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Rouhollah Askari Bigdeli

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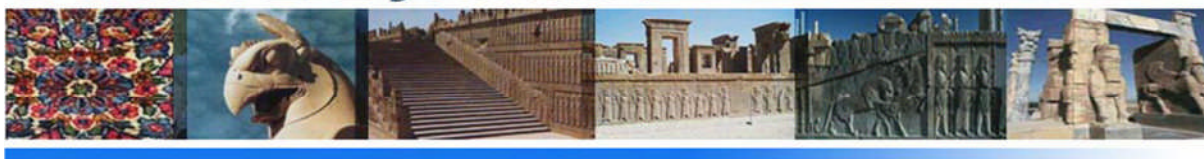


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September 2016 Foreword

By Paul Robertson and Rouhollah Askari Bigdeli

The current issue of the Iranian EFL Journal is composed of five papers. The first paper, by Zahra Shahsavari and Masoumeh Jamalzadeh, explored novice and expert Iranian EFL teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance. Drawing on a model developed by Borg (2003) on teacher cognition, the authors tried to find any differences between novice and expert teachers' contextual belief and performance. The data were collected through a questionnaire and class observation. The results of the study showed that novice teachers' classroom performance was significantly better than expert ones'. Except in using teacher's class equipment, novice teachers performed significantly better than expert ones in other aspects of classroom performance; they tended to minimize students' paperwork and use technology in their classes. The implications of the results along with the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are discussed by the authors. In the second study, Aliakbar Khomeijani Farahani, Masoumeh Ahmadi Shirazi, and Seyyed Ahmad Mousavi used two rhetorically-different listening tasks to find out any possible relationships across working memory capacity (WMC) in L1 and L2, and listening performance. The result showed that (a) both L1 and L2 WMC were related to the participants' listening performance, but that the amount of correlation and predictive power of L2 WMC was noticeably larger than that of L1, (b) L2 WMC yielded different significant correlation with the two rhetorical listening tests (weak), and c) the findings in the multiple regression analysis indicated that L1 WMC and L2 WMC accounted for a significant 3.3 % and 15.3 % of unique variance in argumentative and expository listening tests, respectively. In the third study, Mohammad Javadi and Rouhollah Zarei explored Iranian senior EFL B.A. and M.A. students' perceptions of their non-native English speaking (NNES) teachers' dominant teaching styles and oral language proficiency. They involved 103 students in the study and used two questionnaires to collect the data. The results showed the positive perceptions of the students towards their NNESTs' teaching styles. Also, the students were satisfied with their

NNESTs' level of oral language proficiency except for their pronunciation. The fourth study, by Samad Mirza Suzani and Maryam Ghanbarian, addressed any probable relationship between Iranian ELT M.A. students' mindsets on the application of critical pedagogy and their academic achievement. Also, the study attempted to find any difference between Iranian male and female ELT students in critical pedagogical mindsets. Sixty ELT M.A. students were involved in study. The results revealed that all the students were in favor of utilizing critical pedagogy and that there was a positive correlation between students' critical pedagogy mindsets and their academic achievement. However, no significant difference was found between male and female ELT learners with regard to their critical pedagogical mindsets. The last study of the issue, carried out by Reza Abbasian and Akbar Afghari, investigated the amount of teacher talk versus student talk, IRF structure of conversation and the type of teachers' questions in the English text book used for the third grade at junior high school in Iran. 160 students and 6 English teachers took part in the study. The result showed that the frequency of teacher talk and IRF structure were more than student talk, and other types of structure while the amount of display and referential questions were almost the same.



Novice and Expert Teachers' Contextual Beliefs and Their Classroom Performance

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Abstract

This study tries to investigate novice and expert Iranian EFL teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance. The framework of the study is grounded on the basis of Borg's (2003) model. Fifteen novice and 15 expert teachers took part in this study. The teachers' beliefs instrument and a class observation form were applied to compare novice and expert teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance, respectively. Generally, no significant difference was found between novice and expert teachers' contextual belief. However, overall performance of two groups showed that novice teachers' classroom performance was

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significantly better than expert ones. Except in using teacher's class equipment, novice teachers performed significantly better than expert ones in other aspects of classroom performance; they tended to minimize students' paperwork and use technology in their classes. This study provides remarkable insight into the complexities of teaching. It enables teachers to better understand their own beliefs. It has some implications not only for teachers but also for educators and managers who aim at improving teachers' teaching and learning programs.

Keywords: Classroom performance, Contextual beliefs, Expert teacher, Novice teacher, Teachers' beliefs

1. Introduction

Recently, researchers have focused on teachers' beliefs and their classroom performance (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Hashim, Alam, & Yousef, 2014). According to Borko and Putnam (1996), teachers can improve their classroom performance when they are aware of their own beliefs. Phipps and Borg (2007) argued that teachers' beliefs may have long lasting effects on their teaching. Other researchers claimed that understanding teachers' beliefs and knowledge can assist teachers in implementing their curriculum effectively (e.g., Waters & Vilches, 2001; Yasemin, 2013). In fact, understanding teachers' beliefs can help teachers not only improve their own teaching skills but also understand their learners' psychological requirements and beliefs. Nowadays, teachers do not spoon feed their students; in contrast, they try to train students to generate their own learning (Alizadeh & Sadeghi, 2015).

Erdogan (2015) defined teachers' beliefs as "a set of personal conceptual constructs that signify to its holder a reality" (p. 53). He argued that cognition and beliefs have special effects on teaching. According to Dippold (2009), teachers' beliefs can be divided into two categories: deliberate and spontaneous. Deliberate beliefs show goal formation and guide behaviors which are constructed as an effortful manner in a specific situation while spontaneous beliefs are activated by routine. Other researchers referred to teacher perception, teacher thinking, and pedagogical beliefs as accepted terms for teachers' beliefs. For example, Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver and Thwaite (2001) classified teachers' beliefs into four main groups. The first one is beliefs that are formed based on each individual's past experience. The second one is beliefs about teaching experience and interaction with co-workers and students. The third one is beliefs about professional development. The last one is beliefs based on teacher perceptions about

language; these beliefs are connected to teachers' culture, character, education, and society. In this study, we defined teachers' beliefs based on Breen et al.'s (2001) second classification in which beliefs represent teachers' teaching experiences and their interaction in a learning environment.

1.1. Teachers' Beliefs and Their Performance

Recently, there has been an increasing amount of literature on teachers' beliefs and their performance. Phipps and Borg (2009) examined various effects of teachers' beliefs on their performance. They claimed that teachers' beliefs have main effects on teachers' instructional decisions. In another study, Wilkins (2008) investigated the relationship between different variables such as teachers' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and teachers' classroom performance. Among these variables, teachers' beliefs seemed to have a greater influence on teachers' performance. He also found that teachers' background knowledge had priority over teachers' content knowledge and attitudes. Wilkins concluded that teachers' belief is an important factor in teaching; however, it is neither consistent nor fixed in different conditions.

Other researchers have focused on the influence of society, psychology, and environment on teachers' classroom performance. They referred to institute expectations, social norms, curriculum, workload, and the availability of resources as the main subcategories that can influence teachers' classroom performance (e.g., Chacón, 2005).

1.2. Contextual Belief

Among different teachers' beliefs, contextual belief plays a significant role in teachers' classroom performance. Since contextual belief is context dependent and to some degree is activated by situation requirements, it is very important to know if it is situated in a specific situation or generalized into any context (Fives & Buehl, 2012).

Context is defined as a condition related to learning. According to Figueiredo and Afonso (2005), teaching and learning strategies can be considered as a classroom context. Chacón (2005) believed that context is very important in a learning environment because in teaching procedure, what teachers do is the consequence of their interaction between what they think and what the context is. According to Blandin (2006), context influences teachers' classroom performance. Vassallo's (2002) study showed contextual factors such as salaries, holidays, and working hours may have a great effect on teachers' performance. As a consequent, to design and implement an appropriate learning environment, we need to consider the organization of each context.

1.3. Novice and Expert Teachers' Beliefs and Performance

Although understanding teacher's contextual beliefs seems essential, we are not certain if teachers' contextual beliefs may affect their classroom performance based on their teaching experience. Comparing novice with expert teachers, Tsui (2003) found that novice teachers tend to use more new strategies in their teaching; they pay more attention to students' behavior and remember detailed information about their students. They consistently try to modify their teaching strategies. They also spend a lot of time on lesson planning; however, their planning is not as effective as expert ones. In a word, novice teachers tend to act according to lesson plan and guidelines whereas expert ones who tend to be more flexible in their planning. Dunkin (2002) argued that novice teachers have more interaction with their colleagues while expert ones rely more heavily on their main principles and do not follow the procedure accurately. This finding supports other researchers' ideas who believed that expert teachers are more flexible to change their planning as they are completely aware of the contextual beliefs affecting their classroom performance. To this end, expert teachers' planning is very effective and not limited to syllabus and classroom rules. They consider contextual cues and make changes in their plan if find it necessary (Carter, Cushing, Sabers, Stein, & Berliner, 1988; Tsui, 2003; Wolff, Bogert, Jarodzka, & Boshuizen, 2014). Besides, they pay more attention to students' requirement and use more comprehensive explanation during their teaching. They can manage the class well and make a balance between student-centeredness and content-centeredness because of having a lot of teaching experience under various circumstances. Beyond that, expert teachers tend to predict the situation that their students may encounter. They are not only better at guiding students' learning but also more concerned about students' class activity over a period of time (Dunkin, 2002; Tsui, 2003).

