The fourth move is the main thesis which summarizes the position of the translation on the main topic. In other words, the main function of translation is to present the translator's view on a particular issue, which is performed through this move. The fifth move is analysis or argumentation which provides the reader with more explanations on the main topic and main thesis through different steps. Finally, there is the last move which presents a restatement of the main thesis or a summary of the elaboration on the main topic. The directive may also be a prediction or recommendation.

Procedures for Data Collection

The present study took place in three general phases, namely *before* the instruction phase, *during* the instruction phase, and *after* the instruction phase. In the first phase, after laying the ground for the study and selecting the samples through OPT, the participants were randomly assigned into one experimental and one control group, 30 in each group. All the subjects of this study were pretested on translation measure. Therefore, in the first step of the study, a pre-test which consisted of Longman Preparation course for TOEFL reading texts (2006) were taken and the participants were asked to translate those texts into Persian. The scoring of tests (both pre-test and post-test) was according to inter-rating procedure. Then the participants in the experimental group had ten sessions of GBI. The GBI model in this study was based on Pak's analytical framework (1998) and its moves. Therefore, based on this model, the genre analysis for translating

various genres were divided into the following steps. (1) Outline the contextual variables of the genre. Contextual variables include the purpose of the communication, the type of scene, the thematic event, the communication media and the participants in the communication event. (2) Establish a schematic structure for the certain genre. (3) Discuss in groups the communicative purpose of the certain genre. (4) Discuss in groups and analyze the features of each speech step on three levels: functional, interpretative and linguistic. (5) Summarize the general features of the genre. (6) Practice translating into that certain genre. After the treatment sessions, the participants were asked to take a post-test and translate alternative texts from Longman Preparation course for TOEFL (2006) and finally, Pak's analytical framework was used to calculate the frequencies of different moves in translations in English forms and their Persian translation equivalents. Eventually, to see whether the Persian translations matches the English texts in terms of genre features, the statistical analysis was conducted.

Data analysis

In this study, descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were used. Paired-samples t-tests were used to see how much each group improved from pre- to post-test measures, and an independent-samples t-test was applied to see which group outperformed the other in translation. The statistical analysis was done in the SPSS Software (version 24).

4. RESULTS

Table1 indicates the descriptive statistics of the experimental group. The mean value of the translation for the experimental group before the instruction is 12.47 (SD=1.14), while the mean for the experimental group after the instruction is 16.68 (SD=1.20). It was found that the experimental group's performance on translation improved after the treatment.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for experimental group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	12.47	30	1.14	.31
Post-test	16.68	30	1.20	.22

As table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the control group of the study. The mean for the control group before the instruction is 12.30 (SD= 1.85), while its mean value after the treatment is 14.51 (SD=1.93).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for control group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	12.30	30	1.85	.21
Post-test	14.51	30	1.93	.24

Table 3 illustrates the descriptive analysis of the experimental and control groups for the post-test scores of translations. As the table presents, the experimental group outperformed the control group in post-test with the mean value of 16.68, and with a standard deviation of 1.20 for the experimental group. However, the mean value of the control group of the study in the post-test is lower than that of the experimental group (Mean=14.51, SD=1.93).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for both groups

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PostEX	16.68	30	1.20	.22
PostCONT	14.51	30	1.93	.24

To investigate whether the difference between the groups is significant, the results of the t-tests are presented and discussed to find the effectiveness of using the GBI on the Iranian translator learners' translation ability. The inferential analyses of the data for testing the research hypothesis have been summarized in the tables below.

Table 4 summarizes the inferential analysis of the data before and after translation instruction for the experimental group of the study.

Table 4: Paired-samples t-test for experimental group

	Paired Differences					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Paired1 EX Pre-test-Post-test	4.21	1.02	.18	3.15	29	.000

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of instruction on students' scores before and after the treatment on the translation measures. As shown in Table 4, there was a statistically significant increase in translation scores from pre-test to post-test for the GBI group, $t(=3.15, P=.000 < .0005$ (two-tailed). The observed-t is greater than the critical-t. Therefore, the GBI of translation improved the Iranian translation learners' translation ability.

Table 5 summarizes the results of the paired samples t-test for the control group before and after classroom-based translation instruction.

Table 5: Paired-samples t-test for control group

	Paired Differences					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Paired1 CONT Pre-test-Post-test	2.21	.97	.17	20.29	1.10	.000

As the table shows, there was not a statistically significant increase in translation scores from pre-test to post-test, $t(1.10)=20.29, P=.000 < .0005$ (two-tailed). The observed-t is less than the critical-t. Hence, there was no significant improvement from pre-test to post test for this group

Further statistical analysis was done to examine whether there were significant differences between the two groups in terms of their translation.

Since the two groups of the study were of the same level based on the OPT result, there could not exist any noticeable pre-existing differences between their translation abilities. Therefore, an independent-samples t-test was conducted between the post-test translation scores of the groups to see whether or not there exist any significant differences between the two groups in terms of their translation quality after the instruction.

Table 6 summarizes the inferential analysis of the post-test scores for the control and experimental groups.

Table 6: Independent-samples t-test for the post-tests of both groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	15.51	.165	17.11	58	.000	2.17

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine the effect of the GBI on the Iranian learners’ translation. The Sig value for Levene’s test is larger than .05 (.165), then the first raw in the table should be used, which assumes equal variances. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the scores of the control group and experimental group ($t = 17.11$, $p = .000$). Overall, to answer the research question of the study, it can be concluded that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in the post-test measures of translation which indicates the effectiveness of using the GBI on the Iranian EFL learners’ translation.

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed at gathering data on the effects of the GBI on the Iranian Translation students’ translation ability. The study started with homogenizing the participants through OPT and then randomly assigning them to two groups as the experimental and control groups. A pre-test post-test design was used and the data were used for statistical analysis.

The results were presented in two main sections: first, the procedures whereby the data were analyzed descriptively and elaborated on; second, the results of the inferential analysis of the study were discussed. Both sections took advantage of illustrations such as tables to provide a more clear-cut image of what were obtained. The results of the test scores were compared for both groups to ascertain whether or not the instructional treatment had been effective. It was concluded that the participants of the experimental group who received the GBI outperformed the control group significantly on the post-test measures of translation. This finding is in accordance with some other studies undertaken in other contexts (Bhatia & Nodoushan, 2015; Fu, 2018; Huang, 2004; Li, 2013; Li & Xu, 2018; Upton & Cohen, 2009). It also confirms Paltridge (2000, p. 1) who acknowledges “the increasing attention to the examination of genres people use in professional communication”. The results are in line with Flowerdew ‘s findings (1993) who outlined the advantages of a GBA regarding linguistic variation across professional genres and stated that, by raising awareness of such variation, learners identify functional aspects of disciplinary discourses and become proficient users of the different genre types. Our findings are also in line with Flowerdew (2000) who recommends the use of a genre-based framework to teach organizational structure in academic writing as she claims it helps raise awareness of the rhetorical conventions and generic features, thus setting the grounds for more realistic genre-based methodologies in ESP teaching.

The results we obtained agree with the study conducted by Li Yongqing (2013) who investigated the effect of genre-based translation on hotel promotional text in Malaysia and found the usefulness of this method. The results of this study also confirm Dabaghian and Solimany’s findings (2013) who applied Baker’s (1992) taxonomy to a task of translation of literary texts to evaluate the Persian translation of an English literary text, namely, *Animal Farm*, written by George Orwell and translated by Ali Akbar Akhondi. Hafizi’s study (2011) on two English translations of Sadegh Hedayat’s “Boof-e Koor” by Bashiri and Costello based on Julian House’s

(2001) model is also in line with our findings. Moreover, this research is in agreement with Ornella (2011) who presented an analysis of abstracts from research articles found in Linguistics and Translation Studies journals verifying whether or not the rhetorical patterns of organizations and the moves found in the abstracts coincide with those proposed by Swales (1993) and confirmed that providing learners with affective GBI would encourage them and exert immediate impact on their translation quality. Therefore, the GBI can be used an influential strategy in translation classes and other related situations

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of instruction through genre-oriented method. The outcomes of the study indicate that implementing the GBI is an effective way of improving the Iranian learners' translation ability as this method is more engaging than the traditional ones and is in fact a kind of rethinking in the way translation is taught to university students. The findings of this study offer many vital theoretical and pedagogical implications for teachers, translator educators, curriculum and material developers, and policymakers in an EFL context. In terms of methodological implications, this study has shown how the GBA of translation can contribute to translation studies. However, the limited number of the learners in the current study was a major limitation which the researcher had to cope with. Therefore, the power of the analysis was weaker than desired leaving a possibility of a type II error of analysis which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Thus, further studies should be conducted with a greater number of participants. On the basis of the limitation and delimitation of the study, further studies are suggested to be conducted with a greater number of participants with different ages and levels in various settings and contexts to see if such kind of training would still be beneficial to those other groups.

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A Study of Iranian Novice vs. Experienced EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Grammar: Searching for Professional Development

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Abstract

The present study aimed at comparing the perceptions of two groups of Iranian EFL teachers'- novice vs. experienced- of their Professional Development (PD) regarding teaching grammar. Ten EFL teachers were selected as novice teachers with less than five years of teaching experience and ten teachers were selected as the experienced teachers with more than twenty years of teaching experience. A structured interview was applied to determine and compare the novice and experienced teachers' attitudes toward PD based on the issue of teaching grammar. Content analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The results indicated that most novice teachers believed that their views concerning teaching grammar have changed as they became more experienced. They mentioned some examples of such change in their teaching practice such as using L1 when necessary, taking several English classes to enhance their experience, reading different books, learning from more experienced teachers, revising errors with the help of knowledgeable teachers, etc. Based on the ideas of the experienced teachers, adhering to a fixed old method cannot answer the complexity of teaching to different learners at different points of time. Therefore, most of them mentioned that through reflection on their teaching practice and reading articles and consulting other teachers, they try to keep up-to-date. The study presented a number of implications for language teachers and curriculum designers on the issue of PD.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English became a vital requirement for language learners. However, it can be viewed as a complicated system, involving several interrelated components whose full-fledged functioning guarantees its success and the prosperity of the nation (Postholm, 2012). Hence, the teacher and his/her properties such as behavior, personality and teaching efficiency are among the issues that affect the other parts of the educational system directly and indirectly (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Sharma, 2012). Accordingly, the form of recruitment, professional development of

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teachers and their empowerment should be of the most fundamental issues in the process of teacher education in a modern society (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; Johnson, 2009).

Teacher education is a field of Professional Development (PD) with novice teachers at one end and experienced teachers at the other end (Hughes, 1991). Therefore, teacher PD is an integral part of teacher development that deserves top priority in any country's education system. It is also a vital component of teachers' professional lives. There are various conceptions defining PD. Some people regard PD as training, workshops, in-service days, etc. while others consider it as a lifelong learning process for teachers about their professions. Freeman and Johnson (1998) in their prominent study indicated how teacher PD is constructed from the teacher's experiences as a teacher, understanding of theory and research, continuing reflection on learners and their learning processes, and soliciting and acting on information from learners about their own learning. Since one of the most important principles of teacher development is experience, it can be concluded that there are differences in novice and experienced teachers' attitudes toward this issue.

Twenty years later, Cross (2020, p. 15) stated 'the importance of acknowledging what our teacher-learners bring to the teaching/learning relationship is now axiomatic in second language teacher education. However, Freeman and Johnson's (1998) reconceptualized knowledge base calls for more than a focus on the learner's history. It requires understanding how these learners will go on to be situated within spaces to develop into new ways of being. After Vygotsky, it is a future-oriented understanding of teacher development where identity is central. The learners must note who they are and who they must be relative to the conditions that will shape what and how they need to know, think, and do to be successful within such spaces for activity.

It has been established that experienced teachers differ from novice teachers in their knowledge, skills, and beliefs (Rodríguez & McKay, 2010). They need PD to affirm their knowledge, experience, and intuitive judgment cultivated during their careers. At the same time, teaching experience does not necessarily result in expertise (Mehrpour & Mirsanjari, 2016; Tsui, 2005). Some experienced teachers are not as receptive to PD as the novice teachers, even though they might benefit from opportunities to reflect on and enhance their knowledge and refresh their enthusiasm for teaching.

Identifying teachers' perceptions of PD are useful for both teacher and students in the process of language learning and teaching. In this way, the critical role of the teacher should be taken into consideration. With this motivation, the focus of this study is on exploring the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers on PD for both novice and experienced teachers. Regarding the importance of teachers' perceptions of language teaching and learning, it is significant to compare novice and experienced teachers' perception and ideas on grammar teaching.

This study is significant since it can help teachers to understand how their beliefs influence their classroom practices, and this may encourage them to be interested to the area of PD and try to improve it, which may make them cognizant of the effect of those beliefs on their pedagogical decisions. According to Gabillon (2013) and Khader (2012), by identifying the matches or mismatches among teachers' beliefs and practices, teacher trainers, in-service teachers, and prospective teachers can better understand each other's perspectives and consequently work together to converge teachers' beliefs and practices. As Borg (2003, 2006) stated, studies investigating teachers' cognition in foreign language contexts have been limited, and studies like this may shed more light on this issue.

Moreover, language teachers' PD is considered as one of the most important issues in every current educational system in the world. Regarding the importance of narrative inquiry in creating teachers' PD, the present study outlines the rationale behind using narrative inquiry by teachers.

In fact, language classroom is a place providing this opportunity for teachers to explore themselves and their perceptions against the reality of their classes. This helps teachers research areas such as grammar and contribute their views into other teachers.

Based on the above-mentioned purposes, the following research questions have been formulated:

- 1: What are the novice teachers' perceptions of teaching grammar?
- 2: What are the experienced teachers' perceptions of teaching grammar?
- 3: Is there any trace of teacher's PD in the narration of novice teachers concerning teaching grammar?
- 4: Is there any trace of teacher's PD in the narration of experienced teachers concerning teaching grammar?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional Development (PD)

PD, in a broad sense, refers to the development of person in his or her professional role. More specifically, teacher development is the "professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 41). PD includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meeting, mentoring, etc.) and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications, watching television documentaries related to an academic discipline, etc.) (Ganser, 2000).

This concept of PD is, therefore, broader than career development, which is defined as 'the growth that occurs as the teacher moves through the professional career cycle' (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 415), and broader than staff development, which is 'the provision of organized in-service programs designed to foster the growth of groups of teachers; it is only one of the systematic interventions that can be used for teacher development' (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 416). When looking at PD, one must examine the content of the experiences, the process by which PD will occur, and the contexts in which it will take place (Fielding & Schalock, 1985; Ganser, 2000).

Definitions of teacher development and, more generally, PD, are difficult to find. Fullan (1995, p. 1) commented 'how little systematic attention has been devoted to understanding the topic'. Definitions of teacher development are almost entirely absent from the literature; even those who are generally considered leading writers in the field do not define precisely what they mean by the term. Darling-Hammond (1995), Fullan (1995), and Leithwood (1992), for example, all fail to offer operational definitions of teacher development or of PD.

One of the very few available simulative definitions is Day's definition (1999, p. 12) of PD; he writes, 'PD is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives.'

PD includes both formal and informal experiences. Formal learning opportunities consist of learning environments with a structured program such as postgraduate courses or compulsory PD. Such experiences represent conventional practices of PD. Formal learning opportunities enable teachers to upgrade their knowledge and skills with workshops and courses. Experts generally think that the information provided through these short-term events will be put into practice. On the other hand, informal learning opportunities do not follow a structured program and are not restricted to specific educational settings. They include individual activities such as reading and classroom observations as well as collaborative activities such as interviews with colleagues and

parents, mentoring activities, teacher networks, and workgroups (Yurtseven-Yılmaz & Sever, 2021).

Typical Modes of PD

Mizell (2010) mentioned some typical modes of PD, including:

- Individual reading/study/research;
- Study groups among peers focused on a shared need or topic;
- Observation: teachers observing other teachers;
- Coaching: an expert teacher coaching one or more colleagues;
- Mentoring of new educators by more experienced colleagues;
- Team meetings to plan lessons, problem solve, improve performance, and/or learn a new Strategy;
- Faculty, grade-level, or departmental meetings;
- Online courses;
- College/university courses;
- Workshops to dig deeper into a subject;
- Conferences to learn from a variety of expertise from around the state or country;
- Whole-school improvement programs.

Empirical Studies on Teacher's PD

Asa'di & Motallebzadeh (2013) studied classroom observation based on a factor for Iranian EFL teachers' PD and their students' achievements. They described the processes used to examine the effect of less-experienced teachers' participation in experienced teachers' classes on students' achievements in terms of their proficiency levels in both elementary and pre-intermediate levels. This quasi-experimental design study was conducted in KISH Language Institute in Bojnurd. Twenty-one EFL teachers were selected as experienced and less-experienced ones. Moreover, 169 male and female students (with the age range of 15-45 years), taking elementary and pre-intermediate courses, formed the participants of this study. The participants assigned into experimental and control group. Data analysis and statistical calculations through t-test and one-way ANOVA revealed that, although both control and experimental group students' proficiency in English enhanced, there was a significant difference in experimental group students' final scores before and after the treatment.

Alibakhshi and Dehvari (2015) explored the perceptions of Iranian EFL teachers of continuing PD and identified their main PD activities through a phenomenological research design. Twenty EFL teachers were interviewed. The data were content analyzed in line with Randor's model. The results showed that the participants perceived continuing PD to entail skills development, continuous learning, keeping up to date, learning for interest, and professional revitalization. Additionally, they developed professionally through work, formal education, attending continuing PD events and presenting at such events.

Tanang and Abu (2014), in their study entitled "Teacher professionalism and PD practices in South Sulawesi, Indonesia", asserted that their investigation focused on teachers' behavior-attitude, pedagogic skills, and diversity learning activities through effective PD. The supporting factors and the constraints of being professional teacher were also identified. They employed an exploratory mixed-methods design with triangulation approach. Simple random sampling was used to select 331 samples out of 2367 individuals to answer the questionnaires. Finally, twelve teachers were selected using purposive sampling for interview and observation. The t-test and ANOVA analysis showed that gender significantly affects behavior-attitude practice, while education professional qualification has a significant impact on teachers' behavior-attitude and

learning activities. The qualitative findings showed the need to display exemplary behavior-attitude and strength teaching skill, knowledge and beliefs through diversity learning activities in effective PD. Teacher PD needed supports in policy, infrastructure, and moral and financial arenas to lead teachers to be professional.

Simegn (2014) assessed perceptions and practices of secondary school (Grade 9-12) EFL teachers' self-initiated PD in his study. A questionnaire of Likert scale items and open-ended questions was used to collect data from thirty-two teachers. The teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaire at Bahir Dar University during their registration for pursuing their second degree in English education. The collected data were analyzed as descriptive statistics using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that despite insufficient practices, the teachers had clear consensus on the need for employing self-initiated PD at their working environment. There seemed to have more awareness of self-driven professionalism with a few practical experiences in their work places. Their school management problems, limited learning facilities, and discouraging traditions of self-improvement created pressure on teachers' implementation of the self-initiated PD.

Jazi, Talebinejad & Hashemian (2015) examined Iranian high school EFL teachers' perception of professional obstacles in terms of gender, academic qualification, years of experience, and age. Their study aimed at investigating different PD obstacles on the way of EFL senior high school teachers. More specifically, it examined the role of gender, academic qualification, years of experience, and age in teachers' professional obstacles, which are defined as a combination of Instructional Professional Obstacles (IPO), Self-Directed Professional Obstacles (SDPO), and Work-Related Professional Obstacles (WRPO). The participants were 100 EFL high school teachers who were teaching in senior high schools in Isfahan. They were selected based on convenience sampling procedures to respond to the questionnaire. To collect the intended data, a questionnaire from Herzallah (2011) was adapted, translated, and utilized. Then, Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was employed for THE two research questions of the study. The findings revealed

that gender and age had significant effects on the overall attitudes of the teachers towards professional obstacles. Among the three components of the teachers' attitudes, nonetheless, only WRPO was shown to be influenced by age. IPO and SDPO were not affected by the teachers' age.

Babanoğlu and Yardimci (2017) examined perceptions of state and private school EFL teachers towards PD. They focused on interpreting the concept of PD, putting emphasis on different perceptions of teachers working in different types of schools, as well as gender and age factors to shed light on the current issues of teacher development. 45 state and 45 private school EFL teachers were involved in data collection procedure. A 16-item Likert scale questionnaire was administered and the outcomes were interpreted statistically. Results of the study indicated that all teachers involved in the study had positive perceptions towards PD topics, especially lifelong and ongoing PD and belief in themselves and their profession. When private and state school teachers were compared, private school EFL teachers were more concerned about some principles of PD in teaching than the state school EFL teachers. Thus, gender had an effect on teachers' perceptions of PD in favor of female EFL teachers whereas age was not a decisive factor on their perceptions.

3. METHODOLOGY

Participants of the Study

Twenty EFL teachers working in different language institutes participated in this study. They were selected based on the non-probability sampling due to some limitations (not being able to visit and invite a large number of EFL teachers because of Covid-19 restrictions). Nonprobability sampling is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give

all the participants or units in the population equal chances of being included. Among different types of non-probability sampling, the convenience sampling was applied.

Accordingly, ten EFL teachers were selected as novice teachers with less than five years of teaching experience and ten teachers were selected as the experienced ones with more than twenty years of teaching experience. All participants were teaching in different language institutes in Babol, Mazandaran. The teachers were both males and females with the age range of 27-50. It should be noted that the gender effect was not considered in this study. The participants had Bachelor's (B. D.) and Master's (M. D.) degrees in language teaching and all were native speakers of Persian. The participants were ascertained that their answers to the interview will be kept confidential and just will be used as research data.

Instruments

For accomplishing the main purpose of this study, structured interview was applied. However, it was desired to add another instrument such as observation to increase the reliability of the data which was impossible due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. To justify our use of one instrument for data collection, we adhere to Creswell and Creswell (2018) who supports using one instrument for data collection in qualitative research in certain situations where other forms of data collections are not possible.

Structured interview

A structured interview was prepared to investigate the language teachers' perceptions of and practices on teaching grammar. This interview was a researcher-made interview and its items were associated with different aspects of teaching grammar. It included questions about PD perceptions as well. The interview was prepared in English version and involved five open-ended items. The items were about the teachers' perceptions towards language learning, and teaching, focusing specifically on teaching grammar to the learners. The interview was checked and modified by two TEFL experts to maximize its reliability and validity. The interview was emailed to the participants' email box (See appendix A).

Research Design

To carry out the present study, a qualitative research design was applied. In the data collection process, the structured interview was selected as a qualitative basis. Then, a content analysis was conducted on the data consisting of the teachers' narrations.

Data Collection Procedure

The main purpose of the present study was to study novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of teaching grammar and to look for any trace of PD in their narration. Each participant was given an identification code (novice teachers as NT1 to NT10 and experienced teachers as ET1 to ET10). Not to sensitize the participants, the purpose of the study was not disclosed to them. The interview was sent to the participants via email, their answers were received via email or applications such as Telegram or WhatsApp. All teachers answered the interview questions and sent their answers to the researchers.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed to evaluate teachers' perceptions towards teaching grammar and to trace any hint to their PD. With this purpose, the collected data were transcribed, analyzed and evaluated. Content analysis was utilized to extract important common themes in the teachers' narration. The major themes extracted from the data were classified under these headings: reflection on teaching, constant learning, self-evaluation, witnessing change in one's teaching beliefs and practice.

Member checking was applied to the data to confirm the validity and inter-coding agreement was applied to check the reliability of the findings.