Some studies examined novice and expert teachers' beliefs and their classroom performance. For example, Aliakbari and Heidarzadi (2015) selected 227 Iranian English teachers (110 female and 117 male) from various schools to evaluate the relationship between novice and expert EFL teachers' beliefs and their actual performance of classroom management. They classified teachers into 6 groups based on their teaching experience. A comparison of the groups revealed a significant relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom management among novice teachers with less than 5 year teaching experience and those who had 5–10 years. No significant

relationship was found between teachers' beliefs and their classroom management among teachers with 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, and 26–30 year teaching experience.

In the same line, Gooya (2007) conducted a study to compare novice and expert teachers' beliefs. He found that experienced teachers were more resistance to changes than novice ones. In another study, Meyer (2004) compared novice and expert teachers' conceptions of students' prior knowledge. In contrast to expert teachers, novice teachers do not have sufficient understanding of students' prior knowledge.

Although some studies examined novice and expert teachers' performance (e.g., Zarei & Afshari, 2012), most previous studies mainly focused on what expert teachers can do that novice teachers cannot. To the best of our knowledge, hardly any research conducted in English language teaching (ELT) context in Iran to compare novice and expert teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance. To fill the gap, this study tries to compare novice and expert Iranian EFL teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: Is there a significant difference between novice and expert Iranian EFL teachers' contextual beliefs?

RQ2: Is there a significant difference between novice and expert Iranian EFL teachers' classroom performance?

RQ3: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance?

1.4. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The framework of the study is grounded on the basis of Borg's (2003) model which shows a schematic conceptualization of teaching. This framework focuses on teacher cognition as a core of teacher beliefs and practice in classroom. Based on this model, teacher cognition cannot take place unless we integrate four factors: schooling, professional coursework, contextual factors, and classroom performance. Borg defined schooling as classroom experience that shapes teachers' perception of training; professional coursework is an effective factor that can affect teachers' cognition; classroom practice shows a relationship between students' classroom performance and their teachers' cognition; contextual factors refers to teaching elements that may change teachers' cognition.

Following Borg's (2003) model, in this study, we defined teacher cognition as teacher's beliefs about the context of teaching and its properties. We focused on the role of contextual beliefs between novice and expert teacher performance and tried to figure out if contextual factors such as classroom size and environment, instructional time, the amount of students' paperwork, using technology in classrooms, instructional materials, teaching environment, and using technology in education can affect novice and expert teacher classroom performance (see Figure 1).

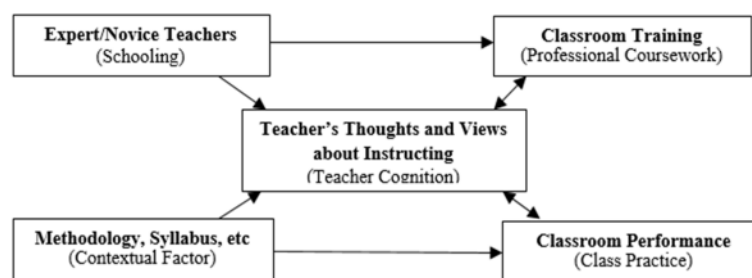


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study adopted from Borg (2003)

2. Method

2.1. Research Design and Participants

In this study, teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance were considered as independent and dependent variables, respectively. We applied convenience sampling because of the easy accessibility to the participants.

The participants of the study were 30 Iranian EFL teachers who taught in adult English department of Iran Language Institute (ILI) as the largest non-profit language institute in Iran with nearly 200 branches and 2000 teachers. ILI was established in 1979 with the aim of developing foreign language learning. It has provided courses in various languages such as Persian, English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Arabic in four quarters a year.

To make an accurate comparison between ILI novice and expert teachers, we tried to select the equal number of teachers in each group. To do so, we randomly selected 15 novice teachers aged between 23 and 30 ($M = 25$; $SD = 2.68$) and 15 expert teachers aged between 32 and 48 ($M = 37.75$; $SD = 2.42$). Among novice teachers, 33 % were male and 67% were female, while 47% and 53% of the expert teachers were male and female, respectively. All expert teachers had more

than 10 year teaching experience while novice teachers had less than 3 year teaching experience. The idea of distinguishing expert and novice teachers is supported by previous researchers who defined the same range of teaching experience for expert and novice teachers (e.g., Zarei, & Afshari, 2012). All teachers participated voluntarily in this study. In terms of educational and professional background, 43% of the teachers had a master's degree and 57% had a bachelor's degree in ELT, English translation or literature.

2.2. Instruments

In this study, the teachers' belief instrument and ILI class observation form were applied to compare teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance, respectively. The full description of each instrument is as follows:

Due to lack of the questionnaire to fit well with the purpose of this research, we developed the teachers' beliefs instrument by following the guidelines adopted from previous research (e.g., Burton & Mazerolle, 2011; Shahsavari & Tan, 2012). Following the questionnaire guidelines, we defined the construct of the questionnaire by reviewing the relevant literature on teachers' beliefs (e.g., Hung, 2011; Suwannasom, 2010). After constructing the item pool including 50 items, we chose likert scale as the format of the questionnaire because of its simplicity. Then, three reviewers who were specialists in developing questionnaires examined the items for confusing and ambiguous words or statements. After two rounds of the review, the reviewers agreed on the questionnaire items and piloted the questionnaire to assess four criteria namely, the validity of the questionnaire, the clarity of the instructions, the questionnaire administration, and the impact of the questionnaire on teachers.

We chose 30 ILI teachers to pilot the questionnaire. They aged between 23 and 50 with 2-7 year teaching experience. Their participation was voluntary and none of them took part in the main research. Among these teachers, 51% had a master's degree and 49% had a bachelor's degree in English language teaching or English translation. Before completing the questionnaire, the purpose of teachers' participation was explained. To increase the reliability of the questionnaire, one of the researchers conducted an interview with nine teachers after they filled out the questionnaire. The researcher asked them about the quality of the items and tried to modify the questionnaire after getting their feedback. To establish better reliability, three items were deleted from the questionnaire. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.77 which showed the instrument was reliable.

Having piloted the questionnaire, we developed the questionnaire including 33 items in 3 subscales: teachers' contextual beliefs (8 items), language beliefs (12 items), and learning beliefs (13 items). Items were scored on a 4-point Likert response scale: 0 (no idea), 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree) (see Appendix). In this study, we merely focused on teachers' contextual beliefs.

The second instrument was ILI class observation form. It is a predetermined observation form designed by ILI to evaluate teacher's classroom performance. It focuses on nine dimensions: teacher's class equipment (e.g., books, a video player, CDs), teacher's lesson plan (e.g., following syllabus, explaining the lesson, maintaining order), teacher's accuracy and fluency (e.g., accuracy of speech and structure, accuracy of pronunciation and intonation), teacher's adaptation to the student's level (e.g., using appropriate vocabularies and structures), teacher's personal qualities (e.g., punctuality, self-confidence, creativity), student-teacher relationship (e.g., mutual respect, sympathy and kindness), teacher's class management (e.g., using class equipment, pace and use of time), student behavior (e.g., involvement, discipline, interest and attention), and methodology steps (e.g., capability to impart knowledge, using appropriate techniques, preparation). Due to copyright reasons the observation form is not appended here.

2.3. Data Collection

The data was collected in winter 2015. Having given ILI teachers consent forms, we asked them to fill out the instruments at home and returned them to ILI. At the end of the term, we also collected the observation forms of teachers who were observed by ILI observers. Teachers were assured that the data would be kept confidential.

In this study, the researchers themselves were not allowed to observe teachers' classroom performance. The main reason was that observation is a part of educational system employed in ILI. In each academic term, at least one of the teacher's classes should be observed by his/her colleague who is professional in teaching English and appointed by ILI. The observer should observe the actual classroom performance during one complete session which takes an hour and forty five minutes. In order to not disrupt a teacher and students' involvement or interaction in class, the observer should sit at the back of the classroom to observe the class and fill out the class observation form simultaneously. Hence, fly-on-the-wall observation allows the observer to avoid influencing the natural occurring events in the classroom and minimize the interaction with a teacher and students.

3. Results

In this study, we used independent sample t-test to find out if there was a significant difference between novice and expert teachers' contextual beliefs. First, we compared total means of teachers' contextual beliefs of the two groups. Then, we compared novice and expert teachers' contextual beliefs in detail. As shown in Table 1, comparing overall teachers' contextual beliefs, we found that there was not a significant difference between novice (M=25.8, SD=2.24) and expert (M=25.2, SD=2.86) teachers' contextual beliefs. A close look at teachers' contextual belief shows no significant difference among various dimensions of teachers' contextual beliefs. Both groups had the same contextual belief about providing sufficient training to apply instructional technology and also having adequate time in class to work productively. However, they had different contextual beliefs about teachers' authority to choose classroom size, spending non-instructional time, students' paperwork such as writing assignment, having access to instructional materials, teaching environment, and using technology in education.

Table 1
A Comparison between Novice and Expert Teachers' Contextual Beliefs

Teachers' Contextual Beliefs		N	Mean	SD	t	Sig-t
Total					6.40	0.53
	novice teacher	15	25.8	2.24		
	expert teacher	15	25.2	2.86		
choosing class size					0.30	0.77
	novice teacher	15	2.67	1.18		
	expert teacher	15	2.53	1.25		
none- instructional time					0.80	0.43
	novice teacher	15	2.07	0.88		
	expert teacher	15	1.80	0.94		
students' paperwork					0.41	0.68
	novice teacher	15	3.00	0.53		
	expert teacher	15	2.87	1.13		
teachers' training					0.00	1.00
	novice teacher	15	3.67	0.49		
	expert teacher	15	3.67	0.49		
instructional materials					0.67	0.51
	novice teacher	15	3.73	0.46		
	expert teacher	15	3.53	1.06		
teaching environment					1.29	0.21
	novice teacher	15	3.67	0.49		
	expert teacher	15	3.87	0.35		
class space					0.00	1.00
	novice teacher	15	3.53	0.52		
	expert teacher	15	3.53	0.64		

using technology			0.22	0.82
novice teacher	15	3.47	0.52	
expert teacher	15	3.40	1.06	

Moreover, we tried to investigate if there was a significant difference between novice and expert Iranian EFL teachers' classroom performance. To do so, we analyzed each teacher's performance in nine dimensions (i.e., teacher's class equipment, teacher's lesson plan, teacher's accuracy and fluency, teacher's adaptation to student's level, teacher's personal qualities, student-teacher relationship, teacher's class management, and methodology steps applied by teachers). The score for each dimension was 0-3. Hence, the total score of teacher's classroom performance was 0-27. "No performance", "poor performance", "satisfactory performance", and "excellent performance" were given to teachers whose total classroom performance scores were 0, 1-13, 13-21, and 21-27, respectively.

Descriptive statistics shows that only three teachers had poor performance, nine teachers had satisfactory performance, and 18 teachers had excellent performance. As the results showed a considerable difference was found between novice and expert teachers' performance. All novice teachers had excellent classroom performance while most expert teachers performed satisfactory in their classes (see Table 2).

Table 2
Descriptive Analyses of Novice and Expert Teachers' Performance

Observation Dimension										
teacher #	class equipment	lesson plan	accuracy & fluency	students' adaptation	teachers' qualities	s/t relationship	management	student behavior	methodology	Total score (27)
1e	3 (100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	20**
2e	3 (100%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	12*
3e	3 (100%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	13*
4e	3 (100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	19**
5e	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	19**
6e	3 (100%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	3(100%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	18**
7e	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	22***
8e	3 (100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	1(33%)1	2(67%)	1(33%)	3(100%)	18**
9e	3 (100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	20**
10e	3 (100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	22***
11e	3 (100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	16**
12e	3 (100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	20**
13e	3 (100%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	2(67%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	13*
14e	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	25***
15e	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	1(33%)1	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	21**
1n	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	24***
2n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	25***
3n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	25***

4n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	24***
5n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	25***
6n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	24***
7n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	25***
8n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	25***
9n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	27***
10n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	24***
11n	2(67%)	3 (100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	26***
12n	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	26***
13n	2(67%)	3 (100%)	2(67%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	25***
14n	2(67%)	3 (100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	26***
15n	2(67%)	3 (100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	3(100%)	26***

Note: e = expert; n = novice; s/t = students/teacher; * = poor performance; ** = satisfactory performance; *** = excellent performance

Comparing overall performance of two groups shows a significant difference between novice (M=25.13, SD=0.92) and expert (M=18.53, SD=3.68) teachers' classroom performance. Having a close look at teachers' classroom performance, we found that except in using teacher's class equipment, novice teachers performed significantly better than expert ones in other aspects of classroom performance such as teacher's lesson plan, teacher's accuracy and fluency, teacher's adaptation to student's level, teacher's personal qualities such as preparedness, positive attitude, fairness, sense of humor and creativity, student-teacher relationship, and teacher's class management (see Table 3).

Table 3.
Novice and Expert Teachers' Classroom Performance

Teacher Performance	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig-t
total class performance				6.73	0.00
novice teacher	15	25.13	0.92		
expert teacher	15	18.53	3.68		
class equipment				2.26	0.04
novice teacher	15	2.73	0.45		
expert teacher	15	3.00	0.00		
lesson plan				5.17	0.00
novice teacher	15	2.93	0.26		
expert teacher	15	1.93	0.70		
accuracy & fluency				2.30	0.03
novice teacher	15	2.53	0.52		
expert teacher	15	2.07	0.59		
student's adaptation				5.25	0.00

	novice teacher	15	2.93	0.26		
	expert teacher	15	1.87	0.74		
teachers' qualities					5.87	0.00
	novice teacher	15	3.00	0.00		
	expert teacher	15	1.93	0.70		
student/teacher relationship					5.17	0.00
	novice teacher	15	2.67	0.49		
	expert teacher	15	1.60	3.33		
teacher class management					4.42	0.00
	novice teacher	15	2.73	0.46		
	expert teacher	15	1.8	0.68		
student behavior					5.81	0.00
	novice teacher	15	2.73	0.46		
	expert teacher	15	1.87	0.35		
methodology					1.58	0.13
	novice teacher	15	2.86	0.35		
	expert teacher	15	2.47	0.92		

Note. level of significant 0.05

Finally, Pearson correlation was applied to investigate if there was a significant relationship between teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance. A non-significant correlation of .07 ($p = 0.72$) was found between teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance.

4. Discussion

This study compared novice and expert teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance. No significant difference was found between novice and expert teachers' contextual belief. Both groups had the same contextual belief about providing sufficient training to apply instructional technology and also having adequate time in class to work productively. However, teachers had different beliefs in other aspects. For example, novice teachers were more

interested in choosing their classroom size, having non-instructional time, minimizing students' paperwork, having access to instructional materials, and using technology in their classes while experts were more interested in keeping the class in good condition. This finding may support Borg's (2003) framework that contextual factors can affect teachers' practice.

Comparing overall performance of two groups, we found that novice teachers' classroom performance was significantly better than expert ones. Moreover, having a close look at teachers' classroom performance indicated that all novice teachers had excellent classroom performance while most expert ones had satisfactory performance. An in depth look at teachers' classroom performance indicated that novice teachers adhered closely to their lesson plan, accuracy and fluency, adaptation to student's level, personal qualities, class management, student-teacher relationship, and students' behavior while expert teachers only put in better performance in using class equipment. The result supports this idea that novice teachers tend to act according to lesson plan and guidelines provided by each institute whereas expert teachers tend to be more flexible in their planning (Dunkin, 2002). Perhaps novice teachers are required to do so due to lack of teaching experience and professional knowledge. This result seems to be inconsistent with other research that found expert teachers more efficient not only in their planning but also in doing various class activities (Tsui, 2003).

Another important finding is that novice teachers were more accurate and fluent in speaking English. The probable reason is that as a younger generation, novice teachers have been regularly exposed to English by using technological tools, computer assisted programs, CD players, etc. (Shahsavari & Tan, 2011) whereas expert teachers who do not feel much more comfortable with using technology (Nomass, 2013).

Another issue emerges from the findings is that novice teachers paid more attention to their classroom management. This finding does not support other studies that expert teachers are better than novice ones in their classroom management because of the quality and quantity of knowledge they have gained through their teaching experience (Clark & Peterson, 1986). In this study, novice teachers paid more detail attention to students' capability and needs; it seems as if they were highly adapted to their working context. In large measure, this study lends support to Wolff et al.'s (2014) ideas that since novice teachers had just started teaching, they were more sensible to students' learning than expert ones.