According to Barkhuizen (2011), a narrative frame is 'a written story template consisting of a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying lengths' (p. 402). Well-designed narrative frames help respondents to talk about their experiences in narrative form, with an outcome which reflects 'a coherent snapshot' (Barkhuizen, 2014, p. 13) of their experiences in narrative form.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results of the First Research Question

RQ1: What are the novice teachers' perceptions of teaching grammar?

The first question deals with the perception and practice of novice teachers in the field of grammar teaching. Therefore, in this part, their answers to interview questions will be presented and analyzed.

The first question of the interview was: Can you describe the process of teaching grammar to your students with some examples? Did you follow the same procedure at the beginning years? The participants provided a number of answers listed below:

NT1. "In the first year of teaching, I explained all the grammars in Persian to the students according to their rules, and after that I gave examples to the students. But now that I have been teaching for almost 4 years, I use less Persian to explain and try to give more examples in English. The reason is grammar teaching sessions at the institute."

NT2. "I teach grammar based on the text of the book and the examples in the book. That is, I highlight the examples in the book and write them on the board, and then I ask the students to give examples like me, and then I explain the rules".

NT3. "In my first two years of teaching English, I mostly explained grammar. But after reading articles about how to teach grammar and college class, I tried to teach grammar to students using YouTube videos. I think they learn better".

NT4. "Grammar is one of the most important parts of language learning. I still think that grammar rules should be explained to students first and then taught by example. Because this way they can learn the rules better and it stays in their minds more. I have three years of teaching experience".

NT5. "Every day I add to my teaching experience; I try to make changes in my teaching style. To teach grammar, I think many examples can help students better. I even try to use chain drills to practice the taught grammar point".

NT6. "My grammar teaching is definitely by example. The way of teaching is different from the past. I used to explain more and now I give more examples and I try to ask students questions so that they can give many examples".

NT7. "I use the traditional method of teaching grammar, i.e., explaining grammar in Persian, and the reasons for this are the level of students as well as my level as a teacher".

Regarding the attitudes of the participants towards teaching grammatical points, most of them believed that grammar is one of the most inevitable components in the process of language teaching. They also thought that the grammatical structures have to be taught through sufficient examples. They also provided some other points such as having grammar sessions, enhancing their teaching experiences, reading academic papers, and participating in university classes. Table 1 presents the novice teachers' attitudes towards describing the process of teaching grammar.

Table 1: Novice teachers' attitudes towards describing the process of teaching grammar

1. Using different examples and texts, and highlighting the grammatical rules in the textbooks.
2. Using learners' first language and trying to present more examples.
3. Reading different articles about teaching grammar, using YouTube videos.
4. Using extensive explanation to teach grammar.
5. Using different drills and activities in teaching grammar.
6. Using traditional method in teaching grammar such as GTM.

The second question of the interview was related to the main factor in teaching grammar based on teachers' views. The participants provided a number of answers listed below:

NT1. "In my opinion, two factors are the most important factors in teaching grammar to students. The first factor is the grammar teaching method and the second factor is various examples. The teaching method can help the student to learn a lot and learn the grammar point faster".

NT2. "I think the teacher's teaching style can be the most important factor in teaching grammar to students. Because if it is not the right teaching method, students will not be able to communicate with the grammar topic".

NT3. "I think the most important factors in learning grammar are the teacher's teaching and examples that are related to the grammar of the lesson".

NT4. "In my point of view, grammar is an important part of teaching. The teacher should choose the book based on the student's level and use the simplest method to teach grammar".

According to the opinions of most of the participants, the most important factors in teaching grammar were the teacher's teaching method, the use of effective tools for teaching, and the choice of grammatical points based on the students' level. Table 2 presents the novice teachers' attitudes towards finding the most important factor in teaching grammar.

Table 2: Novice teachers' attitudes on the most important factor in teaching grammar

1. Teacher's method in teaching grammar.
2. Providing useful examples in teaching grammar.
3. Relying on learners' textbook to be in line with the learners' proficiency level.
4. Choosing grammatical points based on the students' level.

As discussed above, through these questions, it was tried to concentrate on the teachers' beliefs about their conception and practice on the issue of teaching grammar. It was also attempted to investigate whether their ideas have gone through some kind of change over time. Based on the literature, beliefs are considered to be unverified aspects of knowledge the individuals deem to be true (Murphy & Mason, 2006; Pajares, 1992), which gives directions on the way individuals reflect on, interpret and conceptualize the processes (Buehl & Beck, 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Pajares, 1992). Equally important, more inquiries have contributed to our understanding of the field with a primary purpose to expand whats and hows of knowledge (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Muis, 2004; Schommer, 1994).

Nevertheless, an issue of debate is: how teacher belief can undergo changes during different activities and contexts? To answer this question, researchers have gone through a variety of research methods, e.g., questionnaires and interviews, to glue teacher's belief pertaining to the changing nature of belief under different contexts (e.g., Olafson & Schraw, 2006; Yadav &

Koehler, 2007), and different teacher education programs (e.g., Brownlee, Purdie, & Boulton-Lewis, 2001; Gill, Ashton, & Algina, 2004).

It should be emphasized that answering these questions requires a lot of reflection on the part of the teachers about how to teach, how to give feedback to students, and affirming and thinking about teaching problems. Since reflection is the essence of PD (Borg, 2006), it can be claimed that the participants of the present study had experienced PD (in different levels and amounts) while answering these questions. Also, when they talk about how their ideas and attitudes had gone through some kind of change and modification through time, again some aspects of PD would glitter to us.

The next question was about the participants' opinions about the problems in teaching grammar. The participants provided a number of points listed below:

NT1. "One of my most important problems in teaching grammar is explaining it quite simply. Sometimes my students do not notice the teaching. For example, the concept of the simple present tense or its difference from the continuous present tense".

NT2. "My main problem in teaching grammar is the lack of sufficient knowledge in teaching grammar. I mean, I do not know all the techniques and ways of teaching grammar to use them at the right time".

NT3. "As a teacher, I always have trouble explaining grammar. I do not know what the reason is. But it may be my lack of knowledge and not choosing the right method, students' expectations, not having the right connection with the grammar point".

NT4. "I think the lack of effort of the students is one of my most important problems in teaching grammar. I explain all the points several times with examples, but unfortunately the lack of work of students makes them unable to learn".

NT5. "In my opinion, the way I teach, the difficulty of the grammar point can be one of my problems in teaching grammar".

According to the novice teachers' point of view, several factors were among the most important shortcomings and problems of teachers in teaching grammar structures, including the teaching method, insufficient teacher knowledge about grammar teaching, students' expectations, and learners' lack of understanding of grammar points.

The last question of the interview was about the novice teachers' successful experience in teaching grammar. In the following section, some of their answers are mentioned:

NT1. "Perhaps one of my most important achievements and successes in teaching grammar was dealing with students' different grammar problems and solving them. This was seen as an increase in my experience".

NT2. "After a few years of teaching the language, and the grammar section, I realized that it is better for children to rely more on examples than to use grammar rules".

NT3. "From my point of view, my experience as a teacher has changed over the last few short years. Because I had classes with many students, I attended several instructional sessions and read a few articles related to teaching grammar. All of this helped me to make changes in the way I taught grammar".

NT4. "I try to use examples, videos that teach grammar, and related explanations. Each of these helped me to teach grammar in different ways, and this can help my experience. It was a success for me".

NT5. "At the beginning of my teaching I was completely anxious and could not have confidence. In some lessons, I had difficulty explaining grammar points. But now, after three years, I have gained more and better confidence and I was able to learn how to deal with students".

The novice teachers mentioned their views about their successful experience in teaching grammar. They maintained few reasons such as recognizing different problems of the students while teaching grammar, using different methods in teaching grammar, attending training sessions to enhance experience, and increasing confidence in teaching grammar points. In general, novice teachers were able to achieve some levels of PD in teaching grammar through reflection and self-evaluation, although the extent and level of their PD varied among the participating teachers.

Result of the Second Research Question

RQ2: What are the experienced teachers' perceptions of teaching grammar?

The first question of the interview was related to the description of teaching grammar through presenting examples to learners. The experienced teachers provided a number of descriptions listed below:

ET1. "Grammar is a very important topic in learning and the key is reading, writing and speaking. That's why you have to pay more for it. I teach grammar through explanation in class and my explanation is mostly in Persian".

ET2. "Grammar is an integral part of language and must be learned by example and text. Yes, I will definitely use it. In addition, I ask students to give different examples or even make a conversation based on the grammar point".

ET3. "One of the features of my teaching is that I use grammar tips with a variety of examples from my personal life that students may be able to relate to more. For example, in the simple present, I try to give an example of my daily work".

ET4. "In teaching grammar, I try to use examples, videos, as well as written and spoken learning tasks, because I think a combination of these exercises can help you better understand the material".

ET5. "I think grammar teaching should be based on the level and age of the students. For younger ages I use examples because children are less likely to understand the rules and adults are more likely to use the rules".

Based on the teachers' responses, some issues have been regarded referring to grammar as an essential element in language teaching which can be taught through using personal examples, explanations, videos and tasks.

The second interview question was related to the main factor in teaching grammar based on teachers' points of view. The participants provided a number of answers listed below:

ET1. "In my opinion, the level and age of the class can be the most important factors in teaching grammar. Because students of different ages have to learn in different ways".

ET2. "I think that important factors in teaching grammar can be effective: the level of personal information, the readiness of people to learn grammar tips and the way the teacher teaches".

ET3. "The teacher should use the best method in teaching this important part of the language. So, the efficient method of the teacher is the most important component".

ET4. "The most important factor in teaching grammar is adequate and correct explanations to students that can help them learn".

ET5. "Teaching style, the selected contents as same as student's level, and interesting points, effective practices and materials can be important factors in teaching grammar to students".

According to the teachers' responses, the most important factors in teaching grammar were the teacher's teaching method, the use of attractive materials, and adequate and correct explanations, paying attention to the students' level, the use of effective practices and the selection of contents appropriate to the students' level.

Next question was about the participants' opinions about problems in teaching grammar. The participants provided a number of answers listed below:

ET1. "One of the most important grammatical problems for students is understanding students and not doing proper exercises".

ET2. "The most important problem for students about grammar is the incompatibility of grammatical concepts with the real world. This means that students do not have the ability to use grammar in the real world".

ET3. "Because I almost always use one method, this cannot be helpful for students".

ET4. "Some of my students can not relate to grammatical concepts, and this is very important".

ET5. "One of the most important problems in teaching grammar is the use of various tools in teaching grammar that are sometimes difficult to find".

According to the experienced teachers, several factors are among the most important shortcomings and problems in teaching grammatical structures, including the incompatibility of grammatical concepts with the real world, lack of using various tools in teaching grammar, and using a fixed and boring method of teaching grammar.

Next question was related to the teachers' different experience in teaching grammar during recent years. In the following sections, a number of teachers' attitudes are reported:

ET1. "In recent years, grammar teaching has changed and the type of teaching is chosen according to the age and level of students".

ET2. "Due to my extensive experience in language teaching, there has been no noticeable change in recent years, and grammar issues are mostly taught explicitly".

ET3. "I am constantly studying and thinking with my colleagues and this helps me to teach grammar points better. I think someone is constantly learning".

ET4. "Previously, in the early years of teaching, I used a few methods in teaching grammar, but after increasing my experience, attending university and writing two articles on language teaching, various issues in grammar teaching come to my attention".

Most experienced teachers believed that their teaching styles in grammar has been changed while a couple of teachers believed that there were no noticeable changes in their grammar teaching.

The last question of the interview was about the experienced teachers' successful experience in teaching grammar. In the following section, some of teachers' views are mentioned:

ET1. "I am constantly teaching grammar as one of the most important components of language. The fact that students learn and can use it in their communication is a very positive thing".

ET2. "The main point of my teaching method was that I was able to better understand the difference between grammar teaching methods in children and adults and teach it to my colleagues. This can be considered one of my best achievements in the field of grammar."

ET3. "Teaching experience taught me to learn many points in teaching grammar and this is considered as the best success in teaching grammar to students".

ET4. "Understanding students' problems, especially in grammar discussions and solving them, is one of my best achievements in teaching grammar".

ET5. "My most important achievement in teaching grammar was its more efficient teaching in many language situations and more meaningful exercises for students".

The experienced teachers mentioned their views about their successful experience in teaching grammar. They maintained few reasons such as finding the learners' problems in grammar and providing a solution for them, applying various methods in teaching grammar, and expanding teaching experience as the main reasons for the success of the experienced language teachers.

Result of the Third Research Question

RQ3: Is there any trace of teacher's PD in the narration of novice teachers concerning teaching grammar?

NT1. "Teaching English has always changed my attitude. Because of the connection with diverse students and their diverse type of learning. I always tried to learn more and more so that I could be a better teacher in the classroom. It has changed in proportion to the type of teaching, the confidence, the type of assessment of the students, and the relationship with the students in previous years".

NT2. "Teaching is a difficult profession. You must be constantly changing so that you can give better and more useful information to students. Is it possible to teach students with old information? I read a variety of scientific articles and from time to time I critique my teaching with my colleagues and try to improve the way I teach".

NT3. "I learned English very basically and always tried to teach basics. But my attitude is completely different from the first years of teaching, because of meeting different students, reading different books, and learning from more experienced teachers".

NT4. "My first teaching is very different from now. I sat in the classroom of many professors, I had many students, correcting sessions were held at the institute, and my opinion was very different from before. I used to think that I had to decide the teaching method myself and I thought I used the best teaching method. Now I think I became a more experienced person and gained more experience."

NT5. "At the beginning of my teaching, I did not pay any attention to psychological issues and only followed the content according to the curriculum without any flexibility, but after three years of teaching, many psychological characteristics such as motivation, stress, risk-taking and ... can be influential factors in learning."

NT6. "I think the teacher's method of teaching words can have the most important effect on the knowledge of lemons and their learning rate in vocabulary. Teacher teaching can have a direct impact on students' learning".

Based on the opinions of novice teachers mentioned above, it can be concluded that their perception and practice concerning grammar has changed over time. They believed that their teaching ideas and practices has changed since the beginning of their teaching. Thought and practical experience and venturing self-criticism made them aware of the multidimensional nature of teaching. Novice teachers reflected on their practice and questioned their beliefs permanently which led to a kind of PD at different levels.

Results of the Fourth Research Question

RQ4: Is there any trace of teacher's PD in the narration of experienced teachers concerning teaching grammar?

ET1. As a teacher, I have to change day by day and improve the teaching process because it is not possible to teach all students in one way. For example, I taught both low-level and high-level students, and found that it was better to give them comprehensible information based on how much they understood".

ET2. "I think as the student learns more over the years. As a teacher, I also face a variety of opportunities in teaching that can help me learn and change the way I look at teaching".

ET3. "Teaching is a difficult profession. You must be constantly changing so that you can give better and more useful information to students. Is it possible to teach students with old information? I read a variety of scientific articles and from time to time I critique my teaching with my colleagues and try to improve the way I teach".

ET5. "With my long history in teaching and numerous articles that I have read in the field of language teaching, reasons such as lack of experience, lack of knowledge, choosing the wrong methods, lack of proper needs assessment and not using educational tools can be the samples of problems".

Based on the ideas of the experienced teachers, adhering to a fixed old method cannot answer the complexity of teaching to different learners at different points of time. Therefore, most of them mentioned that through reflection on their teaching practice and reading articles and consulting other teachers, they try to keep up-to-date. They also consider themselves as constant learners who keep their minds open to analyze and criticize their routines to learn more and more. This trend of reflection is the basis of PD.

Generally, most novice teachers believed that their views concerning teaching grammar have changed as they became more experienced. They mentioned some examples of such change in their teaching practice such as using L1 when necessary, taking several classes to enhance their experience, reading different books, learning from more experienced teachers, revising errors by knowledgeable teachers, etc. The most important factors in teaching grammar were the teacher's teaching method, the use of efficient tools for teaching, and the choice of grammatical points based on the students' level.

Several factors were among the most important shortcomings and problems of teachers in teaching grammar structure, including teaching method, insufficient knowledge about teaching grammar, students' expectations.

Regarding the attitudes of experienced teachers, the most important factors in teaching grammar were the teacher's teaching method, the use of attractive points and materials as well as adequate and correct explanations, considering the students' level, providing effective practices and selecting contents appropriate to the students' level.

According to the experienced teachers' point of view, several factors are among the most important shortcomings and problems of teachers in teaching grammar structure, including the incompatibility of grammatical concepts with the real world, lack of using various tools in teaching grammar, using one method in teaching grammar.

Most experienced teachers believed that their teaching style in grammar has been changed. A couple of teachers believed that there were no noticeable changes in their grammar teaching.

The emerged themes first revealed that teachers believed PD is a "perpetual development" which continues throughout the teacher's professional life. They also perceived PD to be "necessary" and "beneficial" to teaching expertise. Besides, teachers conceived that PD has "developmental stages" which leads to "deeper understanding and cyclic reflection". This finding is also in accordance with previous studies such as Borg (2006), Clathorn (1995), and Fallen (1995).

The results showed that there was a difference between the experienced and novice teachers in grammar practices and attitudes. This finding was also supported by some previous studies, e.g., Richardson (1996) in his study entitled "The role of attitudes and beliefs in learning to teach", found that more experienced teachers held appositive stance towards PD activities. Byrnes and Wasik's (2009) study also revealed that action research can be considered a PD tool for the ESL teachers.

As teachers' beliefs and attitudes play a significant role in their PD (Braten & Ferguson, 2015), their beliefs about sources of knowledge and how they consider PD activities could be taken as significant factors affecting the motivation for learning in teacher education. Also, as Braten and Ferguson (2015) found, there are strong relations between teachers' justification for what they do and beliefs they hold in science, motivation for understanding what they read in science, and their professional and scientific achievement.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study revealed that PD is considered important by both novice and experienced EFL teachers. However, the experienced ones paid more attention to the activities

which could pave the way for their development. Given that the students' learning and achievement is so greatly impacted by the quality of teaching, effective teacher development is important for any educational system to function properly in the global arena.

PD in general, and effective PD activities, in particular, are of paramount importance in promoting teaching literacy and educational pedagogy. Teacher education, as an ongoing process, requires that EFL teachers keep abreast with the novel educational issues and concepts, get updated in terms of psychological and educational findings and share their findings with their colleagues to generate new ideas (Lopez, 2017). In this regard, the findings of the present study could be employed by EFL teachers in various educational settings, especially in the private institutes and language learning centers to promote teaching literacy.

The researchers hope that the Ministry of Education will consider these findings and begin providing more effective PD activities for teachers, both in the schools and institutes. Without taking advantage of on-going PD activities, the Iranian teachers' growth will be stunted, and students will fail to be prepared to compete in the 21st-century global environment.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe the process of teaching grammar to your students with some examples? Did you follow the same procedure at the beginning years of teaching? If no, what was the reason for that change?
2. What factors do you think are important for teaching grammar? Why?
3. Did you feel any gap in the procedure of teaching grammar? How did you try to fill the gap?
4. Do you think five or six years later your method of teaching grammar would be different from now? Why?
5. Did you have any successful experience in teaching grammar to your students? Can you elaborate on that?

In-Field vs. Out-of-Field EFL Teachers' Self-Efficacy, Classroom Management Styles and Students' Performance

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Abstract

Given that teachers' academic qualification exerts significant effects upon their cognitive- behavioral conduct, especially in the teaching context, which, in turn, has an undeniable and crucial role in their learners' performance, the present study aimed at investigating the differences between In-Field-Teaching (IFT) EFL teachers and their Out-of-Field Teaching (OFT) counterparts with regard to their Classroom Management (CM) strategies and Teachers' Self-Efficacy (TSE) beliefs and their students' achievement. To this end, 60 (30 IFT and 30 OFT) EFL teachers from three different cities in Iran were conveniently selected, and a random sample of 64 EFL learners were picked from the students of both groups of teachers. Two questionnaires, namely, CM Techniques Scale and Teacher Efficacy Scale were used to gather data on CM and TSE, respectively. Moreover, an adapted version of the first certificate in English test was used to assess students' achievement before and after the instruction. Results revealed that the IFT EFL teachers majorly used positive CM strategies compared to the OFT EFL teachers who mainly used negative CM strategies. Further comparisons, moreover, showed that the IFT EFL teachers had a significantly higher sense of self-efficacy than their counterparts. Additionally, statistical tests indicated that the IFT EFL teachers had a better performance in comparison to the OFT-EFL teachers. Implications of these findings for quality education and quality teaching are discussed in terms of providing subject-specific skills and training programs, specifically for the OFT teachers.

1. INTRODUCTION

An ongoing discussion in the recent literature regarding teachers' certification is their subject matter knowledge (Hobbs & Törner, 2019). As Ríordáin, Paolucci, and Lyons (2019) and Porsch and Whannell, (2019) postulate, subject matter knowledge ensures high-quality teaching in classroom setting. Otherwise, specialized or In-Field (IF) teachers who have gained specific knowledge and skills through formal and academic qualifications are probably more qualified than

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non-specialist or Out-of-Field (OF) teachers who teach what does not match their qualification (Ingersoll, 2003). However, although education policy makers around the world have devoted many resources to ensure that schools are staffed by highly qualified teachers (Barbieri, Rossetti, & Sestito, 2011), varying degrees of OF teachers serve in many countries (Price et al., 2019), which may undermine the quality of teaching, as pointed out by Ingersoll (2003).

Whether OF teaching is a problem can be determined by examining the impact it exerts on learners and their ultimate performance. Darling-Hammond (2000) provides evidence indicating the strong relationship between teachers' certification and students' achievement. This raises the question (Hobbs & Torner, 2019) as to whether a teacher with no subject-specific knowledge may positively influence the students' interest in the subject.

Teachers' subject knowledge may also exert possible effects on their cognitive behavioral conditions, i.e., IF and OF teaching may have a differential effect on teachers' identity, self-efficacy, well-being, (Hobbs & Torner, 2019) and content knowledge. According to Abell (2007), it is a necessary element of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Hobbs (2013) believes OF teachers may not confidently involve in more difficult contents because of their limited subject knowledge which affects some aspects of their teaching identity (e.g. self-efficacy). This view is justified where the stress of OF teaching brings about poor self-efficacy, and in Ríordáin et al.'s (2017) terms, a lower confidence, and disillusionment (Pillay et al. 2005).

From the perspective of self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998), in examining the OF phenomenon, it's vital to consider individual teacher's characteristics like Teachers' Self-Efficacy (TSE), i.e., beliefs in their capabilities to have control over their own functioning. This has an important role in establishing a positive learning environment in teaching profession.

Likewise, research shows that OF teaching has a differential effect on teacher's choice of strategies. According to cognitive behavioral theory of behavior management, a possession of such effective Classroom Management (CM) is vitally important within the classroom setting (Brophy, 2010). This helps well-educated and knowledgeable teachers in their choice of strategies to establish a positive learning environment and support learners to behave in ways that help them gain the most from their schooling. It is believed that if teachers are seeking for students' academic success in schools, it is crucial to have an appropriate CM style (Rosas & West, 2009). The most beneficial outcomes of CM are the result of the teachers' capability to establish a positive learning environment. In other words, teachers' perceptions of, or spontaneous thoughts about situations that influence their identity as well as their emotional and behavioral (and often physiological) reactions, determine the skills and techniques that they use for organizing learners' behavior and their attentive task performance during a class (Brophy, 2010).