Furthermore, a considerable difference was identified between the relationship that expert and novice teachers made with their students. Contrary to the expert teachers, the novice teachers made stronger relationship with their students. This finding can be explained by Clark and Peterson's (1986) ideas that as opposed to experienced teachers, novice teachers tend to have more interactions with their colleagues and students. This finding does not support the previous research that expert teachers' teaching is heavily depend on their interaction with their students and "is highly responsive to the counter performance of the students in the class and the events arising amid the interactions" (Wolff et al., p.3).

Another finding is that although novice teachers performed significantly better than expert ones, no significant difference was found between novice and expert teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance. This finding enhances our understating that teachers' contextual belief may not guarantee their classroom performance. In spite of the fact that teachers' contextual beliefs were the same in both groups, novice teachers performed significantly better than expert ones. The result is inconsistence with previous research in that teacher classroom performance is highly context related (e.g. Bernat & Loyd, 2007).

Last but not least, no significant relationship was found between teachers' contextual beliefs and their performance. The result differs from other studies. For example, Vassallo (2002) and Blandin's (2006) study showed that contextual factors have a great effect on teachers' performance. Other researchers investigated the relationship between teacher beliefs, teacher characteristics, and school contextual factors. They found that teacher beliefs, characteristics, and their teaching contextual variables may lead to differences in teacher instructional practices and classroom atomsphere (Rubie-Davies, Flint, & McDonald, 2011).

5. Conclusion

This study tried to investigate novice and expert Iranian EFL teachers' contextual beliefs and their classroom performance. Although novice teachers performed better than expert ones, no significant difference was found between their contextual beliefs. There are several implications for the results. First, this study provides remarkable insight into the complexities of teaching in that novice and expert teachers' classroom performance can be vary in educational settings. Second, it has some implications for teachers or educators who are eager to develop teaching courses and teaching training programs for novice and expert teachers. Third, it is useful for the

managers of institutes who aim at improving their teaching and learning programs. They need to identify how and in which ways novice and expert teachers are different in their classroom performance. Fourth, the results can be incorporated into teaching training programs so that novice and expert teachers can share their ideas and beliefs to enhance students' learning. To this end, care should be taken in preparation programs to enhance novice and expert teachers' interaction. This would enable teachers to better understand their own beliefs and apply more useful strategies in their classrooms.

Like other studies, this study has some limitations. This research was conducted in one institute; the results would be different if we compared teachers' contextual beliefs and classroom performance in different educational settings. In this study, only one session of teachers' classes was observed. Making short observation may not seem logical to understand teachers' performance accurately. Although novice teachers focused on their lesson plan more than expert ones, it is not clear whether they could engage in long-term lesson planning. Consequently, using longitude observation is recommended to gain detailed information about teachers' performance; we also recommend a cross-cultural study to compare teachers' classroom performance and their contextual beliefs in different cultures and educational settings. Next, in this research, we merely relied on research with 30 participants. Designing a research with a larger sample size is suggested. Last but not least, like experts in other fields, expert teachers have a great deal of knowledge in teaching. Although novice teachers performed better than expert ones, there is no guarantee that students could have learnt more in novice teachers' classes. In a word, this study did not address if teachers' contextual belief and their classroom performance may affect students' academic achievement. Further research is required to assess students' achievement in novice or expert teachers' classes.

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Appendix
Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire

Part A: contextual factors affecting teachers' beliefs						
#	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	N
1	The teacher should have authority to choose the class size.					
2	The teacher should have none- instructional time* in his institute. *Non-instructional time includes any time during the day without the responsibility for student contact, including collaboration planning, meetings/ conferences with students and families, etc.					
3	Efforts have to be made to minimize the amount of paperwork teachers are required to do.					
4	Teachers should have sufficient training to fully use technology in their classroom.					
5	Teachers should have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials.					
6	The institute environment should be well maintained.					
7	Teachers should have adequate time in class to work productively.					
8	The physical environment of classroom should support teaching and learning by placing technology and equipment in class.					
PART B: Teachers' Belief about ESL Instruction						
9	Grammatical structures of language learning should be controlled by the language learner.					
10	Language can be thought of as a set of grammatical structures which are learned consciously.					
11	Language can be thought of as meaningful communication.					
12	If language learners understand some of the basic grammatical rules of the language, they can usually use lots of new sentences on their own.					
13	Usually it is more important for language learners to focus on what they are trying to say and not how to say it.					
14	If language learners practice the language patterns of native speakers, they can write or speak up new sentences based on those language patterns which they have already practiced.					
15	It is important to provide clear, frequent, precise presentations of grammatical structures during English language instruction.					
16	Language can be described as a set of behaviors which are mastered through lots of drill.					
17	Language can be described as a set of behaviors which are mastered through practice with the language patterns of the native speakers.					

18	When language learners make oral errors, it is best to ignore them, as long as you can understand what they are trying to say.					
19	It is not necessary to actually teach language learners how to speak English; they usually begin speaking English on their own.					
20	Language learners usually need to master some of the basic listening and speaking skills before they can begin to read and write.					
PART C: Teachers' Beliefs about language learning						
21	It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.					
22	People from my country are good at learning how to speak foreign languages.					
23	People from my country are good at learning how to write foreign languages.					
24	It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.					
25	People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning a foreign language.					
26	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.					
27	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.					
28	If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.					
29	Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.					
30	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.					
31	It is easier to read and write English than to speak it.					
32	Young learners learn new language vocabularies better than the adult learners.					
33	Young learners learn new language grammar structure better than the adult learners.					

Note: * SD: Strongly disagree, D: Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly agree, N: No idea.



Working Memory Capacity in L1 and L2 and Iranian Advanced Learners' Performance on Rhetorically-different Listening Tasks

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship across working memory capacity (WMC) in L1 and L2, and the performance of some Iranian EFL advanced language learners (N=60) on two different rhetorical listening tests. The result showed that (a) both L1 and L2 WMC were related to the participants' listening tests, but that the amount of correlation and predictive power of L2 WMC was noticeably larger than that of L1, (b) L2 WMC yielded different significant correlation with the two rhetorical listening tests (weak), and c) the findings in the multiple regression analysis also indicated that L1 WMC accounted for a significant 3.3 % of unique variance in argumentative and expository listening tests, respectively, and that L2 WMC accounted for a significant 15.3 % of unique variance in argumentative and expository listening tests, in turn. It seems that, unlike the general proficiency test, the listening test of different authentic rhetorical tasks would impose more complex cognitive demands on WM processing. One implication might be that Iranian advanced learners need conscious-raising and treatment of these rhetorical tasks. Additionally, the issue of language proficiency should be coined differently for individual language skills, especially listening, when compared with the general proficiency level.

Keywords: Cognitive Complexity, WMC, Listening Quality, Rhetorical Listening Tasks, Proficiency test

1. Introduction

Despite its importance in developing and improving language skills, listening comprehension is probably the least understood and the least researched from among the four language skills. That is because it is less explicit in nature and more difficult to access and assess (Vandergrift, 2004). Listening is not simply a process of decoding language but also involves complex cognitive processes at different levels (Buck, 2001). However, it is not until recently that there has been some research specifically concerned with the process of L2 listening comprehension. This neglect may be attributed to the traditional belief held by both teachers and researchers that

listening is a passive skill and that mere exposure to the spoken language would be enough for students to develop their listening skills automatically (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Listening-related research mainly covered issues of how to teach and learn in the way of finding more effective strategies and the effect of some affective factors like motivation and anxiety, to name but a few (Bloomfield et al., 2010; Vandergrift, 2004).

In the field of psycholinguistics, however, the ability to comprehend a spoken language is widely recognized as a rather complex and active skill that involves a variety of mental processes (Taylor, 1981). According to Byrnes (1984, p. 318), listening comprehension can be regarded as a “highly-complex problem-solving activity” that is comprised of a set of distinct sub-skills. These sub-skills include (1) the recognition of component parts of the language (Rivers, 1971) (i.e., words, verb groups, or simple phrases), and 2) memory for these linguistic elements upon the time when they have been recognized (Call, 1985). Although recognition of each linguistic element is essential to the process of listening comprehension, it does not necessarily guarantee the comprehension of what is heard, because the utterance which contains a lot of linguistic information needs to be retained in the listener’s WM for a while, so that the utterance can be processed for further semantic interpretation.

In addition, various factors can influence listeners’ L2 listening quality; factors that, according to Rubin (1994), might stem from various resources like, 1) text characteristics (variation in a listening passage/text or associated visual support); 2) interlocutor characteristics (variation in the speaker’s personal characteristics); 3) task characteristics (variation in the purpose for listening and associated responses); 4) listener characteristics (variation in the listener’s personal characteristics); and 5) process characteristics (variation in the listener’s cognitive activities and in the nature of the interaction between speaker and listener). This influence can be investigated through studying some causation and/or correlation variables, where listening quality is the locus. To gain a more comprehensive insight and to be able to draw generalizable conclusions, it seems prudent to look at the correlation of a host of different factors that might simultaneously influence listening process and to investigate their predictive power, too (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

There is a dearth of studies concentrating on the interaction of different factors that might influence listening skill such as the role of the learners’ WMC in L1 and L2 and rhetorical aspect of authentic listening input, particularly in EFL context. There is evidence that the effect of

differences in WMC may be moderated by features of the input. For example, Leeson (2007) showed that topic familiarity can positively affect the performance on listening tasks. Syntactic complexity of L2 linguistic input can also influence the amount of linguistic material that can be retained in WM memory (Cook, 1975), as well as the likelihood of recall (Loe, 1964).

Based on the assumption that differences in WMC could affect successful integration of overall processing skills in L2 listening, this study tried to examine the role of participants' WMC in L1 and L2 and listening tasks differing in rhetorical dimensions on listening quality. It is believed that different spoken or written rhetorical texts would impose varying degrees of cognitive demands on the learners' language learning WMC (Bloomfield et al., 2010; Ortega, 2009). To the authors' knowledge, there is no study in Iran dealing with these variables in combination. Therefore, the current study aimed at examining the contribution of WMC in L1 and L2, and two different rhetorical listening tasks (expository and argumentative). To this end, the following questions were put forward:

1. Is there any relationship among Iranian EFL advanced learners' WMC in L1, L2 and their performance on argumentative and expository listening tests?
2. Can WMC and L2 proficiency predict the rhetorical L2 listening performance?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Working Memory Capacity in L1 and L2 Language Learning

Working memory is involved in the simultaneous storage and processing information during the performance of complex tasks (Baddeley, 2007). According to Just and Carpenter (1992), WMC restricts comprehension and the capacity for activating-mediating processing and storage varies among individuals. The findings of research addressing WMC in L1 and L2 insinuate that cognitive resources underlying WMC are common in the two languages and the relationship is language-independent (Osaka & Osaka, 1992; Osaka, Osaka, & Groner, 1993). Osaka and Osaka found a high correlation between L1 (Japanese) Reading Span Test (RST) and L2 (English) RST with highly skilled L2 users. As Miyake and Friedman (1998) and Osaka et al. (1993) asserted there is a high correlation between L1 (German) and L2 (French) RST with highly proficient bilinguals. In other studies, the correlations between L1 (Japanese) and L2 English RST were found to be weak (Harrington & Sawyer, 1992) and moderate (Miyasako, 2006). Most of the previous studies were conducted with proficient L2 users. In the case of lower-level L2 users,

however, the relationship between L1 and L2 WM capacity might be lower, because the same task represents a greater task demand for lower-level users (Sagarra, 2008; Van den Noort, Bosch, & Hugdahl, 2006). However, not all researchers are convinced WM is critical to on-line L2 processing. Jeffs (2004) found that several measures of WM, including reading span and listening span, did not predict reading times in L2. Juffs also examined L1 comprehension with these same participants and failed to find any WM effects.

2.2 Working Memory Capacity and Listening Quality

Today, models of L2 comprehension assume a trade-off between storage and processing functions of WM (Baddeley, 2007; Ortega, 2009). People who have better WMC could be expected to learn L2 more efficiently, and under this expectation, the capacity should predict learning rate and ultimate levels of attainment in L2 (Ortega, 2009). There has also been found a positive correlation between WMC and specific L2 skills such as reading comprehension (Alptekin & Ercetin, 2010; Harrington & Sawyer, 1992), vocabulary acquisition (Service & Kohonen, 1995), and syntax (Harrington & Sawyer, 1992; Miyake & Friedman, 1998). Current literature on WMC and L2 comprehension indicates that WM is likely to impact L2 listening comprehension, and that these effects will be particularly strong in conditions that impose additional demands on WM (Satori, 2012). It is believed that both the storage and controlled attention aspects of WM are assumed to play a critical role in the listening process by storing the result of the listeners' comprehension as they direct attention to the important information in spoken discourse, at the same time (Baddeley, 2007).

Despite its acknowledged significance, a little research has focused on the role of WMC in the processing of L2 listening. Sakuma (2004) showed that there are some moderate correlations between L2 WMC and the listening dialogue, the listening passage, and the grammar section in the language proficiency test. McDonald (2006) found that when L1 listeners with an induced WM load were asked to make grammaticality judgments about L1 sentences, they showed selective misjudgments. The effect directly paralleled the performance of L2 learners on the same task (in the absence of an induced WM load), suggesting that processing in the L2 imposes a load on WM resources. Satori (2012) also found that both L1 and L2 WM were related to L2 listening, but that the predictive power of L2 WMC was larger than that of L1 WMC, even though the correlation was not significant enough between L2 WMC and TOEIC test. In another study, Satori (2011) found a significant difference between high-span and low-span listeners in

the dictation test scores and the use of L2 cognitive and metacognitive listening strategies. For the second research question Satori found that high-span listeners in both higher proficiency and lower proficiency possibly used more metacognitive strategies than low-span listeners in the same group.

2.3 The Cognitive Dimension of Rhetorical Tasks

Language texts (written or spoken), as an important media for the acquisition of new knowledge, have been labeled differently in literature such as text types (Hatim & Mason, 1990), rhetoric tasks (Brooks & Warren, 1979), discourse mode (Weigle, 2002), and genre (Carroll, 2008; Swales, 1990). Carroll (2008) defines it as any form of discourse that has a characteristic recurrent structure. Genres are important because they provide us with general expectations regarding the way information in a discourse will be arranged and unfolded. The linguistic and schematic organization and arrangement of the information embedded in these genres can have different influence on the readers and listeners (Hartman & Hartman, 1993). Alongside their key role in providing input and their unique characteristic structures, different rhetorical tasks require varying degrees of attention and cognitive processing. Rhetoric theories (e.g. Bain, 1967; Brooks & Warren, 1979; Yang, 2014) lend support for the different levels of cognitive demands inherent in the rhetorical tasks. These tasks differ in terms of types of thinking involved and thus inherently different levels of cognitive demands (Weigle, 2002), as well as whether reasoning is required and the degree of reasoning called for (Bain, 1967; Brooks & Warren, 1979).

According to Hatim and Mason (1990), for instance, an expository text entails analyzing and synthesizing of propositions. Also, these texts are presented to exchange some information to assist audience or reader learn new things like , magazine, articles, manuals, newspapers, and textbooks. Their basic procedure includes synthesizing (taking the forming parts of a complex concept/proposition and introducing a shorter formulation for it) or analyzing (taking a concept/proposition and working out its forming parts). Argumentative texts involve persuasion via evaluation in which more importance is given to metaphoric expression, emotive diction, and subtle uses of modality (Hatim & Mason, 1990). These texts focus on the relations between propositions, where one idea is defended and its relation with opposing ideas or solution detected. the mental process of judging is their locus. They generally assess certain opinions with conceptual associations such as importance, reason, or opposition frequently.

Most studies in writing and reading showed that learners will produce language of higher accuracy and linguistic complexity but lower fluency when performing on the more complex rhetorical tasks such as argumentative or expository ones compared with narrative and descriptive (Yang, 2014). However, Ying-hui (2006) concur that it is difficult to conclude exactly how, if at all, L2 listening comprehension is affected by different rhetorical tasks. It is believed that this challenge is rooted in the different cognitive and linguistic complexity of these tasks (Ellis, 2003). Interestingly, however, Ying-hui (2006) examined passages with description, comparison, and causation structures, but did not find any relationship between rhetorical structure and difficulty in L2 listening comprehension. On the other hand, Sadeghi, Hassani and Noory (2014) found that genre-based instruction of listening does have positive impact on listening comprehension of Iranian male intermediate students.

Studying different text types, with their characteristic nature, along with the WMC is perceived as essential since the inherent features of text types might impose different levels of cognitive demands on the WMC, which as stated earlier has an important role in listening (Bloomfield et al., 2010; Goh, 2000). Most studied cognitive complexity dimension in L1 and L2 studies dealing with reading and writing, since tracing learners' performance on reading and writing seems to be easier than assessing listening, which ultimately lead to finding more reliable, valid theoretical and practical models in those skills. It can be also suggested that by conducting correlational studies like the current one, a better understanding will be achieved about the listening mechanism in general, and the role of WMC in the retention and recall in conjunction with different typologies of text would be highlighted.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Based on a systematic random sampling, 60 male and female language learners (age range 20-33) were chosen from 117 learners (registered in 8 language centers) in Abadan and Khorramshahr, two cities in the southwest of Iran. Through their performance on a sample Nelson English Language Proficiency Test (Fowler & Coe, 1976), it was found that the participants were at advanced level. They were randomly divided into two 30-subject experimental groups; one took a researchers-made test of expository listening tasks and the other was given a test of argumentative listening tasks. To secure proficiency homogeneity of the groups, a *t*-test was applied ($t_o = 1.200$ $t_{critical} = 2.000$, at $p = .95$). This means the groups were

about equal (see Table 1). The selected participants were mainly motivated to take part in this study because they had already intended to partake in advanced examinations such as TOEFL and IELTS.