Despite the growing interest in exploring aspects of teachers' identity and their behavioral conduct in teaching contexts, little attention has been paid to the possible effect of teachers' Related Academic Degree (RAD) in the subject they teach on TSE beliefs, their CM styles and students' performance in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Accordingly, the major objective of this study was to identify the differences between specialist or IF EFL teachers and OF EFL teachers with regard to TSE, CM, and their students' ultimate performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge theory (Shulman, 1986), is about the forms of teachers' knowledge and appropriate ways of applying these forms in the classroom setting. In other words, it refers to teachers' knowledge of the facts and structures of the subject they teach. Shulman, furthermore, argues that teachers' content knowledge about a specific subject is more than just knowing about the facts or structures of that subject. From this perspective, according to

Shulman (1986) the knowledge base for teaching is more fundamentally complex, and means more than just an understanding of the general knowledge. It involves a variety of other types of expertise, such as designing curricular materials, understanding evaluation, and CM skills.

By understanding such pedagogical content knowledge, teachers can present their knowledge in the classroom and facilitate the students' learning. Baumert, Kunter, Blum, Brunner, Voss, and Jordan (2010) contend that such teachers' pedagogical content knowledge greatly depends on the type of qualification and training programs. Accordingly, as Nixon et al. (2017a) states, teachers are required to have a grasp of the subject matter before, for example, they deal with the students' problems with content or choose the appropriate pedagogy to aid their learning.

Previous research has demonstrated that more experienced teachers draw on PCK to scaffold their restricted subject knowledge when teaching OF (Sanders et al. 1993). However, researchers (e.g., Nixon & Luft, 2015) raise concerns around less qualified teachers teaching OF given their limited PCK and experience that may affect their teaching outcome, that is, their learners' ultimate achievement. This issue has attracted the attention of researches for many years.

To determine the possible effects of teachers' RAD on students' achievement, Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) compared the students of teachers with no formal certification and training in the subject they teach to those of teachers with formal certification in the subject area. They found that the students of OF math and science non-certified teachers perform less well than those of teachers with a RAD in mathematics and science. The results showed that the phenomenon of OF could have a significant effect on the students' test scores.

OF teachers' content knowledge and their pedagogical knowledge exert influences on their classroom practices. In a qualitative, multi-perspective study, Du Plessis (2015) examined the OF teachers' experiences. Findings indicated that the OF teachers' quality of teaching was affected by the lack of PCK. Du Plessis observed that the OF teachers felt challenged and stressed when they were asked questions related to their subject knowledge. They hardly understood the application of the curriculum to be taught.

In a similar vein, Hammond (2000) collected data across 50 states in the USA and identified that teachers' RAD in the subject they teach and subject-specific preparation are the strongest factors that affect students' achievement in reading and mathematics. Several other studies have also identified that teachers' RAD in specific subjects is associated with enhanced level of students' achievement in that subject (e.g. Hoffmann & Richter 2016).

To find the possible effects of teachers' RAD on their individual characteristics such as TSE, which, in turn, affects learners' ultimate attainment, Prieto and Altmaier (1994) surveyed graduate psychology teacher assistants to gain information about their training, subject specific expertise and self-efficiency beliefs toward teaching. The researchers used self-efficacy toward teaching inventory (Prieto & Altmaier, 1994) and self-report measure to assess the participants' degree of confidence in their specific teaching behaviors. It was shown that the teacher assistants who received qualifications and formal training in psychology had a greater sense of self-efficacy than participants with no training courses.

In the realm of CM, it is also important to focus on the importance of teachers' specific academic degree in the subject. Soheili, Alizadeh, Murphy, Bajestani, and Ferguson (2015), probed the effect of specialized knowledge on teachers' CM strategies and students' achievement. They examined both students' perception of CM concept and their final grades. Their analyses of 745 students' perception of classroom environment and their relationship with teacher revealed that the qualified training programs had positive effects on teachers' behavior in classroom which can also satisfy the students with the classroom environment, enhance teacher-student interactions, and improve the students' academic performance.

A thorough and in-depth assessment of the relevant literature indicates that few researchers have explored the teachers' characteristics more particularly from an OF perspective in relation to their students' ultimate achievement over the years (Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh, & Khalaileh, 2011). This study, hence, was determined to identify the differences between IF-EFL teachers and OF-EFL teachers with regard to TSE, CM, and students' performance. Accordingly, the following research questions guided the current investigation:

- 1) Is there any significant difference between the OF EFL teachers and the IF EFL teachers with regard to their CM techniques?
- 2) Is there any significant difference between the OF EFL and the IF EFL teachers with regard to their TSE beliefs?

Is there any significant difference between the performances of the IF EFL teachers' students vs. the OF EFL teachers' students?

3. METHODS

A. Participants Teacher-participants (N=60) included 41 males and 19 females with the age range between 26 and 30. Based on their field of study, they were assigned to two groups of IF EFL and OF EFL teachers (with 30 members in each group). They reported teaching to EFL learners of different levels of English language proficiency. The first group (i.e., IF EFL teachers) held MA degree in TEFL; the second group (i.e., OF EFL teachers), on the other hand, held MA degrees in fields other than English language teaching. The teacher-participants had 2-4 years of teaching experience and none of them in either group participated in any teacher training courses.

In addition to the teacher-participants, there were also 64 student-participants, including 43 males and 21 females. Student-participants, aged between 14-17 years, were selected from the students of a random sample of teacher-participants (n =16). Table 1 presents a summary of the participants' profile.

Table 1: Participants' profile

	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
IF-EFL teachers	19	11	30
OF-EFL teachers	22	8	30
Total	41	19	60
IF- students	21	11	32
OF- students	19	13	32
Total	43	21	64

The CM techniques (Lewis, 2001) questionnaire was used to measure the teachers' application of CM techniques in the teaching contexts. It encompassed 24 items that assessed five CM techniques, including involvement, punishment, recognition and reward, aggression, and discussion. The 16-item version of the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) questionnaire (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) was also used to measure teacher-participants' level of self-efficacy. The alpha measures obtained as the index of internal consistency of the questionnaires were .98 and .96, respectively.

The students' performance in English language was tested, before and after the instruction, by the cloze tests adapted from the first certificate in English test, namely, Use of English Paper, that

functions as an integrative measure of language proficiency. The Use of English Paper with 24 items included some cloze (open and multiple-choice) passages which assess different elements of language. The first part of the paper, which consisted of 12 items, encompassed reading a cloze passage and choosing the best option from among the given options for each gap. The second part included a passage with 12 gaps in which the participants were asked to read the passage and think of the word which best fits each gap.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This investigation explored the differences between two groups of teachers namely, the IF EFL and the OF EFL teachers regarding their CM techniques, TSE beliefs and students' performance. The first question sought any significant difference between the two groups with regard to their CM techniques. The descriptive statistics associated with teachers' CM techniques are reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics: IF and OF teachers' CM techniques

CM styles	Teachers	M	SD
Involvement	IF	32.76	5.56
	OF	23.03	4.62
Punishment	IF	11.06	2.94
	OF	13.93	3.87
Reward	IF	15.73	3.01
	OF	12.03	2.59
Aggression	IF	6.31	2.44
	OF	10.03	2.31
Discussion	IF	7.23	2.41
	OF	8.66	2.55
Total	IF	73.16	69.10
	OF	67.70	6.34

N= 30

As displayed in Table 2, the IF teachers had the higher mean in involvement and reward. The OF teachers, however, had higher mean at punishment, aggression, and discussion. Further MANOVA statistics (Table 3) with all the satisfactory underlying assumptions was used to check whether these differences were significant.

The obtained MANOVA results with Lambda value of .466, ($p < .05$) indicate a statistically significant difference between the IF and OF teachers in terms of their CM styles. We further checked whether they differ on all of the dependent measures, or just some. To this end, between-subjects effects test (Table 4) was used.

Table 3: MANOVA test for IF vs. OF teachers' CM techniques

Effect		Value	F	Df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.989	939.866b	5.000	54.000	.000	.989
	Wilks' Lambda	.011	939.866b	5.000	54.000	.000	.989
	Hotelling's Trace	87.025	939.866b	5.000	54.000	.000	.989
	Roy's Largest Root	87.025	939.866b	5.000	54.000	.000	.989
	Pillai's Trace	.534	12.391b	5.000	54.000	.000	.534
CM	Wilks' Lambda	.466	12.391b	5.000	54.000	.000	.534
	Hotelling's Trace	1.147	12.391b	5.000	54.000	.000	.534
	Roy's Largest Root	1.147	12.391b	5.000	54.000	.000	.534
	Pillai's Trace	.534	12.391b	5.000	54.000	.000	.534

Between-subjects effects test indicates that the two groups do differ in all aspects of CM. To be more specific, in terms of involvement and reward, the IF group scored higher (with $M=32.76$, $SD= 5.56$ for involvement and $M= 15.73$, $SD=3.01$ for reward) than the OF teachers (with $M=23.03$, $SD= 4.62$ for involvement and $M= 12.03$, $SD=2.59$ for reward). However, the results are vice versa for punishment, aggression and discussion, that is, the OF teachers (with $M= 13.93$, $SD= 3.87$ for punishment, $M= 10.03$, $SD= 2.31$ for aggression and $M= 8.66$, $SD=2.55$ for discussion) scored higher than the IF teachers (with $M= 11.06$, $SD= 2.94$ for punishment, $M= 6.34$, $SD= 2.44$ for aggression and $M= 7.23$, $SD=2.41$ for discussion).

Descriptive statistics associated with the second question that probed possible differences between groups with regard to their TSE beliefs are summarized in Table 5.

Table 4: Between-subjects effects test: IF vs. OF teachers' CM

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Involvement	522.150	1	522.150	14.754	.000
	Punishment	132.017	1	132.017	11.084	.002
	Reward	81.667	1	81.667	7.916	.007
	Aggression	201.667	1	201.667	35.668	.000
	Discussion	30.817	1	30.817	4.992	.029
Intercept	Involvement	52392.150	1	52392.150	1480.365	.000
	Punishment	9450.150	1	9450.150	793.402	.000
	Reward	11760.000	1	11760.000	1139.967	.000
	Aggression	4034.400	1	4034.400	713.545	.000
	Discussion	3792.150	1	3792.150	614.313	.000

Table 5: Descriptive statistics: IF and OF teachers' TSE beliefs

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means				Mean Difference
		F	Sig	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	
TSE	Equal Variances assumed	8.841	.004	6.416	58	.000	18.10000
	Equal Variances not assumed			6.416	42.461	.000	18.10000

Table 6: Independent samples t-test: IF vs. OF teachers' TSE beliefs

		Teachers	M	SD	N
TSE	IF		68.23	13.84	30
	OF		50.13	6.86	30

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for IF and OF teachers' students' performances before and after instruction

		Students Performance	Mean	SD	N
Pre test	IFT		10.34	2.88	32
	OFT		10.59	3.26	32
Post test	IFT		14.56	4.08	32
	OFT		13.46	4.77	32

The IF teachers, as displayed in Table 5, had higher mean in TSE beliefs compared to the OF teachers. Further independent samples t-test (Table 6) approved this difference ($t=6.41$; $p<0.05$).

The last question probed the differences between the performance of the IF teachers' students vs. the OF teachers' students. Table 7 represents descriptive statistics associated with the students' performance across the two main groups, that is, the IF teachers vs. the OF teachers.

The IF teachers' students performed better than those of the OF teachers' at the end of the instruction. ANCOVA test (Table 8), with students' pre-test performance scores as the covariate, indicated that there is a significant difference between the two groups of teachers with regard to their students' performance ($F=10.47$, $p=.00$, partial eta squared=.147).

Table 8: One-way ANCOVA test for IF and OF teachers' students' performances

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	776.621a	2	388.311	50.574	.000	.624
Intercept	84.880	1	84.880	11.055	.002	.153
Pre test	757.481	1	757.481	98.655	.000	.618
Students_ Performance 1	80.406	1	80.406	10.472	.002	.147
Error	468.363	61	7.678			
Total	13817.000	64				
Corrected Total	1244.984	63				

5. DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the current study was, first, to find out the possible differences between the OF and IF teachers with regard to their use of the CM strategies of 'involvement', 'punishment', 'reward', 'aggression', and 'discussion'. For this purpose, the researcher applied MANOVA test. The results revealed that the two groups differed in the use of the CM strategies of 'involvement', 'punishment', 'reward', 'aggression', and 'discussion'. However, more detailed results from descriptive statistics revealed that specialist teachers used more positive CM strategies such as 'involvement' and 'reward' to manage their classroom. On the other hand, non-specialist teachers applied mainly negative CM strategies, such as 'punishment', 'aggression', and 'discussion' to do so. In other words, EFL teachers with a related academic degree in English language used more holistic CM techniques, which according to Horner, Sugai, and Anderson (2010), use more positive techniques when good students' behaviors occur and more supportive techniques when disruptive behaviors occur. In contrast, EFL teachers with no related academic degree and training in English language teaching use more traditional CM techniques which, according to Ross and Horner (2007), get more punitive when disruptive behaviors occur. This finding implies that certified teachers with a related academic degree in the subject that they teach, use mainly positive and effective CM strategies, which according to Allen (2010), Reupert and Stuart Woodcock (2014) can lead to a positive relationship with students and, in turn, positive learning environment. The result in this part is consistent with the findings of Darling-Hammond (2001), who argued that teachers' academic degree in their subject area ensure that they have professional knowledge about pedagogical techniques. This finding is also in line with Saleh and Darmawan's (2013) research that indicated the IF teachers use higher levels of positive interaction to deal with disruptive behaviors. One explanation for this finding is that teachers with related academic degree in English language teaching have participated in lots of practice-based professional courses on theoretical and practical teaching which mostly encompass effective management skills.

Our second aim was to find out the differences between the IF and OF teachers' TSE beliefs. T-test analysis was used to examine the differences between both groups of teachers. The results showed that the two groups differed significantly in their TSE beliefs; the IF teachers had significantly higher TSE beliefs. This outcome may suggest that the EFL teachers who have a related academic degree in English language teaching have a high sense of self-efficacy than those who do not have a related academic degree in English language teaching. The findings accord with

the studies (e.g., Denham & Michael, 1981) depicting that teachers with training in the fields that they teach and a related academic degree in their teaching fields have a higher self-efficacy and degree of confidence in their abilities, compared to the teachers with no such qualifications in their specialty areas. As the OF teachers have no professional training courses on English language teaching (Michel, 1981), they may possess lower sense of self efficacy beliefs. This view is justified by Pillay et al. (2005), and Schueler et al (2016) who maintain that the stress of OF teaching may end in teacher's stress, poor self-efficacy and disillusionment. Thus, the reality is that the OF teachers might feel the additional tension associated with learning to teach a new subject (Bosse & Törner, 2013).

We finally attempted to find out the differences between the students' achievement of two main groups of teachers. The results of a set of ANCOVA tests revealed that the IF teachers' students' achievement were significantly better than those of the OF teachers. This corroborates with Goldhaber and Brewer (2000), as well as Dee and Cohodes (2008) who reported that the EFL teachers' related academic degree in the subject that they teach can have a significantly positive impact on the students' achievement in comparison to the teachers with no certification in their subject area. Accordingly, the outcomes may reflect that the subject-qualified EFL teachers have developed their content knowledge about English language teaching. This reflects Shulman's (1986) contention that teachers with specific content knowledge possess the knowledge of the facts and structures of the subject that they teach and can also present their knowledge in the classroom and facilitate their students' learning. In sum, the findings proposed in this research may imply that the EFL teachers with subject-specific training in English language teaching and the phenomenon of OFT can affect the TSE beliefs, the teachers' use of CM strategies, and their students' achievement.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study made it clear that teaching English would be more effective when qualified teachers are involved in teaching. This can be an implication of the fact that qualified EFL teachers' awareness about positive CM strategies can enhance their students' achievement and lead to a positive student-teacher relationship in the classroom. The findings call for situated and practice-based professional development programs for the OF teachers. Such focused programs can hugely affect the student-teacher interrelationship and the quality of education which, in turn, may also affect the students' performance. Teacher trainers, English language institutes that support students' successes and seek positive learning environment, should, therefore, offer OFT EFL teachers some training programs or courses that focus on the special needs of teachers, including CM strategy-training. The teachers can, thus, extend the CM strategies that they learnt from the suggested training programs to their daily teaching. Moreover, the findings of this study also suggest that teachers' certification and academic degree can affect their TSE beliefs. One way of strengthening the sense of self-efficacy beliefs is through vicarious experiences. One such experience can be observing the social models that can enhance the observers' sense of self-efficacy beliefs. As in the context of the present study, non-specialist teachers can enhance their self-efficacy beliefs by observing the teaching of other successful teachers. Therefore, this can be an implication of the necessary opportunities that the English language institutes are to provide for the OF teachers to participate and observe the teaching of other successful teachers. Another way of helping the OFT EFL teachers to develop their sense of self-efficacy beliefs is that they can be given supportive feedbacks. Those in charge of running English language institutes, hence, are suggested to emphasize more on frequent observations of the OFT EFL teachers' teaching and providing them with supportive feedback.

The researcher took every precaution to make this study faultless; however, the present study suffered from some unintentional limitations, which may provide insights for further studies. One of the limitations of this study is related to the main data collection tools. Due to the practical reasons, the researcher used two questionnaires to collect data about teachers' CM styles and TSE beliefs. The response format of the TSE questionnaire was Likert-type which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. According to Revilla, Saris, and Krosnick (2014), agree-disagree rating scales have a few shortages such as the possibility of biased responses, enhancing cognitive burden, and yielding to low-quality data. Another major concern of the researcher that has to be mentioned is related to the use of the adapted version of the first certificate in English test for collecting data about the students' achievement. Due to practicality issues, the researcher decided to only use one section of the first certificate in English test and omit other sections. Furthermore, observing a few sessions of both groups of teachers was another limitation of this study which may prevent generalizing the results of the classroom observation. To overcome the limitations of this study and expand the knowledge provided through this investigation, the following suggestions for conducting further studies are recommended. It is recommended that further investigations use other types of data collection tools such as interviews, study both teachers as well as students, and do more classroom observation which can lead to a richer description of the features of the variables involved in the present study. In addition, to make the findings of the study more generalizable, it is recommended that for further and clearer implications, researchers make use of a large number of participants in the future. Researchers are recommended to carry out such studies in the different contexts such as schools to see whether the same or different results are obtained. Conducting similar studies in different contexts can make generalizing the findings of the study more plausible. Finally, further treatment-based experimental studies that use more elaborate achievement tests and provide more thorough results about students' achievement are suggested.

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Diagnostic and Developmental Potentials of Computerized Dynamic Assessment (C-DA) for L2 Vocabulary

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Abstract

Computerized form of dynamic assessment (C-DA) has recently gained a foothold in second/foreign language (L2/FL) context. Inspired by Vygotskian socio-cultural epistemology, C-DA integrates assessment and instruction through providing learners with attuned electronic mediations. This study applied C-DA to assess and instruct L2 learners' vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension tasks. Following a pretest-posttest control group design, the study included 70 participants who were randomly selected based on non-probability sample design from 125 students at the outset of the study. The experimental group (N=35) received the C-DA mediation and the control group (N=35) underwent a traditional, unmediated instruction. To be able to simultaneously assess and promote the learners' knowledge of vocabulary, a software program was designed, which could present a number of reading passages and offer strategically a wide range of hierarchically-based electronic mediations. The results of paired and independent samples t-test revealed significant improvement of the DA group. The information obtained from the learners' learning potential score (LPS) helped diagnose their emerging abilities, which evidenced that learners with equal actual scores in their independent performance had different mediated scores, gained score, and LPS. Moreover, the comparison of learners' non-dynamic assessment (NDA) and DA scores through both paired and independent samples t-test attested to the diagnostic function of C-DA in surfacing learners' underlying potential, a finding which has direct implications for L2 vocabulary assessment and development in EFL context.

1. INTRODUCTION

The L2 field is so obsessed with the development of standardized, high-stakes tests that the diagnostic mission of language testing has been consigned to oblivion. In this line, Alderson (2005) complains that such a sedate disposition and lackluster interest in diagnostic assessment in L2 testing has led to "a considerable confusion and indeed ignorance about what diagnostic testing might entail" (Alderson, 2005, p. 26). He goes further to state that even classroom-based

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assessments have failed to put into effect principles of diagnostic assessment and no worthwhile attempt has been made to cater for the students' developmental needs. It is argued that traditional diagnostic assessments fail to fully capture the multilayer aspects of learners' performance due to their preoccupation with the psychometric notion of reliability and their deficiency-oriented approach to diagnosis (Kunnan & Jang, 2009, p. 622). The traditionally oriented diagnostic feedback treats learners' problems as homogenous and pays lip service to their individualized needs and underlying potentials. For this reason, the decisions and information accrued from such assessments lack pedagogical applications (Alderson, Brunfaut, & Harding, 2014).

The alternative view is anchored in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and his learner-oriented notion of dynamic assessment (henceforth DA) through which the teacher participates or intervenes in the learner's activities to extend and broaden their learning abilities and at the same time diagnosing or assessing their development (van der Veen, Dobber, & van Oers, 2016). Dynamic assessment has established a solid niche in developmental psychology (Lidz, 1991; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002) but has only recently started gaining popularity among L2 scholars (e.g., Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Poehner, 2008; Antón, 2009; Mallahi, & Saadat, 2020) not least because of its robust theoretical background and effectiveness in assisting learners to develop new cognitive skills. DA parts company with the traditional static assessment on several grounds namely an emphasis on process rather than product, the inclusion of examiner feedback and a shift from examiner neutrality towards an individualized teaching and helping relationship (Grigorenko, Sternberg & Ehrman, 2000). What makes DA distinct from traditional assessment procedures is its underlying assumption that human abilities are dynamic and volatile rather than static. DA squarely attacked intelligence (IQ) testing for its tendency to present only a static measure of learners' abilities.

Vygotsky (1978) proposed that all learning takes place within a "zone of proximal development" which represents a distance between unmediated and mediated ability (Hasson & Botting, 2010). Vygotsky's notion of ZPD rests on the premise that learners' word recognition ability can be optimized with the provision of appropriate scaffoldings and mediation (Vygotsky, 1978). Computer and multimedia applications serve as examples of artifact mediation which has shown great potential in scaffolding L2 learners' vocabulary learning (e.g. Chun & Plass, 1996; Hulstijn, 1993, 1997; Knight, 1994; Laufer & Hill, 2000). Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is able to provide fine-tuned mediation to help learners reallocate their short-term memory to higher levels of textual analysis and interpretation and in this way reduce much of their learning constraints imposed by the need for word decoding and help boost their "sight vocabulary" capacity (Cummins, 1979; Li, 2010).

A computerized DA or C-DA integrates assessment and assistance with the aim of redressing the learners' linguistic deficiencies. C-DA has recently gained a foothold in foreign language teaching and learning (Shabani, 2014; Zheng, Niiya & Warschauer, 2015; Zheng & Warschauer, 2015; Yim & Warschauer 2017; Bakhoda & Shabani, 2016, 2017, 2019; Ebadi, & Saeedian, 2019; Vakili, & Ebadi, 2019; Estaji, & Saeedian, 2020; Zhang, & Zou, 2021). However, despite the aforementioned studies confirming the utmost potentials of C-DA few studies have been conducted to investigate its application in diagnosing and promoting L2 learners' vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, the present study was prompted to take a step towards uncovering the effect of computer-based mediations on L2 learners' vocabulary learning and examining the extent to which C-DA can bring to surface the learners' emerging abilities.

To meet the purposes of the present study, the following research questions were formulated:

1) Does computerized dynamic assessment (C-DA) have more significant effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge than non-dynamic assessment (NDA)?

2) To what extent can C-DA diagnose Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge?

3) What types of mediations during C-DA can help improve Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning?

Theoretical Foundation of DA

The concept of DA originated from the Socio-cultural theory, and especially Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD). DA models have been greatly influenced by Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1986) and Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience (MLE, Feuerstein et al. 1979) which addresses the origins of differential cognitive developments (Feuerstein, Rand, & Hoffman, 1979).

ZPD is at the core of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT) which has been introduced by Vygotsky as a diagnostic tool that allows researchers and instructors to have a more vivid image of learners' developmental process and of the types of problems that prevent their cognitive growth. Vygotsky (1986) defines ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (as cited in Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994 p. 468).

ZPD views development "prospectively" and is contrasted with the learners' actual level of development (ZAD) that approaches learning "retrospectively". According to Kozulin (2003, p.17), the concept of ZPD gives three important pieces of information related to the dynamic testing: a) It draws our attention to the psychological functions of the child that are emerging at a given moment but that have not yet been fully developed; b) The concept of ZPD introduces assisted performance as an accepted parameter of assessment procedure; c) ZPD leads to conceptualize the difference between the level of actual performance and the learning potential of the child. ZPD is best captured through the SCT-based methodological procedure named dynamic assessment. DA distinguishes between a learner's unmediated (ZAD) and mediated (ZPD) performances.

As Poehner and Lantolf (2013) note, the difference between DA and other kinds of assessment lies in its interactive nature. Vygotsky discusses that "learner's responsiveness to the mediation signifies the development of his/her abilities presenting the processes underlying his/her performances". From DA perspective, ZAD shows an individual's independent performance but ZPD indicates what the individual is able to do under mediation. ZPD relies on diagnostic principles to detect the individual's potential level of development. The construct of ZPD echoes Vygotsky's SCT epistemology that instruction and assessment should be combined together for the sake of rendering a complete picture of the learner's underlying potential.

Poehner and Lantolf (2005) stated that static assessment (SA) represents a traditional view of assessment. The terms DA and static assessment (SA) were coined by researchers working on DA to differentiate between two different models of assessment. Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002) explain traditional SA as follows:

The examiner presents items, either one at a time or all at once, and each examinee is asked to respond to these items successively; without feedback or intervention of any kind. At some point in time after the administration of the test is over, each examinee typically receives the only feedback he or she will get: a report on a score or set of scores. By that time, the examinee is studying for one or more future tests (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002, p. vii).

In contrast, the authors define DA as a procedure whose outcome takes into account the results of an intervention. In this intervention, the examiner teaches the examinee how to perform better on individual item or on the test as a whole. The final score may be a learning score representing

the difference between pretest (before learning) and posttest (after learning) scores, or it may be the score on the posttest considered alone (ibid).

Therefore, DA is a procedure that simultaneously seeks the assessment and promotion of the learners' abilities. Moreover, it encourages learners to become independent knowledge constructors and problem solvers and, as an alternative to other testing procedure, it embeds mediation into the assessment as a tool to identify their full potential and nurture the abilities which are in the state of developing (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005).

Depending on the way the mediation is offered, DA can take different forms. Poehner and Lantolf (2005) have recognized two general approaches to DA: *Interventionist* or psychometric DA and *interactionist* or clinical DA. The main distinction between the two approaches is related to the way of providing mediation to students. In interactionist DA, the mediation between the learner and the teacher is negotiated and shaped *a posteriori*, while in interventionist DA it is determined in advance.

The interventionist DA has two models: 1) a formal and standardized approach in mediating learners in either forms of pre-test/treatment/post-test, which is called *sandwich* format, or 2) a set of pre-fabricated prompts embedded into the assessment procedures, called *cake* format. The famous advocate of interventionist approach is Milton Budoff. Budoff (1987) was more interested in planning a means to quantify and classify learners more precisely.

Computerized Dynamic Assessment (C-DA)

As an offshoot of DA, computerized dynamic assessment (C-DA) is founded on Vygotsky's theoretical framework (1978). Vygotsky and his colleagues developed a dynamic assessment by providing examinees with mediational prompts and hints during the assessment procedures in order to question the appropriateness of using a static IQ score to make predictions about the abilities of a child in succeeding at school (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991). Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that a learner should be provided with structured intervention from mediators aiming at promoting his development. With the assistance of a mediator, a learner can proceed from his current level where he can't accomplish a task independently to a level where he can do the same task on his own. The focused intervention, emerging from a more mature counterpart, can be from a human, a cultural artifact, an object, or a tool.

In C-DA, individuals are given prefabricated hints and prompts (Mohammad Beigi, Molaei, & Yazdani, 2020; Kao, & Kuo, 2021). According to Poehner and Lantolf (2013), the advantage of interventionist approaches to DA over interactionist DA is that it can be simultaneously administered to a large group of individuals, especially in computerized format. Dixon-Krauss (1996) proposed the use of technology as a means to put into practice the concept of Vygotsky about planning lessons in such a way that facilitates instruction that is slightly above the learner's improvement. Crook (1991) also contended that within the ZPD computers can act much like a human partner or classroom teacher, and technology makes the computerized tool relevant to the mediation periods associated with internalization. Therefore, it is assumed that when human mediators are not accessible, computer-assisted devices can facilitate the social process necessary for development (Roud, & Hidri, 2021).

The applications of C-DA for educational and assessment purposes have been recently reported in the works of some researchers in cognitive psychology and L2 teaching. Tzuriel and Shamir (2002), for instance, successfully tested the positive effect of electronic mediations on the kids' performance but claimed that without the presence of a human mediator it was impossible for the computerized mediation to become successful. Pishghadam and Barabadi's (2012) study attested to the construct validity of C-DA in bringing to surface the students' learning potential which had remained inchoate in their initial unmediated performance. Poehner, Zhang, and Lu (2015)

extended the applicability of C-DA to the reading and listening skills and reported different sets of scores for each learner including an actual score, a mediated score, a transfer score, and a learning potential score. However, they argued that their planned inventory of mediations may not be useful for other learners in a different context as they may find the task challenging for other reasons than the text and next C-DA studies are needed to expand their menu of mediating prompts. Boosting the applicability of C-DA to the domain of cognitive psychology, Bakhoda and Shabani (2016) examined the learners' response latency (RL) and processing time during C-DA of reading comprehension. Their developed software was able to discriminate between learners with larger and smaller ZPDs based on their processing time needed for each mediation. Taking the C-DA to the classroom context, Zhang and Lu (2019) reasoned that the diagnostic information gained through C-DA can be used for guiding the instructional practices.

Despite the various claims about the versatile functions of C-DA in testing diverse language skills, the existing research is still in its infancy and as far as vocabulary knowledge is concerned, there is a dearth of valuable studies, hence an exigent need to undertake the present research.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study was designed to quantitatively capture learners' vocabulary development through C-DA. To this end, a non-probability sample design incorporating A (the pretest), B (mediation) and A (posttest) was adopted in the present study. Moreover, the study followed Sternberg and Grigorenko's (2002, p. 27) cake format and Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) hierarchical implicit-to-explicit regulatory scale to present the mediations. The following table sketches the overall design of the study for the two experimental and control groups:

Table 1: Overall design of the study

Session	Experimental group	Control group
Session 1	Pre-test	Pretest
Session 2	Mediation stage	Traditional approach
Session 3	Post-test	Post-test

Participants

At the outset of the study in late 2021, 125 L2 learners (female and male) between the ages of 19 and 25 from Iranian Language Institute, Chalus, Iran voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. To have a homogenous group, 70 students with 1 SD above and 1 SD below the mean based on the results of the Nelson Language Proficiency Test were selected. The students were then randomly divided into one DA group (N=35) and one control group (N=35). The following table displays demographic information about the participants. Table 2: Demographics of participants

Groups	N	Age	Male	Female	Level
Experimental	35	19-25	15	20	Intermediate
Control	35	19-25	12	23	Intermediate

Materials and Instruments

Computers and laptops were used as the main tools of the present study. Thirty five computers and laptops were used to present the technological vocabulary tasks to 35 students. The Nelson English proficiency test was administered to select a homogenous L2 group for this study. As a static pretest, a vocabulary test package consisting of 60 multiple choice items was developed by the researcher and two professionals in language testing to assess the students' developed word knowledge. Twelve reading passages were borrowed from Philips (2001) to be computerized for mediating purposes. The characteristics of the selected texts are presented in the following table.

Table 3: Coh-Metrix readability text analysis

Text	Narrativity	Systematic Simplicity	Word Correctness	Referential Cohesion	Deep Cohesion	Flesch Kincaid Grade Level	Number of words
1	33	27	88	94	89	9.5	305
2	35	33	76	77	63	8.2	156
3	22	17	54	64	59	7.9	264
4	30	40	79	85	70	9.6	197
5	21	32	88	81	54	7.7.	276
6	35	16	91	73	60	8.2	219
7	41	24	65	93	55	9.5	245
8	26	18	77	95	84	8.3	168
9	30	37	86	86	90	9.1	227
10	19	29	78	89	85	7.4	285
11	24	33	90	82	69	8.3	242
12	29	23	83	69	77	11.5	219

Coh-Metrix analysis measures discourse cohesion, syntax, semantics, word characteristics alongside the Flesch Kincaid readability of the selected texts. The content of passages consisted of different general subjects of psychology, zoology, history, geology, economy, and art. Each passage consisted of 8 questions. Altogether, the learners responded to 96 questions through C-DA procedure. After the mediation phase, both the control and experimental groups participated in the post-test, which was the same as the developed vocabulary test package. To reduce the practice effect, the posttest was administered two weeks later. The developed instruments were piloted before they were used in the current study in order to address the validity and reliability concerns.

Piloting

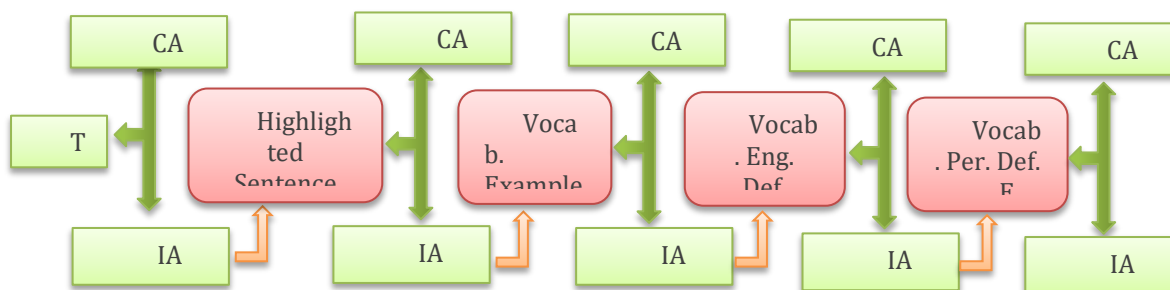
The vocabulary test consisted of content words which were selected from the content of C-DA passages. The vocabulary test package was piloted to 15 intermediate students, and based on the participants' answers to the pilot test, the researcher modified the items that were found either too difficult, attractive or ineffective. The following table represents the statistical reliability estimates of the pilot test.

Table 4: *Results of Piloting*

Number of learners	15
Number of items	60
Maximum score	60
Mean	23.6
KR-21 reliability coefficient	0.79

Procedure

After the selection of 70 participants based on the Nelson English proficiency test, they were randomly divided into two control and experimental groups. The reliability coefficients of the pretest calculated through Kuder-Richardson formula for the experimental and control groups were 0.78 and 0.75 respectively. After the pretest stage, the experimental group joined the C-DA procedure. Following Bakhoda and Shabani (2017), a software program was developed, with the use of C++ programming, to present the passages and the mediations. The following figure illustrates the designed exe application for current study. The learner's successful answer signaled the software to present the next question. The unsuccessful attempt was followed by presentation of a wide variety of pre-specified implicit to explicit vocabulary mediations. As the first implicit mediation, the sentence(s) that helped the learners the most to reach the correct answer was highlighted. The learners' incorrect answer to the question let the software present the second mediation which was more explicit than the previous one. The second mediation was presented after the learners clicked on the content vocabularies (any content vocabulary in the sentence could be clicked on to offer the mediations). By clicking on them, a simple sentence phrasing the selected word was presented on the screen to assist learners to understand both the words' meaning and concomitantly the sentence and reach the correct answer. The third mediation displayed the English definition of the words after clicking on them. Finally, the last mediation offered the learners the L1 (Persian) equivalent of the word. The following graph sketches the C-DA procedure:



Note: CA= correct answer; IA= incorrect answer

Figure 1: C-DA Procedure

The students went through this procedure to answer 96 questions related to the 12 passages. The regulator scale developed for the presentation of standardized, explicit-to-implicit mediations was as follows:

Table 5: Regulatory Scale of C-DA Mediations

Highlight specific sentences.
Provide examples.
Offer definitions.
Present L1 (Persian) equivalent.

The learners in control group received the same passages based on a traditional approach to reading comprehension. They were asked to read the passages; if they had a question about a vocabulary they were free to ask. But, the teacher tended to provide them with the Persian translation of the vocabularies as she followed a traditional method of instruction relying upon the learners' L1. The length of the C-DA test varied for each learner as they required more or less mediation.

A posttest was administered right after the treatment to assess whether or not both groups differed from each other after receiving two different treatments. They were told that for any wrong answer 1 score would be subtracted from the total score. The reliability coefficients of the post-test calculated through Kuder-Richardson for the experimental and control groups were 0.76 and 0.78 respectively.

Data Analysis

The statistical t-test was used to analyze the two groups' post-test performances as well as each group's pre and post-test scores. The scoring process of C-DA was taken from Poehner and Lantolf (2013). In order to quantitatively distinguish learners from each other based on their both developed and developing ability, the following three scores were given to each learner: ZAD score, ZPD score, and LPS. The ZAD score was calculated based on the learners' correct answer at their first attempt without mediation (5 points for the correct answer and 0 point for the incorrect one). Upon the learner's failure to find the correct answer and receiving mediation, 1 score was subtracted from the total 5 based on which the ZPD score was determined. For example, a learner who reached the correct answer after the first implicit mediation would have received 4 as his ZPD score. To quantitatively capture the learners' differential performance from NDA to DA session, the following LPS formula borrowed from Kozulin and Garb (2002) was used:

$$LPS = \frac{2 (S \text{ post-mediation}) - S \text{ actual}}{\text{Max } S}$$

Note. LPS: learning potential score; S: score.

Figure 2: LPS Formula
(Kozulin & Garb, 2002, p. 121)

3. RESULTS

Analysis of the first research question

The first research question asked if the C-DA had more significant effects on the learners' vocabulary knowledge than the NDA. At the outset, a pretest was administered to ensure the groups' parity before the treatment, and the scores were compared using an independent samples t-test, the result of which is summed up in the following table.

Table 6: Independent Samples t-test for the two groups' performances on the pretest

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t value	D.F	P
Experimental	35	20.7	4.7	0.76069	34	.2247
Control	35	19.9	4.6			

The experimental and control groups were assessed based on the developed vocabulary test package (as a pretest) to precisely detect their developed vocabulary knowledge. The conducted t-test analysis indicated no significant difference ($t(34)=0.76$, $p=0.227$). Therefore, the two groups were not different in terms of vocabulary knowledge in the pretest.

To find any significant difference between the two groups in the posttest, an independent samples t-test was used.

Table 7: Independent samples t-test for the two groups' performance on the posttest

Group	N	Mean	S.D	T value	D.F.	P
Experimental	35	43.8	6.9	16.41	34	.0001
Control	35	20.71	4.5			

Based on the above table, the result of t-test revealed that there was a significant difference between the experimental ($M=43.8$, $SD=6.9$) and control group ($M=20.71$, $SD=4.5$); $t(34)=16.41$, $p=0.001$ on the posttest; hence, a significant difference between the two groups' posttest scores was confirmed. These results suggest that C-DA had a significant effect on the learners' vocabulary knowledge. To render a more vivid picture of the learners' difference from the pretest to the posttest, paired t-test was run. A comparison of the experimental group's pretest with its post-test performance yielded the following results:

Table 8: Paired Samples t-test for the experimental group's performance on the pre and posttest

Group	N	Mean	S.D	T value	D.F.	P
Experimental Pre-test	35	20.77	4.75	17.27	34	0.0001
Experimental Post-test	35	43.37	6.80			

The table indicates significant improvement of the experimental group from the pretest to the posttest ($M=20.77$, $SD=4.75$; $t(34)=17.27$, $p=0.0001$). This difference could be attributed to the effect of electronic mediations which guided the learners toward new ZAD levels. The same comparison was carried out for the control group to find out whether their post-test performance differed from their pre-test performance

Table 9: Paired samples t-test for the control group's performance on the pre and posttest

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	T value	D.F	P
Control Pretest	35	19.91	4.67	0.67	34	n.s.
Control Posttest	35	20.71	4.52			

No significant difference was found between the control group's pretest ($M=19.91$, $SD=4.67$) and post-test ($M=20.71$, $SD=4.52$) performances; $t(34)=0.67$, $p=n.s.$ It could be inferred that the traditional instruction of vocabulary through reading comprehension tasks did not lead to significant changes in the control group.

Based on the foregoing results, it was confirmed that computerized dynamic assessment (C-DA) had more significant effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge than the non-dynamic assessment.

Analysis of the second research question

In order to answer the second research question and understand the extent to which C-DA can truly diagnose Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge, we compared the experimental group's mediated (DA) scores with their unmediated (NDA) scores.

The experimental group members systematically received scores based on the quality (im/explicitness) of the mediations they required to tackle the correct answer. In this regard, the learners' first attempt in each of the questions was interpreted as their NDA score, because no mediation was offered to them at this stage. The ZPD scores were calculated depending on the extent of mediations received. Allocating specific score for learners' ZAD and ZPD performance gave us a chance to compare learners' ZAD with their ZPD level through paired samples t-test.

Table 10: Paired samples t-test of learners' NDA and DA scores

Score	N	Mean	S.D.	T value	D.F.	P
NDA	35	195	18.41	148.6700	34	Sig
DA	35	343.67	17.24			

The results demonstrated that there is a significant difference between the learners' ZAD and ZPD scores. Kozulin and Garb's (2002) LPS formula was used to quantitatively assess the learners' vocabulary assisted performance. The calculated data provided us with the learners' mediated score based on their performance on the 96 questions. The following tables sum up the collected profiles of learners' performances.

Table 11. Learners' profile including the actual, mediated, gain score and LPS

Number of learners	35
Number of items	96
Maximum score	480
Mean of actual score	175
Mean of mediated score	343.67
Mean of gain score	168.23
Mean of LPS	0.91

The above table provides information about the number of learners and items, learners' maximum score, the calculated mean for learners' actual score, the calculated mean for mediated score, mean of gained score by learners, and learners' learning potential score. To understand the diagnostic potential of C-DA, a selection of the learners' actual score, mediated score, gain score, and learning potential score is provided in the following table.

Table 12: Selected learners' profile

Learner	Actual score	Mediated score	Gain score	LPS
1	95	325	230	1.15
2	100	318	218	1.11
3	110	299	189	1.01
4	110	271	161	0.9
5	95	279	184	0.96
6	130	232	102	0.69
7	155	244	89	0.69
8	195	297	102	0.83
9	200	269	69	0.70
10	200	316	116	0.9

It is noteworthy that learners with the same actual score (*ZAD*) demonstrated to have different mediated and LPS scores, which is related to their developing ability. More precisely, learners who performed at the same level independently differed dramatically with regard to their learning potential, or responsiveness to mediation. For example, learners 3 and 4 achieved the same actual score of 110, while their mediated and LPS differed from each other. This difference opens up two understandings; first, the LPS has the capacity to diagnose the learners' difference at the level of developing abilities and second, learners with different LPS scores might require different instructional mediations to move toward independency.

Following Kozulin and Garb (2002) and Poehner et al. (2015), we also sought the existence of any significant correlation between learners' mediated score and actual score. The calculated *r* (0.82) indicated a positive correlation between learners' *ZAD* and *ZPD*. Learners with higher actual developed ability proved to have higher mediated score.

Based on the abovementioned results, it was safe to conclude that C-DA can reliably diagnose Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge and distinguish between students with the same *ZAD* scores.

Analysis of the third research question

The third research question dealt with the types of mediations offered during the C-DA which helped improve the learners' vocabulary learning. It was revealed that presentation of a wide variety of electronic mediations assisted the learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge into a new zone. The following table sums up the learners' successful and unsuccessful attempts in the 12 reading comprehension passages (96 questions).

Table 13: Learners' performance over 96 reading comprehension questions

Texts	Q.	Without med.	First med.	Second med.	Third med.	Fourth med.
1	1	7	4	8	9	7
	2	3	7	7	14	4
	3	3	4	12	8	8
	4	5	8	9	10	3
	5	9	5	6	9	6
2	1	6	3	10	13	3
	2	8	7	5	6	9
	3	10	7	6	11	1
	4	3	11	9	5	7
	5	7	9	7	7	5
3	1	12	8	5	9	1
	2	8	5	4	13	5
	3	4	12	9	8	2
	4	9	10	9	7	-
	5	5	6	17	5	2
4	1	7	8	16	1	3
	2	6	11	10	7	1
	3	3	7	8	9	8
	4	8	14	10	1	2
	5	13	9	5	6	2
5	1	6	5	9	10	5
	2	7	8	7	9	4
	3	4	10	8	5	7
	4	8	8	11	7	1
	5	7	9	6	8	5
6	1	6	7	9	13	-
	2	10	4	11	8	2
	3	5	8	12	9	1
	4	3	14	8	10	-
	5	9	6	4	11	5
7	1	14	7	9	2	3
	2	8	13	7	6	1
	3	4	9	15	6	1
	4	8	15	9	3	-
	5	7	9	4	12	3
8	1	6	7	5	15	2
	2	11	5	6	8	5
	3	9	8	10	2	6
	4	3	16	7	5	4
	5	5	5	17	7	1
	1	6	9	7	8	5

Texts	Q.	Without med.	First med.	Second med.	Third med.	Fourth med.
9	2	10	13	9	2	1
	3	5	12	5	9	5
	4	8	7	12	8	-
	5	9	5	6	11	4
10	1	7	8	14	6	-
	2	12	6	4	12	1
	3	11	15	7	2	-
	4	4	12	8	5	7
	5	8	10	12	1	4
11	1	14	12	5	3	1
	2	10	7	13	5	-
	3	7	16	8	3	1
	4	13	10	11	-	1
	5	9	17	6	3	-
12	1	5	15	7	5	3
	2	8	9	10	3	5
	3	10	5	8	11	1
	4	6	8	9	8	4
	5	7	7	12	6	3

Altogether, four types of mediations were offered namely *highlighting the sentence, providing example, offering definition and presenting L1 (Persian) equivalent*. As can be seen in the Table, some learners required less or more explicit mediations to arrive at the correct answer. For example, in question 5 of Text 11 the learners needed more implicit mediations (1st mediation = 17) whereas they needed more explicit mediations for question 2 of Text 3 (3rd mediation = 13). The effectiveness of electronic vocabulary mediations during the reading comprehension is presented in the following graph:

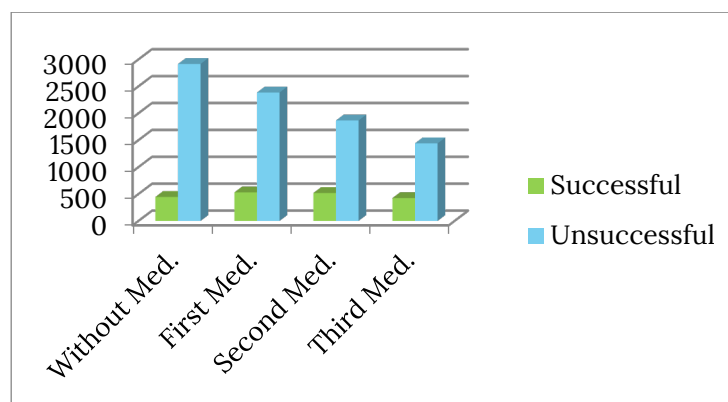


Figure 3: Learners' performance on 96 reading comprehension questions

Figure 3 presents detailed information about the learners' performance on 96 reading comprehension questions. As illustrated in the Figure, a considerable number of learners were not able to reach the correct answer independently at their first attempt but the vocabulary mediations gradually helped them to find the correct answer. The blue bars represent the number of learners' unsuccessful attempts to accomplish the task. As clearly demonstrated in the graph, learners'

unsuccessful attempts decreased toward the last mediation. The frequency of mediational moves is presented in the following table to demonstrate the learners' enhanced performance.