Table 1.

Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Homogeneity Test.

Groups	N	Mean	Max	Min	SD	t _o
Experimental group (arg)	30	13.25	18	6	10.29	1.200
Experimental group (exp)	30	13.85	17	6	9.79	
p-value ≤ 0.05		n=60 df =59		t-critical=2.000		

3.2 Instruments

A battery of tests was utilized in this study. Firstly, Nelson Battery – section 300A (Fowler & Coe, 1976) was applied to ensure groups' equality with reference to their EFL proficiency. Though Fowler and Coe (1976) claim that all their test items have been pretested and so their tests seem to be reliable for the purpose of testing the language proficiency of students, still the reliability of this test was computed through the application of Kudar and Richardson (KR- 21) correlation ($r = .75$) because no solid score of reliability measure is offered in their book. This test had been used because: (1) it was the one of available ones, and (2) its use does not require permission from the authors.

Secondly, two simulated forty-item tests of listening tasks; argumentative and expository listening tasks were administered. The listening tasks were chosen from two authentic listening sites (TED.COM and Englishlistening.com) and from relevant IELTS and TOEFL listening ones. The validity of materials was judged by three of TEFL experts and their reliability was measured by KR-21 formula. To standardize the tests, the researchers administered the tests to two pilot groups of 10 students who had roughly about the same language proficiency level as the participants of the study, but they were not selected for the study. Once the tests papers were corrected, the item discrimination (between .45 and .65 in this study) for each tests item was calculated and some items were discarded while some were modified. The revised versions were used for the next stage of the study. The revised forms of these tests were administered to another pilot group of eight students. Here, again the item difficulty and item discrimination of all the tests items were estimated. All the items of the tests had an acceptable level of difficulty

and suitable power of discrimination. According to Kudar and Richardson (KR-21) formula, the reliability indices for the tests were estimated (r Argu = .73 and r Expo = .75).

Finally, Operation Span Tasks (OSTs) were used as a measure of participants' WMC in L1 (Persian) and L2 (English). The OST for L2 was modified from the one developed by Unsworth, Heitz, Schrock, and Engle (2005). It has been used as an established test for WMC in the field of psychology. The operations used in the task are simple arithmetic operations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (e.g., $(10 \times 1) - 7 = 3$). The English words for recall are all high frequency words with only one syllable and four to six letters. To measure WMC in L1, a list of Persian words was selected and given to six native Iranian speakers to make sure that they are high frequency words in Persian. As there was no similar test measuring WMC in Persian (L1) the procedure explained for the WMC measure in L2 was followed to simulate the Persian version. The OST was chosen because a number of studies (e.g., Van den Noort et al., 2006) have shown it correlated well with other measures of WMC and that it had good internal consistency, test-retest reliability (Unsworth et al., 2005), and validity (Conway et al., 2005). In addition, OST was reported to be easy to handle and perform (Lu, 2011).

3.3 Procedure

In this one-shot experimental study, after administering the proficiency test, the participants were divided into two experimental groups (expository and argumentative). The rationale behind dividing the participants and not having a single group was to minimize the degree of the practice effect gained through taking two tests by one group (Mackey & Gass, 2005) and another is to enhance the chance of inter-group comparisons. Next, each group took the researcher-made listening tests described above. To determine the rhetorical task types, Michigan's Genre Project Clarifying criteria were used. The rhetorical listening inputs chosen for this study were selected from authentic sources, mentioned above, according to their different rhetorical purposes, functions, generic, and linguistic features (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Brooks & Warren, 1979; Smith, 2003). In general, it is believed that these tasks differ in terms of types of thinking involved, their different inherent levels of cognitive demands (Moffett, 1968; Weigle, 2002), as well as the required reasoning and the degree of reasoning called for (Bain, 1967; Brooks & Warren, 1979). The genre of argumentation and exposition were employed because, as hypothesized in our study, they are less attended to in the language education in Iran. Another reason is the researchers' own experience with the issue which is the driving force for this study.

Moreover, these tasks are common rhetorical tasks that EFL advanced learners may encounter in the listening module of high-stake standard tests.

Measures were taken to choose general-knowledge expository texts to eschew any bias in terms of the degree of topic familiarity. It means that as these texts were taken from a number of authentic texts, an attempt was made to select them from those more familiar, non-gender biased ones since these kinds of authentic unmodified texts (especially spoken ones) generally deal with different subjects and topics in which no rigid preplanned cautions are taken to avoid these dimension (Rost, 2005). Argumentative texts were selected in a way that the speaker was advancing a thesis first, and then evaluating it in terms of for and against of the argument, which was finally ended with the listeners' attempt to persuade the listener to accept his antithesis as valid and justifiable. The multiple-choice questions tested the understanding of the main idea, the speaker's tone (arguing, agreeing/disagreeing, sympathizing, etc.), inference, and detail. In addition, matching items, classification items, and sentence completion questions composed the rest of the tests format.

WMC was measured by two 60-items separate tasks— OST in L1 (Persian) and L2 (English). The measure for WM was the average of WMP and WME. In the experiment, the OST was presented on a computer with DMDX (version 3.3.1.1), the software for visual display that was developed by John Forster and was downloadable for free (Forster & Forster, 2003). During the task, a target word was first shown on the computer screen for half a second, followed by an equation involving simple arithmetic operation (e.g., Is $(7 \times 1) - 4 = 3$ Correct?). The participants were instructed to remember the target word for later recall, and then to judge as fast as possible whether the equation was correct or not by pressing a corresponding key on the keyboard that was marked —CORRECT (the right shift key) or —INCORRECT (the left shift key). As soon as the judgment was made, another target word would appear on the screen. The participants were instructed to repeat the process until they saw a prompt on the screen which read—RECALL and write down the target words within this set. At this prompt, they should write down, on a separate answer sheet, as many target words as they could recall from this set.

There was no time limit for the recall. After recalling, they pressed a key marked —NEXT (the space key) to proceed to the next set. WM span tasks in Persian and English lasted about 15-20 minutes for each one. There were a total of 15 sets with a total of 60 items. The number of items varied within each set, with two items as the minimum and six as the maximum. It is

obvious that the higher the number of items within a set, the more demanding it would be on one's cognitive function. Needless to say is that all these procedures were piloted before the actual experiment.

The total number of the target words correctly recalled by a participant on each WM task was recorded as a participant WMC score in L1 and L2, respectively. Total words scoring method was chosen from among four available scoring methods because Van den Noort et al. (2006) and Friedman and Miyake (2005) maintain it results in normal distributions, good reliability, and validation. For this study, the total number of correctly recalled target words was recorded as the score for a participant's WM span. The order of the target words within a set was ignored. However, any target word that was recalled in a different set other than the set in which it appeared was counted as wrong. Any change in a letter of an English or Persian word was also counted as wrong. The total score for WM span was 60 for both Persian and English.

4. Result

4.1 Descriptive and Correlation Analysis

Descriptive and correlation coefficient statistics were used to enable the researchers to make inferences about the relationship, if any, across variables investigated. However, the inferences should be made with caution and tentativeness when generalizability of the results is intended.

Table 2.

Means and Standard Deviations for L2 Listening Scores by Rhetorical Task

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>SD</i>
Expository	30	10.94	16	7	3.11
Argumentative	30	10.00	14	4	2.76

* $p < 0.05$

As it is shown in Table2 the participants in Expository group even performed better than those in the argumentative of but this performance was not statistically significance.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics of L1 (Persian) and L2 (English) WM measures

Measure	Minimum	Maximum	Maximum Possible Score	Mean	Std. Deviation
WM Persian	34.0	60.0	60	55.60	4.46

WM English	36.0	60.0	60	51.47	5.32
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Table 3 shows the minimum, maximum, the mean, and the standard deviation of the participants' performance on the WMC measure.

Table 4.

Reliability and Item Statistics of L1 (Persian) and L2 (English) WMC

Measure	Number of Items	Item Mean	Item Variance	Reliability
WM Persian	60 ¹	.923	.067	$\alpha = .824$
WM English	60 ²	.855	.110	$\alpha = .783$

1. Three items have zero variance and are removed from the scale when SPSS calculates the reliability statistics.

2. One item has zero variance and is removed from the scale when SPSS calculates the reliability statistics.

Table 4 shows that the two tests measuring WMC in L1 and L2 have a statistically acceptable reliability with an item variance of .067 in L1 and .110 in L2.

For calculating the relationship between the WMC in L1 and L2, coefficient correlation analysis was conducted on the number of words recalled in Persian and English. Results showed that participants recalled significantly more words in Persian than in English ($t = 10.794$, $df = 59$, $p = .05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the functional WMC of the participants was larger in their L1 compared to their L2.