Table 14: Quality and frequency of mediations on 96 reading comprehension questions

Texts	Q.	No med.	Highlighted Sentence	Vocab. Example	English Definition	Persian Definition
1	1	7	4	8	9	7
	2	3	7	7	14	4
	3	3	4	12	8	8
	4	5	8	9	10	3
	5	9	5	6	9	6
2	1	6	3	10	13	3
	2	8	7	5	6	9
	3	10	7	6	11	1
	4	3	11	9	5	7
	5	7	9	7	7	5
3	1	12	8	5	9	1
	2	8	5	4	13	5
	3	4	12	9	8	2
	4	9	10	9	7	-
	5	5	6	17	5	2
4	1	7	8	16	1	3
	2	6	11	10	7	1
	3	3	7	8	9	8
	4	8	14	10	1	2
	5	13	9	5	6	2
5	1	6	5	9	10	5
	2	7	8	7	9	4
	3	4	10	8	5	7
	4	8	8	11	7	1
	5	7	9	6	8	5
6	1	6	7	9	13	-
	2	10	4	11	8	2
	3	5	8	12	9	1
	4	3	14	8	10	-
	5	9	6	4	11	5
7	1	14	7	9	2	3
	2	8	13	7	6	1
	3	4	9	15	6	1
	4	8	15	9	3	-
	5	7	9	4	12	3
8	1	6	7	5	15	2
	2	11	5	6	8	5
	3	9	8	10	2	6
	4	3	16	7	5	4
	5	5	5	17	7	1

Texts	Q.	No med.	Highlighted Sentence	Vocab. Example	English Definition	Persian Definition
9	1	6	9	7	8	5
	2	10	13	9	2	1
	3	5	۱۱	5	9	5
	4	8	7	12	8	-
	5	9	5	6	11	4
10	1	7	8	14	6	-
	2	12	6	4	12	1
	3	11	15	7	2	-
	4	4	12	8	5	7
	5	8	10	12	1	4
11	1	14	12	5	3	1
	2	10	7	13	5	-
	3	7	16	8	3	1
	4	13	10	11	-	1
	5	9	17	6	3	-
12	1	5	15	7	5	3
	2	8	9	10	3	5
	3	10	5	8	11	1
	4	6	8	9	8	4
	5	7	7	12	6	3

As shown in the above table, the learners required less explicit mediations for the 8-12 passages, which could be considered as their cognitive development in grasping the meaning of vocabularies from the context of passages.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was designed to investigate whether providing electronic vocabulary mediations leads to learners' vocabulary development. The learners were involved in reading comprehension tasks where their failure in finding the correct answer was responded through a wide variety of computer-based vocabulary mediations.

The obtained results demonstrated that there is a significant difference between NDA and DA results. The NDA assessment is able to distinguish learners with reference to their current developed abilities, but it is unable to uncover learners' developing abilities. On the other hand, DA assessment provides a more comprehensive view of learners' both independent abilities and underlying potential through integration of assessment and instruction. The comparison of NDA results in the pretest with the DA findings indicated that the information collected about learners' potentiality in DA was quite revealing. According to Poehner (2008), DA assessment brings to surface both learners' ZAD and ZPD. Computerized electronic vocabulary mediations through reading comprehension tasks assisted the learners to develop new ZAD and ZPD levels. Based on the evidence presented in the results, LPS quantitatively differentiated learners from each other. Following Kozulin and Garbs's (2002) proposed formula for LPS consisting of high (≥ 1.0), mid ($.71-.8$) and low ($\leq .71$), the average calculated LPS for 35 learners (0.91) in the experimental group demonstrated that their vocabulary knowledge highly improved. Also, it became clear that learners with the same ZAD scores (for example, learner 1, 2, and 5) based on their independent performance had different mediated scores, gain score, and LPS. In other words, learners' dependent performance was brought to surface through the C-DA procedure. Generally, the C-DA

procedure set the stage for appropriately responding to the learners' needs in carrying out the reading tasks and in this way assisting them to co-construct new ZPDs. Such layers of vocabulary learning abilities had remained inchoate during the NDA stage. These observations are found commensurate with the results of C-DA studies that have reported similar results for other language domains such as English tenses (Mohammad Beigi, Basirloo, Molaei & Yazdani, 2020), L2 listening (Poehner, Zhang, & Lu, 2015; Kamroud, Davoudi, Ghaniabadi & Amirian, 2019; Kao & Kuo, 2021; Roud & Hidri, 2021), L2 writing (Vakili & Ebadi, 2019; Ebadi & Bashir, 2020; Hidri & Roud, 2020), L2 reading (Ebadi & Saeedian, 2019; Yang & Qian, 2019; Estaji & Saeedian, 2020; Yaghoobi & Razmjoo, 2020) and interlanguage pragmatics (Zangoei, Zareian, Adel & Amirian, 2019).

Learners' vocabulary enhancement in the experimental group could be attributed to the presentation of hierarchical implicit-to-explicit mediations. The strategic mediations based on Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) regulatory scale were found effective in the context of vocabulary instruction/assessment. The pre-specified electronic mediations helped the learners reach new developmental zones. The C-DA procedure was able to render a rich profile for each learner capturing the learners' ZAD, ZPD, and LPS. As Poehner (2008) discussed, one of the advantages of electronic presentation of mediation is to generate an automatic profile for learners while facilitating their development.

The effectiveness of hierarchical presentation of implicit to explicit electronic vocabulary mediations on both learners' reading comprehension ability and vocabulary knowledge echoed Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) and Sternberg and Grigorenko's (2002) claim about the effectiveness of this procedure on learners' cognitive modification. The study also substantiates Zhang and Annual (2008), Martin-Chang and Gould (2008), and Joshi and Aaron's (2000) claim that vocabulary development and reading comprehension are closely related. Therefore, combining assessment and instruction can be beneficial for EFL learners in vocabulary learning.

One major contribution of the findings reported in the present study is the inherent potential of C-DA procedure to be administered to large numbers of students simultaneously in the context of vocabulary assessment and to report the results in a quantitative format that is easily interpretable. The C-DA incorporated diagnosis and promotion of vocabulary learning abilities through a system of graduated prompting, an instructional-evaluation procedure that can be considered as a replacement for the conventional teacher-fronted instruction and unmediated assessment methodology in Iranian EFL context. The present study showcased a sample potential of computer as a tool to replace humans in presenting scaffolds. However, there are diverse features in the computer which can be offered to the learners in an EFL context to boost their learning of vocabulary among which is the Google Expeditions virtual reality (Ebadi & Ebadijalal, 2020) or Metaverse whose efficacy via C-DA serves as a potential site to explore.

A supplementary feature which can be added to the C-DA software reported in this study is the assessment of testees' response latency after receiving the mediation and before reaching the correct answer. The results from the observation of students' processing time and response latency can further increase the discriminatory validity of the C-DA. The results drawn from the LPS scores could be used for placement purposes and tailoring remedial instruction attuned to the ZPD to the prospective learners since different learners with different LPS scores might require different degrees of mediated instruction.

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High School Students' Perceptions of Learning English Online: Satisfaction, Perceived Learning, and Challenges

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Abstract

Given the significance of online learning, various factors influencing students' satisfaction and perceived learning have been explored by researchers. However, online learning for Iranian public high schools has never been held until recently due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Accordingly, the present study aims at investigating EFL learners' perceptions of English online learning classes using a semi-structured interview. The participants of this study were 15 female high school students, within the age range of 16-18, who had been recently taught Vision Series for their required English course online. In order to analyze the data, a hybrid process of inductive and deductive thematic analysis was conducted. In the deductive phase of analysis, a model of students' satisfaction and perceived learning was utilized, and new themes, in the inductive phase, emerged from the data. The analysis of the data revealed that the students were satisfied with online learning through exercising self-efficacy, learner-content interaction, and learner-instructor interaction. Moreover, the students believed that the course resulted in optimal learning of the materials presented to them; however, they confronted some challenges including Internet access, software requirements, and engagement problems. The findings of the present study will be of interest to teachers and those in charge of holding online classes to employ strategies to improve the effectiveness of online classes.

Keywords

Online learning;
Satisfaction;
Perceived learning;
Self-efficacy;
Interaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the ever-growing tendency to use the Internet, online learning has gained a promising stance in educational uses of technology (Bates, 2019; Cigdem & Yildirim, 2014). As the demand for online courses in educational settings increases (Wei & Chou, 2020), so does the quest for investigating various factors such as distance learning interaction and online learning self-efficacy which play a determining role in online learning student satisfaction and overall perceived learning (Alqurashi, 2019). Satisfaction is viewed as how learners perceive their online learning experiences. The significance of students' satisfaction in determining learners' dropout rates,

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motivation and inspiration to complete an online course, and achieving success has been attested by many studies (Ali & Ahmad, 2011; Alqurashi, 2019; Yukselturk & Yildirim, 2008). In a similar vein, perceived learning is another core criterion for any online course evaluation which is defined as someone's judgment about how their knowledge and understanding are constructed (Rovai, 2002). Perceived learning also affects students' grades (Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2016) and students' active participation in online classes (Fredericksen et al., 2019), meaning that students who have mastered the learning material willingly participate more in online classes. Therefore, investigating the influential factors in perceived learning contributes to the improvement of online classes and the enhancement of students' learning outcomes (Alavi et al., 2002).

One factor influencing students' satisfaction and perceived learning in online settings is interaction (Alqurashi, 2019; Cho & Kim, 2013; Kuo et al., 2013) which is perceived to be a reciprocal event through which the learner and a part of the learning environment exert a joint effort to approach an educational goal (Wagner, 1994). Drawing on Moore's (1989) tripartite conception of interaction in distance education, three different patterns of interaction namely, student-student interaction, student-instructor interaction, and student-content interaction are identified. According to Moore, student-student interaction revolves around interaction among individual students or students in small groups; student-instructor interaction is an attempt to foster the interaction between the instructor and learners; student-content interaction refers to the interaction of learners with the content which contributes to learners' comprehension of the material. Self-efficacy, another vital element in gauging students' satisfaction and perceived learning, plays a pivotal role in online instruction milieus (Alqurashi, 2019; Shen et al., 2013). Self-efficacy can be defined as a person's belief in their capabilities to take action and achieve the desired outcomes (Burger, 2019). According to Alqurashi (2019), self-efficacy helps learners confront challenging tasks easier and provides opportunities for enhancing their skills which will eventuate in achieving good results and, consequently, more satisfaction.

Given the significance of satisfaction and perceived learning in online classes, these concepts merit attention since investigating satisfaction and perceived learning provides opportunities for improvement and enhancement of online classes (Kuo et al., 2014). Additionally, despite the fact that online learning has gathered momentum in recent years, it has not officially obtained a firm position in Iranian high school contexts until recently due to the outbreak of Coronavirus which put the instructors in dire need of holding online classes to compensate for the absence of face-to-face instruction. Accordingly, there have been few, if any, studies investigating perceptions of EFL learners towards high school online learning classes in the educational contexts of Iran. In order to fill this void, the present study aimed at gauging learners' perceptions of English online classes. In doing so, students' satisfaction and perceived learning are considered with regard to the role of online learning self-efficacy, student-instructor interaction, and student-content interaction based on the model proposed by Alqurashi (2019)—it should be noted that since student-student interaction is not a good predictor of student satisfaction and perceived learning (Alqurashi, 2019), the current paper eschewed student-student interaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical underpinning guiding the current study suggests that satisfaction and perceived learning within online learning environments can be predicted by students' interaction and self-efficacy (Alqurashi, 2019). The present study defines satisfaction within online learning environments as the extent to which students' experience of online learning is consistent with their learning values and needs (Jiang et al., 2021) and perceived learning as students' judgment about the changes in their knowledge and understanding after experiencing online learning (Alqurashi, 2019).

In an educational context, online interaction is a meaningful relationship that students develop and maintain online to build up their knowledge (Diep et al., 2017; Meredith, 2019). This relationship manifests itself as the interaction with course contents and instructors. The review of the literature demonstrates that only a few studies have been conducted on the role of interaction in students' satisfaction and perceived learning in online learning environments (Cho & Kim, 2013; Kuo et al., 2013; Mahle, 2011; Park & Choi, 2009). For example, Chen and Chen (2007) investigated the significance of interaction in learners' satisfaction and found that there was a positive relationship between interaction and learners' satisfaction. In another study, Dennen et al. (2007) examined the influence of instructor actions on the success of online courses. Their results indicated that learners' satisfaction relied on their feelings toward the interaction they had with instructors. Similarly, Sher (2009) focused on students' satisfaction with web-based online learning programs at a university in Washington. His results showed that instructor-learner interaction was a significant predictor of students' satisfaction. Examining 147 learners taking online courses, Park and Choi (2009) also suggested that interaction can play a significant role in determining students' satisfaction and motivation. On a similar note, Sebastianelli et al. (2015) investigated various variables contributing to perceived learning, satisfaction, and course quality; the results revealed that course content can affect perceived learning. In a more recent study, Parahoo et al. (2016) used focused grouped interviews to explore students' satisfaction. The results showed that students' interactions with staff, instructors, and classmates had a major role in students' satisfaction. In the same vein, Landrum et al. (2020) explored how students evaluated their satisfaction with online courses via adopting focused group interviews. The results indicated that their satisfaction was relevant to their concerns including time, space of online learning, motivation, and role of interaction with instructors. Thus, interaction, specifically learner-instructor interaction and learner-content interaction, can play a part in identifying students' satisfaction and perceived learning within online learning environments.

Self-efficacy, another component in students' learning, is directly interrelated with the level of performance and rate of satisfaction. In the present study, it refers to a student's belief in their capabilities to take action and achieve the desired outcomes (Burger, 2019). Different aspects of self-efficacy including Internet self-efficacy (Tang & Tseng, 2013), computer self-efficacy (Jan, 2015; Wu et al., 2010), and online self-efficacy for learning (Artino, 2007) have received attention in recent years. However, among various types of self-efficacy, the focus of the present study is on online learning self-efficacy which has not received the proper attention from scholars. The emphasis on the relationship between self-efficacy and satisfaction within online learning environments (Artino, 2007) has been a springboard for a few further studies. For example, Shen et al. (2013) who examined different dimensions of self-efficacy and its effects on students' satisfaction revealed that online learning self-efficacy can have a pivotal role in determining students' satisfaction with online learning. Alqurashi (2019) also investigated the interaction between different variables, including online learning self-efficacy, learner-learner interaction, learner-instructor interaction, learner-content interaction, and students' satisfaction. The results showed that learner-content interaction is the most significant variable for students' satisfaction, and online learning self-efficacy is the strongest predictor of perceived learning. In examining the effect of online learning readiness and online learning perceptions on the performance and satisfaction of learners, Wei and Chou (2020) found that self-efficacy for online learning readiness can influence online learning perceptions, satisfaction, and performance of learners. In another recent study, Hamdan et al. (2021) examined the interaction, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and satisfaction of university students during Covid-19 online education. The results revealed that students' satisfaction was low, and learner-instructor interaction had the highest mean score. Moreover, students' satisfaction was predicted by their self-regulation, self-efficacy, and their

interactions with peers and content. It can be concluded that, besides interaction, online self-efficacy can contribute to students' satisfaction and perceived learning within online learning environments.

Despite the many advantages of online learning, there are also a number of challenges for both instructors and learners. For example, in a large-scale study, Muilenburg and Berge (2005) investigated the factors hindering online learning. They enumerated eight main factors, namely administrative issues, social interaction, academic skills, technical skills, learner motivation, time and support for studies, cost and access to the Internet, and technical problems. In another study, Liang and Chen (2012) lamented that physical and financial problems may deprive learners of successful online learning. Difficulties in learning strategies and in interaction and collaboration can be other challenges that learners may experience related to their perception of online learning (Sun, 2014) since many learners may suffer from the inability to use different applications necessary for online classes (Gillett-Swan, 2017). Therefore, it appears to be crucial that exploring the challenges of online learning in terms of students' satisfaction and perceived learning should be taken into account as well.

Thus far, EFL high school students' perceptions of online learning environments have not been explored sufficiently through qualitative measures in terms of students' self-efficacy and interaction. Therefore, to fill this gap, this study investigated how a group of Iranian high school learners perceived and experienced online learning classes in terms of their self-efficacy and their interaction with instructors and contents. The present study explored the following research questions:

1. What is the students' perception of online English learning in terms of their satisfaction and perceived learning?

What are the challenges of online English learning in terms of students' satisfaction and perceived learning?

3. METHOD

Participants

Being a teacher-researcher, one of the researchers selected a total of 15 Iranian female senior high school students by means of convenience sampling, a common sampling method in qualitative research. These volunteers had no prior experience of attending online classes for school subjects until the Coronavirus outbreak. They were within the age range of 16-18 and studied Vision Series for their required English course in their face-to-face classes at school. However, due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, their classes were held through an online learning platform. After being briefed on the aim and scope of the research, the participants were voluntarily solicited to undertake a semi-structured interview in order to unfold their perceptions of their English online learning experience.

Data Collection

The present study adopted a semi-structured interview to gather data on EFL students' perceptions of English online learning in terms of satisfaction, perceived learning, and challenges. By consulting with a university professor in Applied Linguistics, the researchers convened to compose the concepts and develop the interview questions. The theoretical underpinning that directed the development of the items included online self-efficacy, online learner-instructor interaction, and online learner-content interaction since, as discussed earlier, they are the main factors predicting students' satisfaction and perceived learning. Consequently, nine questions were created that asked participants about their self-efficacy, learner-instructor interaction, learner-content interaction, and challenges in relation to their satisfaction and perceived learning

(Appendix). Online English teaching has been enacted officially in public schools by educational policymakers after the Coronavirus outbreak. Consequently, the Ministry of Education of Iran developed its exclusive educational software, called ShAD. The participants were interviewed after taking online English classes through this newly developed software for one semester. Due to the spread of the Coronavirus and researchers' inability in conducting face-to-face interviews, data were collected through the Telegram messaging application which allows the use of voice and text messaging. Moreover, in comparison to face-to-face data collection procedures, online interviewing decreases the amount of pressure on participants (Poynter, 2010).

In order to collect the data, a Telegram group was created. One of the researchers who was also the students' teacher explained the aim of the study to all students, briefed them on the purpose of the research, and ensured them that the interviews would only serve the purpose of research and would not be related to their course grades so that they could answer the interview questions freely. Moreover, the interviews were done one-on-one in a way that the teacher-researcher could ask follow-up questions whenever needed. Since this researcher was also the English teacher of the students (i.e., a member of the class culture), an emic perspective was also obtained to ensure the understanding of the categories that learners referred to (Mackey & Gass, 2016). The teacher-researcher acted as a facilitator, and the interviewees were helped to remember their experiences with the online classes. Each interview lasted around 15 to 20 minutes and was conducted in the students' mother tongue, Persian, to ensure their understanding.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, a hybrid process of deductive and inductive thematic analysis was conducted. First, the interviews were transcribed. In the deductive phase of analysis, the researchers relied on Alqurashi's (2019) model of students' satisfaction and perceived learning, meaning that the recurrent themes were extracted considering online learning self-efficacy, learner-instructor interaction, and learner-content interaction. In the inductive phase of the analysis, the researchers looked for new themes which emerged from the data. Having this in mind, they coded the transcribed data to find the new subthemes. In order to attain credibility and truthfulness of data, by consulting with a university professor in Applied Linguistics, they first coded the data individually and, then, compared their coding to draw out the differences and recognize the similar themes from the interviews. Accordingly, the data was analyzed through induction (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) and constant comparison (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

4. RESULTS

Considering Alqurashi's (2019) model of students' satisfaction and perceived learning, three main themes were analyzed in the deductive phase of data analysis, namely online learning self-efficacy, learner-instructor interaction, and learner-content interaction. Through inductive analysis, four subthemes have also been extracted related to students' satisfaction and perceived learning, namely preparing for online classes, following a planned schedule, adapting to the online classes, and completing the assignments. Additionally, some challenges related to the students' perceptions of online learning have been identified. In what follows, the themes and their related subthemes are provided along with some extracts.

Deductive Phase

Online Learning Self-Efficacy

Regarding the interconnection between students' satisfaction and their self-efficacy in terms of online learning, the participants referred to some measures taken to make their online learning successful. In addition to the factors under study, students' attitudes towards the outcomes of the

classes were also investigated. Despite the challenges, learners found the course useful and believed that they have obtained the desired outcomes. The examples from the interviews include:

P1: The online classes were fruitful for us. We learned the lesson very well because it was as if we are having face-to-face classes since the teacher taught like she used to do at school. My educational needs were met, and I learned all the parts. We learned the lessons, but there were some problems too. Because of time limitations, we only could learn the lessons and couldn't practice much, so I think online classes need more self-study than before.

P7: It is definitely different from face-to-face classes, but it satisfied our needs to a great extent. The fact that the teacher was with us was awesome. We could ask them so many questions, and they answered all of them patiently. In online classes, we ought to try harder and study more. I mean the challenges are more. But, I think it was a good experience, and we can cope with it little by little.

P3: It was good in some aspects because we were alone at home, and there were no other students around to distract me. It was good because it helped us not to fall behind schedule. Moreover, online classes are much better than reading from a pamphlet on our own. Online classes became so spiritual for me. Hearing the voice of the teacher gave me energy and hope to go on. You feel like the teacher is beside you and is helping you. Moreover, some lessons like English cannot be self-studied because we need someone to teach the grammar to us.

Despite the fact that most of the learners preferred face-to-face classes, they were satisfied with the outcomes since they all believed the course had enhanced their learning effectively. However, they believed that online classes required more effort on the part of learners and they had more responsibilities for their own learning, which suggests the importance of learner autonomy in online classes. Considering the significant role of teachers, it can be inferred that students were inspired by having the teachers beside them.

Learner-Instructor Interaction

The participants of the present study considered interaction as an important element of effective online learning. The majority of them put emphasis on how they communicated with their teachers. Examples include:

P10: Despite the fact that the classes were held early in the morning, I got up and attended them. I was active during the class by asking questions that popped into my head and also answering the questions that the teacher asked. The process of asking and answering questions was through typing in the chat section. The instructor answered all of our questions. She constantly asked questions to communicate with learners. The English class was the most interactive class we had because the instructor not only taught but also engaged the students by asking various questions.

P3: The teacher communicated with us all the time; for instance, the topic was about traveling; she asked each one of us "where are you going to travel?" and forced all of us to answer by calling out our names. After answering, she gave feedback and said, "wow! France is really beautiful, or we can go together to...". In this way, she created interactive classes.

P4: I could ask my questions privately too. The teachers provided the space needed for interaction and answered our questions in both online classes and ShAD messaging group.

P15: The teacher was asking constant questions, so we had to be active and pay attention. When I didn't understand the content, I would tell the teacher to ask my question. We normally typed our questions there, and the teacher read all of our messages and provided us with feedback.

Most of the learners referred to the interaction which was created between teachers and students. Interactions were constructed by the questions that the students posed and answers that

the teacher provided or vice versa. Engaging the students in the classes contributes to the quality of online classes since the higher rate of interaction increases students' engagement and understanding. Furthermore, providing feedback was considered one way of constructing rapport which contributes directly to learning the information shared in the online learning environment.

Learner-Content Interaction

In terms of content, learners' preferences leaned toward the textbooks which were covered in face-to-face classes since, from their point of view, the textbooks were more effective and prevented confusion. Some of the participants asserted that:

P4: In face-to-face classes, we normally used our books, so I think to resemble our physical classes, it's better to use books. The book is more useful because this is what students mainly follow at home.

P2: The book helps us a lot; the students and teachers would go forward together. We would look at the books and take notes wherever necessary. When we use the book as a source, we can follow it line by line and take notes or highlight the important points. Sometimes, we can take screenshots to write the new points in our book later.

P8: Showing the book pages on the screen helps us more. We can see the book and also hear the voice of the teacher explaining things. I think the book is better because we can follow it like in school classes. I mean it helps me learn better, and by using books, I remember school days and our face-to-face classes.

It can be inferred that the participants preferred using their own textbooks as the source material for a number of reasons. The most significant one was the fact that using the books was a reminiscence of their school days, and it made their interaction with the class and connection to their experience at school easier. Besides, they felt the convenience to follow the sequential presentation of material in a stress-free atmosphere.

Inductive Phase

Considering students' satisfaction and perceived learning, a number of subthemes including, preparing for online classes, following a planned schedule, adapting to the online classes, and completing the assignments were extracted. Each of the subthemes is reported and discussed.

Preparing for Online Classes

Most of the participants believed that preparing before the classes and taking certain steps were the requirements of attendance in online classes. Examples include:

P1: I followed the principal's instructions. She gave us some guidelines, and I tried to follow them. For instance, when attending online classes, I closed all messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram. I also checked my Internet connection. We had wireless data, but the speed was limited. So, I used cellular data. In sum, online classes were useful, and I could understand many concepts which were difficult to self-study.

P4: I tried to be connected to a high-speed Internet since the application is sensitive, and you may lose pictures and voices if you don't have good Internet access. Before attending the class, I prepared the books and pamphlets required around me to make the atmosphere more class-like. Sometimes, ShAD lags, and the process of entering the application can be time-consuming, so I tried to start five minutes earlier in order to be on time. For the current circumstances, it is good because the teaching and learning process is constant, and it is better than being forced to self-study. The online classes made us feel near the school, and we have moved forward. It helped us learn something, and I think students gained the energy needed to study.

P11: At first, I had so many problems with online classes, but I talked to one of my teachers, and she helped me out. I did a number of things. I changed my cellphone and my location to have

access to a better Internet connection. I took pictures of the screen to be able to review them and learn better. I was also sitting in a quiet environment.

From the excerpts, it can be implied that preparing contextual factors before the classes contribute to the effectiveness of online classes. This can overcome the possible challenges since the students mentioned that, after preparing the required conditions or facilities, they were able to utilize the class content better. Accordingly, the students have presented their self-efficacy through taking action and organizing various factors in order to attend the classes. This implies that learners have represented the skills for attending the classes and were ready to take responsibility for their own learning through taking simple steps and managing the online learning environment.

Following a Planned Schedule

Many of the participants in this study were satisfied with online classes because they believed attending the classes made their planning more organized and forced them to take over studying and learning. They explained that:

P8: Online classes were useful from the perspective that we were forced to attend them at a particular time, and we couldn't postpone learning and practicing because the teachers would call our names to check whether we are present. In other words, we were dragged to the books.

P3: I'm kind of a lazy student who won't study if I'm left alone to myself. So, attending online classes made me organized since I had to prepare before the class and take part in the class at a fixed time and then do the assigned homework after the class.

These examples indicate that the overall satisfaction of students is interconnected to the fact that online classes served as an impetus for planning and managing their time. This underlines that students were satisfied with the classes since they were able to manage their time effectively and be self-efficacious in learning new materials. Hence, time management can indicate how students represented their self-efficacy in online classes and how they planned to enhance their learning and reduce their stress at the same time by following a disciplined procedure for achieving the desired outcomes.

Adapting to the Online Classes

As mentioned earlier, in the Iranian educational system, online classes are not common in public high schools, and the students are accustomed to attending face-to-face classes. Hence, online classes were considered a huge shift in their everyday learning routine. Accordingly, they needed to make changes in their learning style. Some participants said that:

P2: I tried to change my method of learning to be adapted to online courses. At first, I found it so difficult to attend the classes since I was used to seeing the teacher and my classmates; however, after some sessions, I tried to give myself energy and found my own style of learning. For example, in online classes, I tried taking pictures and recording the session so that I could watch it later. If the systems cooperate, it is definitely useful.

P6: There has been a huge shift in learning classes, so I had to adapt myself to the changes. One thing I did was highlighting the important points that the teacher referred to, and immediately after the class, I would review and study them to instantiate the new points easier. The fact that we can interact and communicate with the teacher directly is so helpful. We can ask questions, and the teacher can answer them immediately.

Clearly, the online classes required a change in students' learning styles. Even though disconnection from the physical classrooms had made learning difficult, the participants believed that, in order to maximize their learning, they had to employ certain extra activities that they did not normally do in face-to-face classes. In other words, they exerted self-efficacy by adopting various dynamic changes in their learning style to adapt to the rapid changes by developing new learning strategies to achieve success, by being engaged in the learning process, and by preventing

passive learning conditions since students' success in learning might be guaranteed with their own efforts to grasp every opportunity to learn.

Completing the Assignments

The students in this study were satisfied with the assignments given to them. They deemed homework as one way of achieving the desired outcomes in online learning classes. The following examples have been extracted from the interviews:

P9: Assignments helped us. It felt so real since the teachers asked questions and assigned homework. It was effective because we were following the school schedule, so we were not falling behind the schedule. It had some challenges because students had to work with computers and cellphones in order to hand in the homework.

P10: When the teacher assigned various homework to do, I was forced to study. When I studied, I could find the problems, so I could ask the teacher to explain them or ask for help from my classmates. So, I guess doing homework makes online classes more useful for us. I tried to do all online assignments on time to learn better.

P14: The teacher held an online exam session through ShAD. It was a challenge because we were forced to study what has been taught before. At first, it was so difficult for me, but I know that if she didn't give the exam, none of us would have studied.

In short, assigning homework was effective for achieving desired outcomes in the classes and keeping up with learning. It can be underscored that online classes yield better results when they pose extra-class activities for students to be engaged since the students are not used to self-study. Moreover, it is implied that students' self-efficacy in doing tasks can be reinforced by completing the assignments and can consequently bring about a sense of satisfaction.

Challenges Confronted

Despite the many advantages of online learning classes, the students suffered from a number of issues that made online learning a cumbersome process for them. The challenges were divided into three separate categories including, Internet access, software requirements, and engagement problems.

Internet Access

Regarding Internet access, many students had problems with the speed limit of the Internet which caused a breakdown in the communication. The participants explained that:

P10: I couldn't understand what was happening since the internet would disconnect constantly. We would miss the teacher's voice and waste a lot of time because of the low speed of the Internet.

P2: Due to Internet connection problems for both instructors and students, we had difficulties. If we solve these problems, we can have effective classes. We were disconnected constantly, I guess the application had some problems.

P6: Due to Internet connection problems, we missed the teacher's voice a lot. The teacher was teaching, but we could not follow her because, sometimes, we missed her voice. If we put Internet problems aside, it was a good opportunity to learn.

Software Requirements

The other challenge was preparing the software required for attending the classes. Most of the participants believed that they could not install the required application and enter it properly. The examples of the interviews include:

P5: The major problem we had was the use of the online platform system. I had to prepare the computer or my cellphone. Sometimes, I couldn't enter the class, or when I entered, the software would kick me out. The teacher spends time, but it is a waste of time because many of us cannot concentrate. I personally lost the picture for half an hour.

P7: This software has so many shortcomings. Disconnections occur frequently and the speed of teaching is slow because the teacher has to constantly check whether everyone is listening and whether they have the pictures and sound. I think these challenges have decreased learning.

Engagement Problems

Another hurdle the students came across was a matter of distraction due to many contextual problems such as being at home with other family members which resulted in the loss of concentration. The examples include:

P6: At home, we usually have many sources of distraction. There were some problems that distracted me. I couldn't participate because of the distraction. It made me nervous. For example, there were a lot of background noises like TV and radio. In addition, I couldn't directly interact with my peers.

P9: When I was attending the classes, my family was present, and they would talk to each other, so I was distracted. But, I had to focus on the content and what the teacher was saying. The online classes were useful; however, face-to-face classes are better since when we are connected to the Internet, the cellphone itself may distract us.

From the excerpts, it can be inferred that online learners have by and large faced some challenges in learning which might have been the source of distraction and demotivation for them. What deteriorates the situation is that classes are in cyberspace, and there are no face-to-face interactions with teachers. Moreover, the feeling of disconnection from the school community might inhibit students' desire to attend classes and break their concentration.

5. DISCUSSION

This study was an attempt to examine students' perceptions of online learning by considering how online learning self-efficacy, learner-instructor interaction, and learner-content interaction would influence high school students' satisfaction and perceived learning. Related to the first research question, the findings indicated that in order to achieve a sense of satisfaction and embody higher rates of confidence in their performance, the students deemed online learning self-efficacy as an important criterion which is in line with the theoretical underpinning of the current study based on Alqurashi (2019) suggesting that self-efficacy is a critical factor in students' satisfaction and perceived learning during online courses. The participants exercised self-efficacy in terms of preparing for the online classes, following a planned schedule, striving to adapt to the class environment, and completing the given assignments. This shred of evidence is compatible with the findings of Wei and Chou (2020) who found that online learning self-efficacy and students' readiness exerted a positive influence on their overall level of performance. The findings are also in line with other studies done by Alqurashi (2019), Artino (2007), Gunawardena et al. (2010), and Shen et al. (2013).

In this study, learners were cognizant of their own role and willingly strived to improve the quality of their learning by deploying some facilitative actions like taking responsibility for learning, adapting to the system by changing their learning styles, and planning not to lag behind the schedule by completing the assignments. In the case of responsibility, the participants of this study exercised autonomy by attending the classes on time and striving to prepare for the requirements which are consistent with Eneau and Develotte (2012) who contend that in the online learning environment, learners are capable of controlling their learning process and becoming autonomous accordingly. Some of the learners reported that they followed the instructions provided by both the teacher and the principal. Hence, the construction of autonomy was facilitated by the help of other individuals as well, which is attested by Eneau and Develotte (2012) claiming that constructing autonomy is dependent on both self-regulated and other-regulated procedures in online settings.

With respect to adaptation to online learning, the participants utilized a number of strategies. The results of this portion of the study consolidate the fact that exerting self-efficacy results in applying multiple learning strategies that determines the performance of individuals (Diseth, 2011). Therefore, participants who can employ various strategies reflect higher rates of self-efficacy which is conducive to a successful online learning experience. Furthermore, this finding corroborates Eneau and Develotte's (2012) beliefs indicating that the process of online learning requires a change in the learning habits of learners, which requires more time allocation and dedication on the part of learners. In addition, the students in this study considered doing homework as a way of achieving success in online learning classes, and this aspect is directly linked to students' task self-efficacy which is defined as "the perceptions that one can succeed at a specific task" (Wilson & Narayan, 2016, p. 237), implying that through completing the assigned homework, students are able to achieve self-efficacy and satisfaction with the online learning outcomes. Believing that they can do the required tasks and achieve certain outcomes represents their self-efficacy which is in line with Burger's (2019) definition of self-efficacy.

Online interaction contributes to students' establishing rapport in online classes in order to develop their proficiency and knowledge (Diept et al., 2017; Meredith, 2019). In the present study, the interaction was manifested in students' interactions with the course content and the course instructor. As for learner-content interaction and its effect on learner satisfaction, the interpretation of the results verifies that learners prefer to establish their comfort zone by relying on the textbooks presented to them in their face-to-face classes. A multitude of reasons is set out on the side of learners for this tendency such as considering ease of access to the materials, creating a familiar scenario of learning, favoring sequential presentation of lessons, and sticking to more convenient and stress-free learning material presentations. Such findings corroborate Chen et al. (2013) and Zimmerman (2012) who demonstrated that the relationship between quantity and quality of interaction is of paramount importance and that there exists a positive correlation between access rates to the content and the final grades. In a similar vein, Hung et al. (2010) contend that orientation to courses should pave the way for a more productive learning experience and reduce the technical problems during the study. Furthermore, according to Alqurashi (2019), online learners exert a lot of effort into processing and digesting the content and learning from the computer screen. Hence, the two-dimensional process of rethinking and learning from content put learners' interaction with content at a critical point in terms of overall learning and satisfaction. Due to such evidence, learners consider familiarity with the course content an important element since, according to Sebastianelli et al. (2015), course content can affect perceived learning to a considerable amount.

Interaction, be it synchronous or asynchronous, increases learners' satisfaction with the learning environment (Gosmire et al., 2009). Additionally, Alqurashi (2019) considers high-quality interactions with the instructor a possibility for having higher learner satisfaction and perceived learning. In accordance with such notes, the findings of the study depicted that learners declared their consent and satisfaction with their interaction with the instructor through their engagement via asking and answering questions, gaining sufficient feedback, etc. The findings of this study also resonate well with Espasa and Mense (2010) who found a significant relationship between instructor feedback and learning outcomes measured in terms of satisfaction and final grades. Therefore, it can be inferred that considering learner-instructor interaction as a criterion in learner satisfaction can be significant since learners deemed that being able to interact with the instructor and the quality of the feedback could be indispensable factors for any effective online learning experience.

Alongside satisfaction, perceived learning as another determining criterion was analyzed in order to gain more insights into learners' perceptions of online learning. Perceived learning was theoretically defined as students' judgment about their knowledge and the changes they undergo after taking part in online courses. Therefore, the students were asked to report their overall perceptions of their learning experience. The results illustrated that despite the challenges faced, the students assumed that the course was productive, and they had obtained the desired outcomes through enumerating benefits like meeting their specific educational needs, enjoying the unbounded company of the teacher throughout the course, video recording to review the sessions, and taking responsibility for their own learning. Teachers' contributing presence affects learners' perceived learning which is in tandem with Akyol and Garrison (2014) who claimed that teachers' facilitative role affects perceived learning, and instructors' decisions can positively influence learners' performance. On a similar note, learner-instructor interaction is one of the most significant predictors of perceived learning in an online course (Fredericksen et al., 2019; Jiang & Ting, 2000; Ozturk & Ozcinar, 2013).

Related to the second research question, although learners were satisfied with the classes held online, they mentioned some challenges of online learning that would hamper their motivation and willingness to experience online education in the long run. These challenges revolved around issues including, Internet access, software requirements, and engagement problems. Many learners suffered from Internet speed limits which consequently led to a breakdown in communication in terms of receiving the content and the teacher's voice. Cost and access to the Internet have been listed by Muilenburg and Berge (2005) as one of the students' barriers to online learning. Besides Internet access, some learners complained about the software required for attending the class in a way that they found the application not user-friendly. According to Kirkwood and Price (2014), such technical problems would make adapting to the online environment difficult and create challenges for both instructors and students. Engagement problems such as failing to build a class-like atmosphere at home, getting distracted by various sources, and constant loss of concentration due to some personal factors were deemed as some other hurdles in the learners' learning process which is corroborated by Stoessel et al. (2015) who noted that personal factors have the potential to affect students' access and participation in the online learning environment.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide practitioners and those in the policy-making process with information regarding the experiences and perceptions of learners. Moreover, understanding what affects perceived learning can pave the way for instructors to enrich the online courses in terms of their design, delivery, and evaluation with the ultimate aim of improving the student learning experience (Alavi et al., 2002). Therefore, those schools which are currently involved in holding online learning classes might be interested in using this information either to improve the conditions for students or to increase their motivations. Since the participants referred to many challenges, it is vitally important that before starting the classes, principals or teachers allocate some sessions for informing the students about the procedure of online classes and learning platforms. Moreover, the problems with the platform require more attention to providing or developing more user-friendly platforms for students. The authorities should aim at eradicating the problems which prohibit students' participation and learning process in the classes. Besides, it is recommended that teachers cultivate the participation of all attendees and encourage them to engage more extensively in online classes.

Like any other research project, this study was faced with a number of limitations consideration of which may open new avenues of research for further investigations. First, the findings of the present study should not be overgeneralized to all online learning environments since only a small

number of participants who were studying at a public high school were included. In addition, to have more generalizability, it is best to use data triangulation and collect data from other sources such as questionnaires to verify the qualitative data. Second, the students' perceived learning was estimated based on their self-reports. Thus, other ways of analyzing perceived learning such as examinations should be utilized to find more credible findings. Finally, the current paper focused only on female high school learners. Moreover, for further research, other students' personal characteristics such as age or gender can be taken into account.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

- What measures did you take to experience a productive online class?
- Was this online program effective for you? In what ways?
- Which content presentation material was more conducive to your learning? (PowerPoint, board, book, etc.)
- Could you interact with the content presented to you online?
- Could you take an active role during the program? How did you ask your questions?
- Did the instructor lay the sufficient ground for interacting with you? How?
- Did you grasp what was taught to you online?
- Overall, how do you evaluate this program? Were your educational needs met?
- What challenges did you face throughout your online learning experience?

The Effects of Bottom-Up, Interactive and Top-Down Listening on L2 Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

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acquisition

Abstract

Although previous research studies have shown that the rate of incidental vocabulary acquisition through listening is affected by various factors such as gloss type and listening proficiency (Çekiç, 2022; Zhang & Graham, 2020), the effects of top-down, bottom-up and interactive listening on incidental acquisition of words have not been examined. The present study, therefore, was aimed to examine the effects in a university laboratory. A group of 90 lower-intermediate English language learners majoring in dentistry and medical sciences took part in the study. The participants were between 19 and 24 years old and Key English Test (KET) was employed to assess their proficiency. Learners' knowledge of the new words was assessed before and after listening using Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). Descriptive statistics, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were run to examine the differences in vocabulary acquisition before and immediately after the learners listened to the audio clips. The results indicated that the learners in the three groups were equally able to acquire the new words and there were not any statistically significant differences in the effects of the three types of processing (bottom-up, interactive and top-down) on L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition. Implications of the findings will be discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Incidental learning happens when learners acquire new aspects of their L2 without paying attention to what they do (Schmidt, 1994). Many studies on LI and L2 vocabulary acquisition have supported the claim that most of the vocabulary items are learned incidentally, that is, as a by-product of being engaged in a listening, reading, speaking or writing activity and it has been also mentioned that few words are acquired by an act of intentional learning (Coady, 1997a; Ellis, 1994; Hatch & Brown, 1995; Nagy & Herman, 1987; Nation, 1990; Schmidt, 1994). The studies in this area, however, have mostly focused on the relationship between reading and vocabulary learning (e.g. Dupuy & Krashen, 1993; Hulstijn, 1992; Lynch, 2009; Pitts et al., 1989). Variables which

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have been investigated in the area of reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary acquisition include L1 and L2 glosses (Choi, 2016), context and word order frequency (Teng, 2019), reading-only and reading-while listening (Chen, 2021), topic familiarity and rhetorical organization of texts (Mahdavy, 2011), repetition and L1 lexicalization (Ghaedi & Shahrokhi, 2016) and the kind of task (Kaivanpanah et al., 2020).

Nation and Newton (2009) asserted that listening can also provide L2 learners with information through which they can build up the knowledge required for using the language. Pavia et al. (2019) stated that language learners can acquire new words incidentally through listening to songs and Smidt and Hegelheimer (2004) pointed out that incidental learning of words occurs while listening to online academic lectures. Although it has been shown that words can be acquired incidentally in listening and that listening leads to smaller vocabulary gains than reading (Brown et al., 2008; Vidal, 2011), it is not yet known to what extent different variables associated with L2 listening can contribute to higher rates of incidental vocabulary acquisition through L2 listening. Some of the studies, however, have reported that listening proficiency plays a more important role than pre-existing vocabulary knowledge in incidental acquisition of words through L2 listening (Zhang & Graham, 2020), proficiency level and aptitude positively affect language learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition when they view captioned videos (Teng, 2022), the type of caption (full caption with highlighted targeted words and L1 gloss, full caption with no audio and full caption) does not affect incidental vocabulary learning (Hsieh, 2020) and audiovisual input combined with traditional and multiple-choice glosses significantly affect incidental vocabulary acquisition (Çekiç, 2022).

The research studies conducted so far, however, have not examined listeners' type of processing on incidental vocabulary acquisition. In the process of listening listeners can use top-down, bottom-up and/or interactive processing. Top-down processing has been defined as the use of background knowledge in comprehending messages (Richards, 1990) and as it was pointed out by Van Duzer (1997), it refers to the process by which a message is interpreted by using schemata. Lingzhu (2003) stated that in top-down processing learners utilize their prior knowledge to make predictions about the text. Bottom-up processing, however, has been introduced as "the use of incoming data as a source of information about the meaning of a message" (Richards, 1990; p. 51). While using bottom-up processing, the listener relies on his lexical and grammatical competence in a language to process the information. Other studies have indicated that in real-life situations, listening draws on both bottom-up and top-down processing and it is basically an interactive process (Brown, 2004; Oprandy, 1994; Oxford, 1993).

Craik and Tulving (1975) argued that the chance that some pieces of new information will be stored into long-term memory or not is determined by the shallowness or depth with which it is initially processed. Considering the fact that in the top-down, bottom-up and interactive listening the incoming information is processed in three different ways, we might hypothesize that the rate of new vocabulary learners acquire incidentally can be impacted by the differences in type of listening. Language learners always experience these three types of processing both in the classroom context and real world environments. And while acquiring new words incidentally during listening, they focus on different sources of information under these three different processing conditions, which might cause them not be equally able to acquire the new words incidentally. Thus, it might be interesting to examine their effects on vocabulary learning. In order to investigate the issue empirically, we, therefore, formulated the following research question:

Does the type of processing (bottom-up, interactive and top-down) affect L2 learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

After many years of being considered as the Cinderella skill in second/foreign language learning, listening was viewed as an important skill in 1970s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) and the centrality of the skill in L2 acquisition was well established in 1980s (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). During this time, Communicate Language Teaching (CLT) which emphasized the teaching of the four language skills including listening emerged (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, one of the major theories of language acquisition which further highlighted the importance of listening was proposed by Stephen Krashen, who argued that language learning occurs from comprehensible input which is provided through listening and reading (Krashen, 1982, 1985). The Input Hypothesis was criticized later (e.g. McLaughlin, 1987); however, Krashen (1998) provided empirical evidence in support of the hypothesis and refuted the idea that comprehensible output (Swain, 1985; Swain & Lapkin, 1995) plays a significant role in language learning. In 1999 Vandergrift described listening as

“a complex, active process where the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of the utterance”. (p. 168)

As it can be inferred from the quotation above, each experience of listening may involve some degrees of bottom-up (e.g. distinguishing the sounds) and top-down (e.g. identifying the context) processing. Lingzhu (2003) stated that in top-down processing learners utilize their prior knowledge to make predictions about the text. While using bottom-up processing, the listener relies on his lexical and grammatical competence in a language to process the information. Previous studies indicated that in real-life situations, listening draws on both bottom-up and top-down processing and it is basically an interactive process (Brown, 2004; Oprandy, 1994; Oxford, 1993).

The studies which have been conducted to show how listening comprehension can be enhanced mostly focused on the role of tasks, type of listening input, person-specific attributes and listening strategies. Joyce et al. (1992) suggested that pre-listening tasks which may involve pre-teaching of vocabulary, grammar, or rhetorical structure and discussion of topics related to the contents in the upcoming input can help language learners pre-structure information and prepare for the listening stage. Madani and Kheirzadeh (2018) examined the effects of different pre-listening activities on L2 listeners' comprehension ability and concluded that pre-teaching of the new words has the strongest effects on elementary and advanced language learners' listening comprehension.