Table 5.

Correlations across L1, L2 Working Memory Span Tasks, Proficiency, Expository, and Argumentative Tests

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) proficiency test	—			
(2) expository listening test	.452	—		
(3) argumentative listening test	.412	.695	—	
(4) L1 WMC	.183	.164	.160	—
(5) L2 WMC	.391	.179	.174	.488
$p < 0.05$		$df = N-2=58$		

Looking at the means, standard deviations and the correlation coefficient (Pearson Product-Moment) values, the results showed that there is significant moderate correlation between the participants' performance on both L1 and L2 WMC measures. ($r=.488$); that a significant but very weak relationship between L1 WMC measure and the proficiency test and both rhetorical listening tasks ($r=.183$, $r=.164$ and $r=.160$, $p < 0.05$) for expository and argumentative listening tasks, respectively; that a significant but weak relationship across L2 WMC measure and both rhetorical listening tasks ($r=.179$ and $r=.174$, $p < 0.05$) for expository and argumentative listening tasks, respectively; that a significant but moderate relationship across L2 WMC measure and the proficiency test and both rhetorical listening tasks ($r=.391$, $p < 0.05$); that there is significant but moderate relationship across proficiency test and both rhetorically different listening tests ($r=.452$ and $r=.412$, $p < 0.05$) for expository and argumentative listening test; that there is strong correlation between both rhetorically different listening tests ($r=.795$).

The two rhetorical listening tests scores and general proficiency test with the OST in L1 (Persian) and L2 (English) shown in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 showed that there is a very weak correlation between L1 measure of WM with both rhetorical listening tests even though a little better for expository test ($r=.164$, $p<.05$ for expository and $r=.160$, $p<.05$ for argumentative tasks). On the other hand, there is a little moderate correlation between L2 measure of WM with both rhetorical listening tests, even though a little better for expository test, too ($r=.179$, $p<.05$ for expository and $r=.174$, $p<.05$ for argumentative). Also the correlation between L1 and L2 measures of WM and general proficiency test show a better correlation but different for L1 and L2 measures of WM. L1 and L2 OST correlated significantly with the general proficiency test but this correlation was little for L1($r=.183$, $p<.05$) and more significant for L2 ($r=.391$, $p<.05$).

4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

To evaluate the predictive power of WMC and participants' L2 proficiency (independent variables) on the rhetorical L2 listening performance (the dependent variable), a multiple regression analysis was performed. Since the participants' performances on both argumentative and expository tests were highly correlated as well as due to the proximity of the means and standard deviations of the scores of the two tests, the researchers coalesced the argumentative and expository indices under one dependent variable to make predictive judgments possible.

The value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) (based on a stepwise regression analysis appears in Table 6) shows that L2WMC accounted for 15.3% of the variance in L2 rhetorical listening performance.

Table 6.

Summary of Multiple Regression (n=60)

Variables	β	R	R^2
L2 OST	.391	.391	.153

p<.05

The value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) (based on a stepwise regression analysis shown in Table 7) shows that L1WM C only accounted for 3.3 % of the variance in L2 rhetorical listening performance. In addition, the participants' L2 proficiency was not predictive of their performance on L2 listening tests.

Table 7.

Summary of Multiple Regression (n=60)

Variables	β	R	R^2
L1 OST	.183	.183	.033

p<.05

As demonstrated in Tables 6 and 7, L1, L2 WMC measures, and proficiency tests are not good predictors for the advanced learners' performance on two expository and argumentative listening tests, even though the magnitudes of coefficients are different for different correlations.

5. Discussion

The present study attempted to investigate whether there are any statistical linear correlations across L1 WMC, L2 WMC, English language proficiency, and the performance on two rhetorical listening tests of 90 Iranian advanced participants. With regard to RQ 1, it was generally found that there were weak and sometimes moderate correlations across the variables. A multiple regression analysis (answering RQ2) showed that L2 WMC only accounted for 15.3 % of the unique variance of rhetorical listening tests and L1 WMC accounted for just 3.3 % of the unique

variance of the rhetorical listening tests. Needless to mention that the comparisons made across the correlations was based on the mean scores and not individual scores.

The results obtained are in line with previous studies indicating the contribution of the variation in WMC to variation in L2 reading and listening (Harrington & Sawyer, 1992; Satori, 2011, 2012). As it was shown in the result section, the limited capacity of WM may affect L2 listeners' performance on the rhetorical tests even for the advanced listeners. It can be suggested each of the rhetorical listening tasks examined in this study, with their unique characteristics, would require different levels of attentional resources and, as a result, need different mental models. This finding is consistent with studies investigating the relationship between L2 WMC and reading comprehension (Harrington & Sawyer, 1992; Osaka & Osaka, 1992) with bilingual-L2 users, and L2 speech production (Finardi & Weissner, 2008), and listening comprehension (Satori, 2012) in general.

One possible reason might be related to the limited capacity of WM memory and can be explained by controlled attention theory (Engle & Kane, 2004). According to this theory, the process of building a mental model may involve the attentional resource allocation aspect of the central executive in WM rather than other memory parts (Montgomery, Polunenko, & Marinellie, 2009). There is a domain-general component of WM responsible for controlling attention as well as domain-specific components responsible for maintaining task-relevant information. The domain-general controlled attention ability is related to both higher-level cognitions such as L2 comprehension, and lower-level cognition requiring cognitive control (Colflesh & Conway, 2007). It can be contended that listening to different rhetorical tasks, though inherently different in terms of attentional resources, involve domain-specific, higher-level cognition of the WM processing. It is quite likely that the participants' weak performance can be attributed to their limited capacity to use domain-specific knowledge as well as their ability to control attention. In addition to these factors, the individual differences in L2 OST performance may have reflected the differences in their personal experiences such as relevant background knowledge.

The second reason for the weak indication of individual differences in WMC and its relationship with listening performance and entry proficiency test can be attributed to the L2 OST test of WMC. L2 OST might have been a weak indicator to measure the controlled attention ability and the processing efficiency precisely. Therefore, the individual differences in the

controlled attention component of WMC, shared by LI with L2, influence the listeners' L2 listening performance.

The third reason is related to the input features. There is evidence that the effect of differences in WM resources may be moderated by the, namely task cognitive complexity, amount of input, and quality of contact (to name but a few). These factors, however, should not only be considered merely interdependent influencing the listening quality, but each of them independently can have a determining effect on the performance.

The cognitive complexity of the task includes issues like topic familiarity, authenticity, rhetorical knowledge, and linguistic complexity (Leeser, 2007). On the cognitive complexity of topic familiarity, Robinson's Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson, 2010), Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis (Skehan, 1998; Skehan & Foster, 2001), and schema-based models of comprehension (e.g., Rumelhart, 1980) are most often used in SLA research to describe the role that learners' background knowledge plays in facilitating listening comprehension. It can be contended being equipped with general familiarity per se does not guarantee learners' success in listening performance. In addition to general topic familiarity, learners need detailed sociocultural, sociopolitical, and rhetorical knowledge of the topics (Leeser, 2007; Rost, 2005; Vandergrift, 2004). It is possible to suggest that even if the participants in this study had supposedly had enough topic familiarity, according to Rubin (1994), this would not always result in improved language learning generally and listening comprehension, specifically, because topic familiarity highly interacts with other variables such as rhetorical knowledge and related linguistic and cognitive structures. Part of this familiarity pertains to listeners' rhetorical knowledge that seems to play a paramount role in language processing. In this study, the rhetorical tasks, argumentative and expository, differ in terms of types of thinking involved and the linguistic structure (Bloomfield et al., 2010) and thus inherently different levels of cognitive demands (Weigle, 2002), as well as the degree of reasoning involved (Bain, 1967; Brooks & Warren, 1979). Also as it was mentioned before, syntactic and lexical complexity of L2 linguistic input can also influence the amount of linguistic material that can be retained in WM memory (Cook, 1975), as well as the likelihood of recall (Loe, 1964).

Another issue accounts for the cognitive complexity is the difficulty associated with the authentic interaction that makes comprehension of the rhetorical tasks more difficult. Not only did the authenticity included in the tasks in this study have any facilitative role, but it resulted in

greater difficulty for the listeners. That is, the sociocultural bias inherent in the tasks, which by nature resisted the researchers' endeavor to mitigate their effect, would lead to difficulty in listening quality. According to Richard (2001) authentic materials may be too culturally biased, so unnecessarily difficult to understand outside the language community. The vocabulary might not be relevant to the student's immediate needs. Too many structures are mixed, so they need more time decoding the texts (Kaprova, 1999). High amount of redundancy and more discourse markers of authentic materials (esp., in argumentative rather than expository tasks) might result in counter-productive outcomes that do not facilitate comprehension. This is in line with the conclusion that authenticity is not always facilitative and sometimes blocks comprehension even for advanced learners (Rubin, 1994). Given these observations, our findings are in line with Yang's (2014), pointing to the fact that different factors including topic familiarity of texts, rhetorical knowledge, and text and interaction authenticity may have different levels of cognitive demands on listeners.