The effects of input type on L2 learners' listening comprehension is another area of research which has garnered interest especially in environments in which technology is used for teaching and assessing listening. For example, Wagner (2013) reported that test takers who were exposed to audiovisual input outperformed the group of English language learners who received audio-only input. It was also found that audio-visual input in comparison with audio input is more conducive to L2 acquisition. Zhang and Zou (2021) reviewed 41 research papers which examined the effects of various input modes and concluded that audio-visual input has stronger positive effects on language learners' L2 acquisition as compared with the audio-only condition, cognitive connections between the audio and visual sources of information are reinforced in learners' minds. They pointed out that audio-plus-animation-plus-captions/subtitles can create optimal conditions for vocabulary and grammar learning through listening.

Learners' individual characteristics were also the focus of many research studies which investigated the role of variables such as motivation, cognitive style, aptitude, anxiety and self-

efficacy in L2 listening. The results of these studies indicated that listening comprehension is negatively correlated with amotivation (Vadergrift, 2005), field independence is significantly related to L2 listening (Satori, 2022), there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between aptitude and L2 listening (Sok & Shin, 2021), and anxiety which negatively affects self-efficacy during listening is negatively associated with L2 listening performance (Canaran, et. al. 2020).

Another factor which has been found to play a significant role in listening is the use of listening strategies. The results of the studies which investigated the issue revealed that metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies (Vandergrift, 1997) significantly contribute to listening performance. Some examples of such studies include Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) who showed metacognitive strategy instruction has positive effects on L2 listening and Bozorgian et al. (2021) who reported that L1-mediated metacognitive intervention could significantly improve listening comprehension. In addition, Kök (2018) illustrated that the use of cognitive strategies is significantly related to L2 listening performance.

Since a higher rate of comprehension can improve chances of success in language learning, the variables which help learners maximize their comprehension are likely to have positive effects on their acquisition of vocabulary through listening. Many research studies have tried to shed light on this aspect of L2 listening and showed that many new words can be acquired incidentally, when the learners are not forewarned about a vocabulary retention test after listening (Eysenck 1985). The studies conducted by Pavia et al. (2019) and Smidt and Hegelheimer (2004) provided empirical evidence in support of the claim as they reported that language learners can acquire new words while listening to songs or academic lectures. Most of the studies conducted in this area have focused on the effects of different kinds of listening input on incidental acquisition of the new words in listening. Çekiç (2022) compared the effects of traditional gloss, multiple-choice gloss and no gloss conditions on language learners' listening comprehension performance and found that learners who were exposed to the audiovisual input under the two gloss conditions could acquire more words. Other studies investigating the role of listening input in vocabulary acquisition showed language learners could recall 35% of the word meanings and 28% of the word forms after watching an entire season of a French series (Fievez, et al., 2021) and learners in the glossed keyword captions group had the best performance on tests which measured meaning recall and form recognition (Perez, 2018).

3. METHOD

A quasi-experimental design with a pretest and a posttest was used to conduct the study. The dependent variable was incidental vocabulary acquisition and the independent variable was the type of listening (top-down, bottom-up or interactive). The learners' posttest scores were used to compare incidental vocabulary acquisition in the three groups immediately after listening.

Participants

The study involved 90 female (N=50) and male (N=40) English language learners who were at the lower-intermediate level of proficiency. They were studying dentistry and medicine at a university of medical sciences and their age ranged between 19 and 24. The participants were selected through convenience sampling method and were randomly divided into three groups (bottom-up, interactive and top-down). Only the students who agreed to take part in the study by completing a consent form participated in the study.

Instruments

The instruments utilized in the study included KET, three types of listening tasks (bottom-up, interactive and top-down) and the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). KET which has the

difficulty level of A2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is generally designed for those who have some knowledge of reading, writing, speaking and listening. In the present study the test was used in order to assess L2 learners' proficiency level before the experiment and to have homogenized groups of participants. KET has three sections:

- 1- **Listening**: 25 minutes, 25 listening items
- 2- **Reading and Writing**: 60 minutes, 30 reading items and two writing parts
- 3- **Speaking**: 8-10 minutes

Cronbach's alpha value was computed for the KET items and a reliability score of .72 was obtained. Therefore, it was concluded that the data collected by KET were reliable as the value did not fall below .60 (Dörnyei, 2007).

Three tasks were designed to have the L2 listeners acquire the new words incidentally. In task A they were supposed to use bottom-up processing by filling in the gaps with the appropriate words they listened to. In task B, which was interactive they listened to the same audio and put the statements in the correct order. And finally, in the third group the participants completed a top-down task in which they found an appropriate topic after they listened to the audio clip in each part.

VKS was the next instrument employed in the study. It was used to assess the participants' knowledge of the words before and after the experiment. This instrument is in fact a self-report assessment tool developed by Wesche and Paribakht (1996), who suggested that it is sensitive enough for the purpose of quantifying incremental word knowledge gains. There were pre-VKS (before performing the tasks) and immediate post-VKS tests (after performing the tasks). The VKS tests contained the new vocabulary which appeared in the audio clips. They also included words which did not exist in them. Reliability of the pre-VKS and post-VKS data was .93 and .95 respectively.

Procedure

Arrangements were made with the university for collecting data in the laboratory and then information about the purpose of the study and details of administration procedure were provided. Once the participants completed the consent forms, KET was administered to assess students' level of proficiency. The learners were then assigned to three groups each consisting of 30 participants who answered the listening comprehension questions wearing headphones in the laboratory. The VKS test was administered in the next stage to measure the participants' familiarity with 40 words used in the audio. A week later the three listening tasks which were intended to activate bottom-up, interactive or top-down processing were completed in the same laboratory. The unfamiliar words were glossed both in English and learners' mother tongue and each listening was played twice. The audio files were randomly selected from among the files accompanying Developing (seven files) and Expanding (two files) Tactics for Listening (Richards, 2010). Although it was decided that the audio clips were appropriate for learners at this level of proficiency, some of the new words which they were not supposed to learn incidentally were taught after examining the pre-VKS results and before administering the immediate vocabulary posttest. There were on average fewer than five unfamiliar words in each listening. The participants were told that they could also take notes while listening to the clips. Immediately after the listening the answer sheets were collected and students were given a surprise VKS test (immediate post-VKS) to assess their knowledge of the new words. The data were collected in the same class and by the same instructor.

4. RESULTS

In order to answer the research question, descriptive statistics of the variables were calculated first and then statistical tests were run to examine homogeneity of the three groups. The results related to the participants' performance on KET are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Proficiency Scores by Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group (1)	30	33.00	59.00	49.86	8.02
Group (2)	30	23.00	60.00	48.63	9.14
Group (3)	30	28.00	60.00	52.23	7.51
Total	90	23.00	60.00	50.24	8.29

Group (1): bottom-up; Group (2): interactive; Group (3): top-down

As reported in Table 1, the KET mean scores were 49.86, 48.63 and 52.23 in group 1, 2 and 3 respectively. In the next stage of analysis, the participants' scores in the three groups were compared using one-way ANOVA. Table 2 shows that there were not statistically significant differences between the group means ($p = .23$).

Table 2: One-Way ANOVA Results Showing the Difference in the Performance on the KET

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	200.82	2	100.411	1.473	.235
Within Groups	5929.80	87	68.159		
Total	6130.622	89	50.24		

Participants' prior knowledge of the words they were supposed to learn incidentally was the next variable which was checked in the three groups. Table 3 shows learners' performance on pre-VKS in the three groups (bottom-up, interactive or top-down)

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Pre-VKS Scores

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group (1)	30	86.00	175.00	136.20	23.55
Group (2)	30	94.00	189.00	136.70	29.15
Group (3)	30	100.00	184.00	137.70	25.56
Total	90	86.00	189.00	136.86	25.90

Group (1): bottom-up; Group (2): interactive; Group (3): top-down

Moreover, one-way ANOVA was used to compare learners' vocabulary knowledge scores in the three groups and see if there were differences between them before listening to the audio. As it is shown in Table 4, there were not statistically significant differences in the pre-VKS scores students obtained at this stage ($p = .97$).

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA Results Showing the Difference in the Pre-VKS Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	35.00	2	17.500	.026	.975
Within Groups	59701.400	87	686.223		
Total	59736.400	89			

Finally, the participants' knowledge of the words they acquired incidentally was also compared after they listened to the audio clips and answered the vocabulary questions. The differences in the mean scores in the three groups showed an increase in learners' vocabulary knowledge (see Table 3 & Table 5).

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Post-VKS Scores

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group (1)	30	110.00	200.00	170.53	27.25
Group (2)	30	104.00	200.00	165.53	28.77
Group (3)	30	119.00	200.00	164.60	25.40
Total	90	104.00	200.00	166.88	27.00

Group (1): bottom-up; Group (2): interactive; Group (3): top-down

After examining normality of the data through the skewness and kurtosis tests and making sure that the values fell within the acceptable ranges, the participants' pre-VKS and post-VKS scores were compared using paired-samples t-tests. The results of the three paired-samples t-tests which were run to compare the pre-VKS and post-VKS scores in the groups indicated that the differences were statistically significant in all the three groups ($p < .05$) (see Table 6).

Table 6: Paired Samples T-Tests for Comparing Pre-VKS and Post-VKS Scores

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper				
Group (1)	-34.33	17.58	3.20	-40.89	-27.76	27.25	-10.69	29	.00
Group (2)	-28.83	40.03	7.30	-43.78	-13.88	28.77	-3.94	29	.00
Group (3)	-26.90	27.83	5.08	-37.29	-16.50	27.00	-5.29	29	.00

Group (1): bottom-up/pre-test and posttest; Group (2): interactive/pre-test and posttest; Group (3): top-down/pre-test and posttest

Table 7 shows whether there was a statistically significant difference between the post-VKS means. The results of one-way ANOVA, which was used to compare the post-VKS means in the three groups, indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean scores ($p = .66$). It was, therefore, concluded that the type of processing (bottom-up, interactive and top-down) does not significantly affect L2 learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA Results Showing the Difference in the Post-VKS Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	610.756	2	305.378	.413	.663
Within Groups	64274.133	87	738.783		
Total	64884.889	89			

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effects of bottom-up, interactive and top-down listening on L2 learners' incidental acquisition of the new words. In line with what was reported in other studies such as Pavia et al. (2019) and Smidt and Hegelheimer (2004), the results confirmed that language learners acquire new words through listening as post-VKS scores were significantly higher than pre-VKS scores. It has been posited that listening comprehension activities of any kind may have effects, weaker or stronger, on learners' selective attention to vocabulary items (Hsieh, 2020). This was also emphasized by LaScotte (2020) who suggested that listening texts can be leveraged to develop L2 vocabulary. Our study supports the idea that listening comprehension activates the mental processes needed for vocabulary learning and the rate of comprehension affects language learners' ability to acquire different aspects of language including the lexicon (Fievez et al., 2021; Krashen, 1985; Zhang & Zou, 2021).

However, the results revealed that the type of listening (bottom-up, interactive and top-down listening) does not have a statistically significant effect on incidental vocabulary acquisition. Previous studies emphasized the role of bottom-up processing in listening comprehension (e.g. Ke & Wang, 2022; Mahdavy, 2008; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998). In addition, it can be argued that in bottom-up listening in which L2 listeners use their lexical and grammatical competence (Richards, 1990) they are more likely to pay attention to the word forms which are learned before acquiring other aspects such as word meaning (van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013). Moreover, unlike bottom-up listening, interactive and top-down listening can cause L2 listeners to go through different meaning-making processes as in both types of listening they use their background knowledge to construct meaning. Nevertheless, as the results of our study indicated, the slight difference caused by the higher rate of vocabulary learning in the bottom-up group (see Table 5) was not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the positive effect of bottom-up processing in L2 listening which was reported in other studies does not impact incidental acquisition of the new words from listening.

In addition, the depth of processing the new words (Craik & Tulving, 1975) could have had varied effects across the groups as, for example, in the interactive group both bottom-up and top-down processing can be involved and this can affect incidental acquisition of the words. According to the findings, however, depth of processing does not seem to affect the rate of incidental vocabulary acquisition through listening as it has been shown that the three kinds of listening are equally effective in the process of acquiring words incidentally in listening.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The primary goal of this study was to investigate the effects of bottom-up, interactive and top-down listening comprehension on incidental acquisition of new words which were glossed in English and learners' mother-tongue. The results indicated that the participants acquired the new words after being exposed to them through listening twice. It is, therefore, recommended that curriculum designers, materials developers and language teachers create opportunities for facilitating incidental vocabulary acquisition through appropriate forms of listening which can enhance learners' comprehension. They can, for example, design tasks completion of which involves incidental acquisition of glossed words in the process of listening for meaning. This way language learners can benefit from listening instruction and at the same time improve their vocabulary knowledge.

The findings of the study, however, did not show that there was a statistically significant difference in the rate of incidental vocabulary acquisition in the bottom-up, interactive and top-down listening. In other words, the three groups similarly benefited from the three kinds of listening. Considering the fact that this study included lower intermediate language learners, we

recommend that further research be conducted to compare the effects across the proficiency groups and see if similar results are obtained when language learners at higher levels of listening proficiency are also involved. Follow-up research can also investigate the effects of other bottom-up, interactive and top-down listening tasks and show which aspects of vocabulary knowledge (form, meaning and/or use) can be acquired more effectively by the use of each kind of processing during listening.

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Concept-Based Instruction for EFL Learners' Pragmatic Development: The Case of Compliment and Compliment-Response Speech Acts

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Abstract

Grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of mind, Concept-Based Instruction (CBI) emphasizes teaching language in context and advocates the development of a conceptual understanding in learners. Despite its great theoretical and practical potential, CBI has received scant attention in language teaching contexts. Using a mixed methods research design, this study investigated the impact of Concept-Based Pragmatics Instruction (CBPI) on teaching compliment and compliment-response speech acts in an EFL context and, also, participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the CBPI for pragmatic development. With this purpose, sixty EFL students from two intact classes were selected to participate in the study and assigned to one experimental group (n = 30) and one control group (n = 30). The experimental group was exposed to the CBPI whereas the control group did not receive any CBPI. The study mainly aimed at tracking changes in the EFL learners' appropriation and application of the instructed pragmatic concepts, as assessed by discourse completion tests and semi-structured interviews (n = 10) after 10 weeks of instruction. The findings showed that the CBPI was highly effective for improving the learners' pragmatic knowledge of compliment and compliment-response speech acts. Similarly, the results of the interviews indicated that participants of the study had positive perceptions of the CBPI. The study has some implications for teachers, teacher educators, material developers, and curriculum designers in the EFL contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Internalization of theoretical concepts is an integral part of human education (Vygotsky, 1978), and it must be a major goal of education to guarantee learners' development by provision of the suitable instruction in explicit and coherent theoretical concepts to help them internalize them (Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006). Concept-Based Instruction (CBI) approach (Galperin, 1992) is predicated upon the assumption that meaning is constructed through conceptual categories inspired by Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory of mind (SCT).

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SCT attempts to provide convincing explanations for processes involved in learning and development, and this development is inseparable from its social and cultural context. In his assumption, Vygotsky (1978) proposed that social interaction plays a major role in the origin and progress of higher mental (e.g., metacognitive) functions. These functions have two dimensions, inter-psychological (social) and intra-psychological (individual). These higher mental functions first appear on the social plane and just later on the individual plane, i.e., Vygotsky believed in the integration of social, cultural, and psychological processes of learning and regarded language as the main cultural artefact for communication, cultural representation, and conceptualization (Kozulin, 1998). Similarly, drawing on the basic tenets of the SCT, the CBI emphasizes the importance of improving conscious conceptual mediation and well-organized tasks-promoting conceptual development.

Based on Vygotsky's position on the role of scientific knowledge in formal education, Gal'perin (1989, 1992) and Davydov (2004) developed the CBI models to instruction. To be more specific, in both models, scientific concepts are presented verbally and modeled graphically to guide the learners' actions. Verbalization, by which the learners explain their language choices, helps them to externalize their understanding of the concept. As Nicholas (2015) noted, the CBI helps the learners to develop a deep conceptual understanding of a skill or knowledge area for using in a variety of situations.

Since the goal of the EFL teaching must be to help the students to communicate effectively and fluently in the target language, the instructors should focus on grammatical competence along with other aspects of communicative competence such as pragmatic competence. It is usually seen that a learner has a full knowledgeable of the grammar of the L2, whereas it does not guarantee their pragmatical competent (Kasper & Rose, 1999). Indeed, they can produce grammatically correct utterances while they are pragmatically inappropriate which is called pragmatic failure.

One way of helping the EFL learners improve their pragmatic knowledge is through the CBI, advocating the development of a conceptual understanding in learners. For this purpose, van Compernelle (2014) developed Concept-Based Pragmatics Instruction (CBPI) aimed at helping the learners to internalize such basic concepts as self-presentation, social distance, and power to play a mediational role in selection between various pragmalinguistic forms. In this approach, the pragmatic concepts are described in the written or oral form, and they are formulated in the pedagogical diagrams. The CBPI postulates that learners need to be able to explain and use these pragmatic concepts to justify a pragmatic choice and orient to these concepts as mediational tools to figure out the social contexts, interactive processes, and meanings they construct using pragmalinguistic forms.

Despite its rigorous theoretical and pedagogical foundations, few studies have been conducted to examine the influence of the CBI on improving the learners' pragmatic competence in the EFL contexts (van Compernelle, 2011; van Compernelle & Henery, 2014a, 2014b; Williams, Abraham, & Negueruela-Azarola, 2013). To reduce the gap, this study intended to see if the CBPI can help the learners develop their knowledge and practice of compliment and compliment-response speech acts in an EFL context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept-Based Instruction (CBI)

The CBI for teaching and learning (e.g., Galperin's Systemic-Theoretical Instruction (STI), 1969; and Negueruela's Concept-Based Instruction (CBI), 2003) was inspired by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of mind. Vygotsky (1978) built a research methodology encompassing the socio-historical nature of human, in which he buried himself in a generation of a holistic theory that could explain the higher mental processes developing speech, thinking and consciousness

(Haenen, 1996). Mediation, inner and private speech, zone of proximal development, concept formation, internalization, and development are among the most significant hypotheses Vygotsky developed in explicating language learning.

The main concept within the SCT through which higher mental functions are accomplished is mediation (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), elementary mental processes develop from biological origin. Yet, higher psychological functions, which are specific to human, are derived from sociocultural processes and mediated by such cultural artifacts as language, literacy, and numeracy (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). While elementary mental processes consist of involuntary attention, simple perception, and natural or direct memory, higher mental processes include self-organized attention, reflection, categorical perception, conceptual thinking, and logical memory. Both biological and higher mental functions are united immediately when the individuals are engaged in their cultural practices (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978) argued that everyday concepts' development begins from objects and moves to concepts; however, scientific concepts grow inversely from everyday concepts, i.e., their development begins from the concepts and moves to objects. Everyday concepts must be classified through their real-life use, performed naturally due to the lack of a child's conscious awareness of their meaning. The main difference between the formation of everyday concepts and scientific concepts is that the child's everyday experiences lead to the creation of everyday concepts; however, only school is the place for acquiring the scientific concepts. The individual's conscious awareness of their meaning, voluntary attention and logical thinking are bases for categorizing the scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1987). To internalize the scientific concepts, two elements are essential: learners should be provided with the verbal definitions of the concepts and then with opportunities to apply the concepts to solve relevant problems to fully master them (Karpov, 2018).

Drawing on Vygotsky's SCT, Galperin (1989) developed the Systemic-Theoretical Instruction (STI) to learning. In this approach, the student is supplied with the essential-gradual intellectual support, in the form of a map, graph, chart, utilized as a learning tool, to adjust himself or herself throughout performance, by which the students can comprehend what is going on during their learning activities. Galperin (1989) made an attempt to observe the cognitive interaction happening internally (in mental actions) when the learner participates in material actions throughout the learning activity. Galperin (1989) developed a collection of four prerequisites in his teaching approach based upon his revisions of the systemic formation of mental actions and concepts: 1- the learning motive; 2- the orienting basis; 3- the properties of parameters of an action; and 4- the stepwise procedure.

In Galperin's model, the learning motive reflects the innate ability to learn which is within all of us. Moreover, "when the subject matter content is properly conceived and taught, there will be no paramount motivational problems" (Haenen, 1996, p. 124).

The demonstration of all essential elements for a learner to convey an action is involved in the orienting base called the Orienting Basis of an Action (OBA), and, also the Scheme of a Complete Orienting Basis of an Action (SCOBA). To distinguish these two terms, it must be considered that the OBA refers to as the students' current orienting basis and what they have "at their disposal" in and within themselves (Haenen, 1996, p. 134); however, the SCOBA is the desired orienting basis and external cognitive tool to enable the students present their learning actions.

The properties of an action entail four parameters: 1- level of appropriation; 2- degree of generalization; 3- degree of abbreviation; and 4- degree of mastery. There are three diverse planes of an action within the level of appropriation: material, verbal, and mental.

The stepwise procedure entails the last precondition of the STI approach. It refers to Galperin's proposed step-by-step procedure of concept internalization. The stepwise procedure includes: 1-

motivational stage; 2- orienting stage; 3- material stage; 4- stage of overt speech; 5- stage of covert speech; and 6- mental stage.

Throughout the motivational stage, the learners learn about the aim of the study by which they are motivated to engage in learning. During this stage, a material organizer (graph, chart, map, etc.) is given to them, and they learn about the learning actions to attain the learning objective. The components of the SCOPA as well as the way of their application are taught throughout the orienting stage. The engagement of the learners in problem solving activities with the assistance of a material organizer occurs in the material stage. In overt speech stage, the students distinguish themselves by a transitional stage, in which they begin using self-directed speech as a cognitive tool, instead of the material organizer. The learning action shifts from overt to covert speech during the stage of covert speech where the students have a private talk with themselves. Throughout the mental stage, the students internalize the material organizer and are capable of solving the problems at the mental level, where actions are abbreviated and achieved at a high speed.

To integrate the STI in a foreign language classroom, Negueruela (2003) revised Galperin's stepwise procedure. Negueruela (2003) introduced the CBI to the L2 classroom. In his proposed model, concepts are viewed as the minimal units of instruction, didactic models such as charts and diagrams are used as materialization tools, and learners are involved in verbalization activities. To operationalize this model, Negueruela (2003) designed a sixteen-week course to explore the effect of the CBI on intermediate learners' Spanish composition and grammar in a US university. During the instruction, didactic models such as charts for the concepts of mood, aspect and tense were presented to the learners, and they were involved in audio-recorded verbalization activities to describe the concepts to themselves. The results indicated that the instruction helped them develop a conceptual understanding of the grammatical features and apply the knowledge successfully in written and oral tasks.

Empirical studies

Following Negueruela's (2003) application of the CBI in language education, this approach was the subject of many studies in language teaching and learning, including teaching writing (Fogal, 2015; Wall, 2015), literature (Yanez-Prieto, 2008), grammar (Garcia, 2012; Infante, 2016), and pragmatics (van Compernelle, 2011, 2012; van Compernelle, Williams, Abraham, & Negueruela-Azarola, 2013; Henery, 2014; van Compernelle & Henery, 2014b; Nicholas, 2016; van Compernelle, Gomez-Laich, and Weber, 2016; Kuepper, 2018). To serve the purpose of the current research, a brief review of some studies concerning the effect of the CBI on pragmatic development is presented here.

Van Compernelle et al applied the CBI for L2 pragmatics and developed a model called CBPI. Indeed, Van Compernelle's PhD thesis laid the foundation for conducting other CBPI-related studies. Van Compernelle (2012) explored the impact of the CBPI on the development of socio-pragmatic competence in French intermediate learners studying in a US university. To examine the learners' pragmatic development, he used verbalization tasks, appropriateness judgment questionnaires, as well as oral strategic interaction scenarios. The researcher gave the learners the CBPI representing SCOPA to orient them. These cards consisted of descriptions of concepts, which learners had to verbalize to themselves, and diagrams. They also acted out the strategic scenarios with the tutor. The findings showed that the instruction improved the participants' socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge, contributing to their performance in the strategic interaction scenarios and the appropriateness judgment questionnaires. Van Compernelle also stated that such scientific concepts as indexicality, social distance, and power were internalized by the learners orienting them while performing the strategic interaction scenarios and their choices in the appropriateness judgment questionnaires.

Drawing on Vygotskian theory, van Compernelle & Henery (2014b) replicated van Compernelle's (2012) study to explore the effects of the CBPI on French second-person addressing system. The researchers concluded that the CBPI was effective in developing the learners' conceptual understanding of the target feature and helped them to apply the knowledge gained to plan and produce *tu* and *vous* more appropriately.

Using the design of van Compernelle and Henery's (2014b) study, van Compernelle, Gomez-Laich, and Weber (2016) investigated the impact of the CBPI on beginner learners' use of Spanish second-person pronoun in a US university. They used discourse completion tasks instead of the computer-mediated strategic scenarios as an evaluation instrument. After a full semester of instruction, the study concluded that the instruction enhanced the learners' conceptual socio-pragmatic knowledge enabling them to make more systematic pragma-linguistic choices.

In another study, Kuepper (2018) examined the effect of the CBPI on using German singular pronouns by beginner and intermediate German learners. Following van Compernelle's (2012) doctoral design, the researcher also used the CBPI in a one-by-one tutorial method. The findings supported the results of the previous studies, indicating that the CBPI contributed to the learners' conceptual socio-pragmatic knowledge facilitating the use of target language features by learners. The findings also showed that minor differences exist between the two proficiency levels in terms of their use of the German singular pronouns where intermediate learners applied these features more systematically. Based on the findings, the authors stated that the experimental group learners outperformed the control group learners in terms of the usage of German singular pronouns.

Nicholas (2016) explored the effect of the CBPI on learners' development of request speech act. The researcher utilized strategic interaction role-plays within the CBPI to develop the learners' interactional competence in line with conversation analysis approach. In this study, the basic concepts were turn-taking, adjacency pairs, organization of talk, and role of context. The main feature of the intervention was the researcher's mediation in the dynamic strategic interactions. Overall, the results suggested that the intervention helped the learners to develop their pragmatic competence and their ability to verbalize the choices of certain linguistic features within a given interactional context.

In brief, although the CBI, rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) SCT of mind, has increasingly been explored in recent years, little research has investigated its role in pragmatic development (van Compernelle, 2011; Williams et al., 2013; van Compernelle & Henery, 2014b); to the researcher's knowledge, no study has been conducted to examine the role of the CBPI in developing the EFL learners' compliment and compliment-response speech acts. To reduce this gap, thus, the present study aimed at addressing the following questions:

- 1) Does the CBI instruction have any effects on the EFL learners' ability to use compliment and compliment-response speech acts?

What are the learners' perceptions of CBPI for EFL pragmatic development?

3. METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

To achieve the purposes of this study, an embedded QUAN + QUAL mixed-method design was used. In embedded mixed method designs, a set of data or instruments support the originally collected data. For instance, a researcher may embed the qualitative research into a quantitative study to support the collected data from the quantitative experimental design (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the qualitative data provide a secondary supporting function for the quantitative dataset to provide a better picture for the effectiveness of the CBPI to develop the EFL learners' pragmatic competence. In the quantitative stage of the study, a quasi-experimental design was adopted with pre-test/post-test equivalent groups to achieve its objectives. In this study, the randomly selected

participants were in two existing intact classes, and the researcher just randomly determined them as the experimental and the control groups. For the qualitative dimension of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants of the experimental group to explore their perceptions of the possible advantages and disadvantages of the CBPI. In fact, the collected data from the interviews aimed to enrich the quantitative data regarding the effectiveness of the CBPI for developing the EFL learners' pragmatic competence in general and their performance of compliment and compliment-response speech acts.

Participants and Research Setting

Sixty intermediate students studying English at Iran Language Institute, Tonekabon Branch, Mazandaran, Iran, participated in the study. They were selected randomly to participate in the study using a probability sampling technique. At the first place, cluster random sampling procedures were performed to select the Iran Language Institute among other universities and institutes at Tonekabon. The original population who had the opportunity to participate in the study from the Iran Language Institute consisted of 94 learners in 3 classes, who were at intermediate level based on their placement in the institute's language courses. Due to the policy of the institute, random assignment of the participants to the experimental and control groups was impossible. However, to recheck their language proficiency and select two more homogenous intact classes out of the three available classes, a language proficiency test (Oxford Placement Test) was performed. Then, two classes in which the learners were at more homogeneous level in terms of their proficiency were selected and remained intact during the instructional phase. In other words, sixty students from two intact classes were selected to participate in the final phase of the study. All the participants were female and their ages varied from 18 to 23 years old. To be more precise, there were two groups with 30 participants. One of them was labelled as the experimental group and the other one as the control group. The former was instructed using the CBPI, whereas the latter did not receive any CBPI as the treatment. The participants in both groups were pre-tested, and after 10 weeks when the semester was over, both groups were post-tested. After the post-test administration, 10 participants in the experimental group were randomly selected and interviewed to examine their perceptions of the CBPI.

Instrumentation

Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

To be sure of the homogeneity of the two groups, a proficiency test was administered to establish the participants' homogeneity. Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to make sure the participants were homogenous in terms of their language proficiency. This enabled teachers to have a better understanding of what level their students are at. The test contained 50 multiple choice questions assessing the student's knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary, a reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions, and a writing task for assessing their ability to produce the language.

Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

Two Discourse Completion Tests (DCT), one for compliment speech act and the other for compliment response, were designed by the researcher. The DCT for compliment speech act (see Appendix A) consisted of 5 situations, in which the participants were expected to write their responses in English using the speech act of compliments. The contents and the scenarios were examined by two experts in the field for content validity and revised based on their suggestions. One of these situations is provided here as an example:

Situation: You work in a small company as secretary of the boss. Recently, you did a project very well. One day, after the meeting, the boss talked to you.

Boss: ...
 You: I feel glad that I could be of any help to you.
 The second DCT was used for collecting data regarding the compliment responses (see Appendix B). Again, learners were provided with some situations in which they were asked to write their responses to the compliments when they faced the same situation. An example is given here:

Example Situation:

Your friends have organized a party to celebrate the end of semester. You’ve dressed up for the party. As you arrive at the party, one of your friends says: “Hey, you look great! You’re really handsome/beautiful today”.

Answer: ...
 In fact, the researcher considered the DCT as a suitable method for investigating the compliment speech acts and compliment-responses, which cannot but be situated in a context as it has been adopted and confirmed by notable scholars in pragmatic studies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986).

Interview

The semi-structured Interview drew on the themes and constructs extracted from the relevant literature regarding the learners’ perceptions of educational courses. Based on these themes and constructs, some questions were written to be included in the interview. For content validity, some experts in the field inspected the content relevance and content coverage of the questions. The interview questions were used in one semi-structured interview session after the instruction. In the interview, the participants were asked to express their beliefs towards the program orally and their voices were audiotaped to be transcribed later for delving into the learners’ perceptions of the course. The interview consisted of 7 original questions like “What differences have you found between a regular English course and this course?” tapping into their perceptions of the CBPI before and after the study. To examine the content validity of the interview, two experts in the field inspected the content relevance and content coverage of the questions, and the questions were revised based on their feedbacks.

4. RESULTS

The first research question had to do with the effect of the CBPI on the EFL learners’ mastery of compliment and compliment-response. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the data of the experimental group of the study for compliment speech act.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Compliment for the EX group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	12.26	30	1.74	.31
Posttest	16.41	30	1.20	.22

According to Table 1, the mean value of the compliment speech act for the experimental group before the CBI was 12.26 (SD=1.74), while the mean for this group after the instruction was 16.41 (SD=1.20). It is obvious that the EX-performance improved greatly after the treatment. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the control group of the study.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Compliment for the CONT group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	12.30	30	2.02	.21
Posttest	13.51	30	1.93	.24

As Table 2 indicates, the mean for the control before instruction was 12.86 (SD= 2.02), while its mean value after the treatment was 13.51 (SD=1.93). With regard to its performance on the posttest, the control group also showed some improvements in its performance in compliment speech act. Table 3 illustrates the descriptive analysis of the experimental group for the scores of the compliment-response speech act.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Compliment-Response for the EX-group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	12.22	30	1.12	.21
Posttest	15.67	30	1.21	.27

Table 3 shows the result of the descriptive statistics of the compliment response of the experimental group before and after the instruction. Prior to the instruction, the experimental group had a mean value of 12.22 with the standard deviation of 1.12. However, it is indicated that its performance on the compliment speech act enhanced after the CBI (Mean= 15.67, SD= 1.21). Table 4 illustrates the descriptive analysis of the control group for the scores of the compliment-response speech act.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Compliment-Response for the CONT

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	12.28	30	1.41	.24
Posttest	13.12	30	1.10	.21

According to Table 4, it is revealed that the pretest mean value of the control group for the compliment speech act was 12.28 with the standard deviation of 1.41. With regard to its performance on the posttest, the control group showed improvement on the DCT test of the compliment-response speech act (Mean= 13.12, SD= 1.10). Thus, it can be claimed that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the posttest of the compliment and compliment-response speech acts. Yet, to investigate whether the difference between the groups is significant, the results of the independent-samples t-tests for compliment and compliment-response speech acts should be presented and discussed. Table 5 summarizes the inferential statistics for the posttest scores of compliment speech act for both groups of the study.

Table 5: Independent-samples t-test for the posttests of both groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	15.51	3.27	45.27	58	.000	2.90	.767	4.06	2.40
Equal variances not assumed			45.27	48.67	.000	2.90	.767	4.06	2.39

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the means of two groups for the compliment speech act. The Sig. value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (3.27). There was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their compliment speech act performance ($t(58) = 45.27$, $p = .000$, two-tailed). As a result, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on the posttest of the compliment speech act. The effect size of the independent-samples t-test for two groups' performance of the compliment speech act was measured by Cohen's d formula for the effect size measurement using the mean scores, standard deviations, and sample sizes of the two groups [Cohen's $d = .88$]. This shows a large index of the effect size. Table 6 summarizes the inferential analysis of the data of posttest scores of compliment-response speech act for both groups of the study.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the impact of the intervention on the learners' posttest scores on the DCT measures intended to quantify their performance in the compliment-response speech act. There was a statistically significant difference between the performances of two groups in compliment response speech act, ($t(58) = 35.78$, $p = .000$). Therefore, the CBPI significantly improved the learners' performance on the DCT measure of the compliment-response speech act. The effect size of the independent-samples t-test for two groups' performance on the compliment-response speech act was measured by Cohen's d formula for effect size measurement using the mean scores, standard deviations, and sample sizes of the two groups [Cohen's $d = .67$]. This also shows a large index of the effect size. In response to the first research question, the findings showed that the CBPI was highly effective for the improvement of the learners' performance in the compliment and compliment-response speech acts.

The second research question was answered by thematic analyses of the interview sessions after transcribing and analyzing them thoroughly. Overall, the extracted themes and ideas from the interview sessions indicated that the participants of the study had a positive attitude and perceptions of the CBPI. One of the students talked directly about the benefits of the CBPI in the classroom. Maryam said

Table 6: Independent-samples t-test for the posttests of both groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	21.12	4.12	35.78	58	.000	2.55	.856	3.56	2.15
Equal variances not assumed			35.78	48.67	.000	2.55	.856	3.55	2.15

Extract 1:

We can study and have fun, and then we will like this class. If I do not like the class, I will not learn and take advantage of the class. This new method helped me learn better in a more appropriate atmosphere.

It seems that they perceived the new approach of instruction for pragmatic items more effective and efficient. The experience of learning is made less satisfactory by teaching methods which are perceived to be inappropriate. Most students contended that the CBPI made the understanding and application of certain instructed speech acts easier. Fatemeh pointed out that

Extract 2:

I will not progress if I cannot connect the new learning experience with previously learned materials in an organized and meaningful way. For example, this new method helped me organize my ideas, and this will motivate me to learn.

Putting different types of compliment and compliment-response speech acts into various understandable concepts and contexts makes learning meaningful. The students' perceptions of poor learning, lack of control, arbitrary and irrelevant tasks in relation to the traditional methods of pragmatic instruction contrasted sharply with the perceptions of high quality learning, active student participation, feedback opportunities and meaningful tasks in relation to pragmatic knowledge (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). In this regard, Mahsa stated that

Extract 3:

The teacher should teach us ways or methods to improve our language use, and they will do it... Everybody has preferences, so the teacher should teach us all the ways to improve our language use, and then we will find out the way which we prefer and start doing it at home.

The participants believed that the CBPI afforded them with a better atmosphere and opportunity to gain insights into the ways of using the speech acts into practice in actual communicative contexts. Zahra reflected her views about the instruction this way

Extract 4:

By using these graphics... the teacher breaks up the routine of the book. Some activities must be presented in a special way to make them easy to understand, such as the same graphics to learn compliments. Students might understand some tasks in this form [graphics] more than they would through explanation.

They were given more coherent, brief, systematic, concrete, and applicable explanations of the specific speech acts through graphic aids. From a CBI perspective, better explanations of the

complex issues need to be introduced to L2 learners through graphic aids, which help learners construct a functional understanding. These material graphic representations may be presented to the learners in the form of diagrams, flow charts, drawings, or schemas. The actual form of these material graphic representations is not as critical as the principle behind materializing a complex meaning: to capture at a glance the essence of an idea, which generally requires a long linguistic elaboration. Examples of these types of graphic ideas are found in Lantolf and Yáñez-Prieto (2003), Negueruela and Lantolf (2006), Negueruela (2008), and Lantolf (2010). The participants considered these graphic visualizations as keys to better conceptualization and production of the compliment and compliment-response speech acts. Elahe mentioned that

Extract 5:

It is true that some days, the classes are not interesting because of the type of teaching method the teachers use, but the teacher should provide a variety of activities to teach better in the class. These organizers helped me to learn how to organize various ideas and concepts together. This is what made my learning more meaningful.

They also expressed their positive attitude towards its perceived impact on their long-term retention and application of such speech acts. The students in the study consistently expressed views that the new method of pragmatic instruction motivated them to work in better ways. It was quite implicit in their speech that the new method was based upon a fundamentally different relationship between the teacher and students, between the previously learned materials and the new ones and, that the new method of instruction embodied a different view of the nature of learning.

5. DISCUSSIONS

The findings suggested that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in the posttest of the compliment and compliment-response speech acts, indicating the effectiveness of the CBPI for the enhancement of the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance in the compliment and compliment-response speech acts. Major findings of the current study are in line with the findings of the previous research showing that using the CBI could actually lead to resourceful language learning in general (e.g., Negueruela, 2003, 2008; Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006; Lapkin, Swain & Knouzi, 2008; Serrano-Lopez & Poehner, 2008) and pragmatic development in particular (e.g., van Compernelle, 2011; van Compernelle et al., 2013; van Compernelle & Henery, 2014b; Nicholas, 2016; van Compernelle et al., 2016; Kuepper, 2018).

The result can be attributed to the learners' increased conceptual understanding of the compliment and compliment-response speech acts as a result of their participation in the CBPI. Perhaps the key to the success of this instructional approach for enhancing the pragmatic competence is that the students are concerned with important contents of the language during practicing communicative tasks through using devices such as concept maps or diagrams to organize the concepts in conceptual meaningful categories in a communicative manner. Concerning the importance of the CBI, Negueruela's (2003) project was very revealing in terms of the proposed methods to connect the theoretical concepts and new ways of thinking that prioritize agency as well as L2 development. As he states "development is not about the emergence of morphology, but about the emergence of agency through meanings" (Negueruela, 2003, p. 331).

The increase in learners' pragmatic competence can also be particularly attributed to the learning processes within the CBPI where the focus is not on the mere memorization of the concepts (i.e., symbolic tools) but also on the internalization of these concepts as *inner psychological tools* (Kozulin, 2018). Mindful engagement through concepts is necessary for internalizing the L2 meanings connected to communication. This is the key to transform the inner

concepts as declarative knowledge into conceptual categories, which are functional for communication and conceptualization.

The implementation of the CBI permits the teachers to move from focusing on isolated facts for memorization to organizing learning in ways to engage the students by using concepts and generalizations (Birbili, 2007). Conceptual understanding becomes more highly developed as new examples of concepts emerge (Erickson, 2008). For students to gain deep conceptual knowledge, teachers require an understanding of how to teach conceptually, provide concept-based learning experiences, and assess the learners' conceptual understanding. Implementing the CBI provides the teachers with a strategy to help the learners achieve their full potential to understand and learn the newly-introduced concepts.

Another reason for the development of the participants' pragmatic awareness may be due largely to various practical opportunities provided by the researcher to apply the acquired conceptual knowledge in practical activities (van Compernelle, 2014b). It is argued that a dialectic connection is necessary in the CBPI and the learners should be given many real-like practical activities to put the gained conceptual understanding into practice (van Compernelle, 2014b).

The findings also indicated that the participants in the experimental group expressed their positive attitude towards the efficacy of the CBPI. They also stated that the instructional method had some advantages for learning new pragmatic items, including using visual aids and graphic contents, contextualization of learning items, making learning more meaningful, etc. The CBI is a method of instruction with opportunities for the students to make connections and understand the relationships among the concepts. The students' experiences and meaning making via discovery learning provide the basis for the new knowledge (Hardin & Richardson, 2012). The incorporation of this method in the classroom requires the understanding of the method and the effective implementation of the instructional method. It also needs a clear understanding of the learners' perceptions of the specific instructional methods. As a result, the study revealed that most learners held a positive attitude towards the instruction. Information about the learners' perceptions and experiences are needed and will be valued in the L2 teaching and learning. Increasing knowledge in the field of language education concerning the learners' attitudes towards the instructional approach, including the CBI, may benefit the community of practice.

Furthermore, in this regard, the participants expressed that they think the new approach could have a great impact upon their ability to communicate. It is quite in line with the underlying principle of this approach to the L2 classrooms (Galperin, 1992) proposing that meaning constructed through conceptual categories is central in the process of L2 development (Negueruela, 2003). This proposal is also based on the research principles inspired by Vygotsky's (1986) SCT of mind. Unaware of such scientific issues and principles, most of them said that this new method of instruction assisted their conceptualizations and meaning making process via some well-designed classroom activities using visual aids. Promoting conscious conceptual mediation is the central tenet of the CBI. Properly organized learning activity promotes conceptual development. As a whole, it was proven that the participants showed a strong personal preference for this new methodology of pragmatic teaching. To be more exact, the CBPI adheres to the Vygotskian approach (1978) that allows students to go from the abstract to the concrete conceptualization and internalization.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings suggested that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in the posttest of the compliment and compliment-response speech acts, indicating the effectiveness of the CBI for the enhancement of the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance in the compliment and compliment-response speech acts. Also, the findings

indicated that the participants in the experimental group expressed their positive attitude towards the efficacy of the CBI. This study revealed that the participants believed that the CBI afforded them with a better atmosphere and opportunity to gain insights into the ways of using the speech acts into practice in actual communicative contexts. They were given more coherent, brief, systematic, concrete, and applicable explanations of the specific speech acts through graphic aids. From a CBPI perspective, better explanations of complex issues need to be introduced to L2 learners through graphic aids, which help learners in constructing a functional understanding.

The findings of the study have some implications for teaching communicative competence in general and pragmatic competence in particular. More attention should be paid to this kind of instruction for developing communicative competence. This requires teachers to have practical knowledge and cognitions about the principles of the CBI. Therefore, teacher education centers and courses are responsible to provide the teachers with the necessary knowledge about the CBI because making sense of new strategies from professional development to classroom practice is a complex task with emerging dilemmas during implementation (Han, 2012). To communicate effectively in the target language, the learners of English language need to develop pragmatic competence, which can be accomplished through pragmatic instruction in the classroom, particularly in the spoken English class. In fact, teachers who are to explore and enhance the materials form the textbook, material developers and curriculum designers should also include pragmatic awareness in the books and curricula. Therefore, the CBPI can have some great bearings on the learners' pragmatic knowledge and communicative ability. If the teachers are expected to use the CBPI in language education effectively, they should be supported by policy makers, teacher education centres, and material developers. New change will be practiced when there is a sense of cooperation among all those who are involved in educational processes. High quality professional development has a focus on collective problem solving and collaborative learning sustained by ongoing support (Fickel, 2002).

Clearly, there is a need to continue the research on teaching and learning strategies for pragmatic instruction. It would be beneficial to repeat or conduct a similar study with a larger population. Due to the limited sample size, the power of analysis was weaker than the researcher intended. In addition, a longer intervention is recommended to give the students more time to interact with the newly taught pragmatic items. This study focused only on compliment and compliment-response speech acts. Therefore, further research focusing on other speech acts is required to have a better picture and understanding of the efficacy of the CBPI. In addition, the study focused on the perceptions of the EFL learners' about understanding and using the CBPI. The voices of teachers, instructional leaders, other administrators, and professional development facilitators were not included, however. Future research could include data collection from other educators involved in the training and implementation of the CBI to gather data pertaining to professional development design, facilitation, application, and supports and barriers for using the CBI.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Compliment speech act DCT

We sincerely appreciate your participation and effort .

Participant's demographic data

1. Name:
2. Sex: male female
3. Age:

Direction: please complete the following conversation according to the situation and corresponding pair.

Situation 1: On the bus, you sit opposite to a woman who has a lovely baby in her arm.

You:.....

The woman: thank you. Some of my friends say it more resembles my husband.

Situation 2: You are a new basketball player. Your coach is showing you how to shoot at the basket. He makes a skillful and standard shoot.

You:.....

Coach: ok. Now you have a try.

Situation 3: You met your former classmate on the street whom you haven't seen for years. He noticed your new hairstyle.

He:

You: really?

Situation 4: You were the leading actor in a drama. Unfortunately before the performance day to the public, you felt sick. Another actor took your place and performed successfully. Today, you meet him and say

You:.....

He: if you performed it, it would have been better.

Situation 5: You work in a small company as secretary of the boss. Recently, you did a project very well. One day, after the meeting, the boss talked with you.

Boss:.....

You: I feel glad that I could be of any help to you.

Appendix B: Compliment response speech act DCT

Five situations in which you receive a compliment are described below. Imagine that you are in these situations and write down what you are most likely to answer in each situation.

Situation 1:

Your friends have organized a party to celebrate the end of semester. You've dressed up for the party. As you arrive at the party, one of your friends says: "Hey, you look great! You're really handsome/beautiful today".

Answer:

Situation 2:

After having finished the lunch you had prepared, one of your family members tells you, “You’re such a great cook”.

Answer:

Situation 3:

You have recently purchased a new car. Your colleague’s son sees it and tells you, “what an awesome car”.

Answer:

Situation 4:

After looking at your new cell phone, your colleague tells you, “That’s a beautiful one”.

Answer:

Situation 5:

On seeing your new watch, your mother tells you, “That’s a nice watch!”

Answer:

Appendix C: Interview questions

- 1) How have the activities done during the semester helped you improve your fluency?
- 2) How is your learning in this class going to be useful to you in the future?
- 3) How have the classroom activities raised your self-confidence when speaking?
- 4) How have the materials used in the class helped you to develop English?
- 5) What differences have you found between a regular English course and this course?
- 6) How have the differences affected your learning process?
- 7) Which methodology do you prefer? Why?