Last but not least, the participants' poor performance can possibly be attributed to the amount of input and the quality of contact of the L2 they had received in the course of language learning (Long, 1985), especially for listening. In ESL context, learners are exposed to a variety of listening input with different qualities paving the way for them to get more familiar with diverse topics and rhetorical communicative tasks. In most EFL contexts, however, language learners have little, if any, chance to experience real listening. The input the participants experienced in the current study were selected from among rhetorical tasks that contained high lexical density with intricate micro- and macro-structure facets such as socio-political and cultural aspects. These facets probably would also result in greater demands on working memory processing L2, when listening. That is, the more information that must be held in working memory, the greater the strain on working memory storage (Baddeley & Hitch, 1993; Buck, 2001). Thus, a passage containing more information should pose a greater challenge for working memory. Any listener's cognitive processes are in competition for limited processing resources. L1 listeners compared with L2 ones have processing capacity to spare, because they can process aural input automatically, with little conscious attention to individual words. L2 listeners, on the other hand, need to consciously focus on individual word they hear, given the limitation of their WM (Lynch, 1998; Vandergrift, 2007). In this case, "lower-level processes will be privileged at the expense of higher-level processes" (Zwaan & Brown, 1996, p. 291). It seems quite possible that

because the participants in this study have experienced limited amount of input, non-authentic material, and tasks of fair complexity, they would demonstrate diverse individual differences and, thus, varying performance on the rhetorical listening tasks.

6. Conclusion

The findings here suggest that the limited capacity of WM and the inherent complexity of different rhetorical listening tasks together might cause more difficulty for both groups. It particularly showed that task characteristics in conjunction with WMC would give rise to variations on the learners' performance on the rhetorical listening tasks. Also, the results of the correlation analyses are in keeping with previous findings that L2 WMC has a greater role and more predictive power on listening performance than does L1 WMC (Engle & Kane, 2004; Satori, 2011). This highlights the role of the controlled attention component of WM in L2 listening performance even for advanced learners. Moreover, it was found that rhetorical tasks with their unique linguistic and cognitive dimensions possibly lay greater demands on WMC; hence, impose extra processing complications and lower comprehension of higher-level discourses. If each of the lower-level processes becomes more automatic by improving lower-level skills such as L2 word recognition and L2 syntactic processing, the effect of WMC on L2 listening comprehension for these EFL advanced learners might arguably be reduced. To conclude, more cognitive resources such topic familiarity, authenticity, background knowledge and others might be required for higher level processing of L2 listening, once such lower-level skills become more automated.

Given the above observations, one implication is that the general proficiency tests that assess learners' holistic attainment are not apposite representative of their command over individual skills. As it was made plain, listening skill is a hot spot, where any variation in the text, either linguistically or rhetorically, can make a significant difference on the learners' performance. As it is clearly noted, the listening comprehension difficulty experienced by many L2 learners can be amended through some of the listening strategy instruction such as how to chunk the incoming linguistic data before they are asked to respond to the significance of the utterance, so that the teacher can help the students use their short-term memory capacity more efficiently (Call, 1985).

Another implication is that exposing learners to spoken texts with a variety of topics and rhetorical structures and instructing them certain rhetoric-related strategies would arguably contribute to saving the limited capacity of WM which is devoted to lower level processing.

Finally, this study is not without its limitation. The participants were Iranian EFL learners. It would be interesting to see whether some of the key findings can be borne out in some other samples. Also, although controlling for the rhetorical tasks for all the listening tests seemed strength of the study, it is unknown whether the findings can be generalizable to other tasks. It may be possible to replicate it in the future with other rhetorical tasks.

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Iranian University Students' Perceptions of Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers' Oral Language Proficiency and Teaching Styles

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Abstract

Non-native English-Speaking Teachers' (NNESTs) dominant teaching styles and oral language proficiency as perceived by their students are considered two substantially critical elements which have gained increasing attention during the past few decades. The present study was conducted to explore Iranian senior EFL B.A. and M.A. students' perceptions of their NNEST teachers' dominant teaching styles and oral language proficiency. Through multistage cluster sampling, 103 senior EFL B.A. and M.A. students were chosen on a random basis from Shiraz, Isfahan, and Yasouj universities to take part in the study. To collect the data, use was made of a

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teaching style questionnaire (TSQ) and an analytic scale for assessing the oral proficiency (ASAOP). The results revealed that the students held positive perceptions of their NNESTs' dominant teaching styles in that classroom management issues received a higher mean score than personal characteristics. Also, the students were satisfied with their NNESTs' level of oral language proficiency; that is, their level of fluency, grammar and vocabulary were satisfactory except for their pronunciation. The findings have implications for NNESTs in the sense that once they are orally proficient, they can have more diverse, helpful, and appropriate teaching styles.

Keywords: Students' perceptions, Iranian universities, NNES teachers, Teaching styles, Oral language proficiency

1. Introduction

The English language plays a vital role in our life to such an extent that it has become dominantly and internationally accepted throughout the world especially for daily communication, entertainment, broadcasting, science and technology, business, diplomacy, and education. At the present time, English is the native language in some countries such as Canada, United States, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Ireland, and South Africa. In some other countries, it is considered as a second language as in India, China, Japan, and Russia. In Iran, English is learned as a foreign language. Therefore, English use has become essential in one's life and thus having a strong basis of English language is inevitable for everybody. One important aspect of learning a foreign language is associated with language proficiency and teaching style of teachers.

A good teacher is one from whom students actually learn what is outlined in the structural goals and objectives (Dewar, 2002). Research supports the idea that effective teaching affects students learning (Hill, 2002; Schrage, 1995; Shapiro, 1995). Also, empirical evidence supports the belief that good teaching qualities contribute to students' cognitive outcomes (Campbell, Kyrakides, & Robinson, 2005) and it predicts students' achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Kaplan & Owings, 2002; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2003). One essential factor to take into account when discussing teaching in an EFL setting is the issue of non-native English-speaking teachers as over 80% of the English teachers worldwide are NNESTs (Canagarajah, 1999).

Some studies have been carried out which provided significant insights into NNES teachers' minds by surveying their opinions and attitudes (e.g. Medgyes, 1994), sometimes complemented

by direct observation of their classes (Arva & Medgyes, 2000), or interviewing them face-to-face and by email over a period of time (Liu, 1999 a,b). For over a decade considerable discussion has taken place about the construct of 'native speaker' in second language pedagogy, teacher education, and research (Llurda, 2005). Cook (1999), in particular, has indicated that non-natives are sometimes inappropriately compared with natives, arguing against the unfairness of judging L2 users based on a standard that they can never achieve. It is claimed that NNSTs are superior to NSTs in some cases; for instance they can share their first language for the matter of clarification when necessary, and they can also guess the students' major problems and try to solve them with a sense of empathy; moreover, they may have cultural and educational backgrounds and attitudes similar to those of their students in the classroom (Llurda, 2005). Therefore, students' perceptions of their NNSETs are of utmost significance to the extent that they may give rise to some changes made to the methodology and teaching styles of the teachers. The present study was an attempt to explore the students' perceptions of NNESTs from different dimensions to find out whether NNESTs are orally proficient enough in English and to determine what teaching styles they use in the classroom.

2. Literature Review

Students' perceptions of NNS English teachers are currently a hot topic in the realm of applied linguistics. Moussu (2002) analyzed the data collected from two questionnaires administered to four NNS English teachers from Japan, Argentina, Ecuador, and Switzerland and to 84 ESL students above the age of 17. The result of the study showed that the students held positive attitudes towards their NNS English teachers from the beginning of the semester. Also, it was found that 68% of the students were satisfied with their teachers just like a NS teacher, and 79% expressed admiration and respect for their NNS English teachers and finally 84% of them considered this as a new positive experience with such a teacher. However, the Korean and Chinese students expressed negative perspectives towards their NNS English teachers more than the others. By the same token, Liang (2002) conducted a study on students' attitudes towards NNS English teachers. The study investigated 20 ESL students' attitudes towards six ESL teachers' accents and the features of these teachers' speech which contributed to the students' preference for teachers, five of whom were NNESTs from diverse language backgrounds and the

sixth one was a NS. The study found that the pronunciation and/or accent of the teachers did not affect the way students held positive perceptions of their NNS English teachers.

Involving both teachers and students within one single study, Cheung (2002) explored students' attitudes toward their NS and NNS English teachers, the teachers' strength and weakness points, their ability to motivate the students in order to learn English, and any discrimination against NNS English teachers. The findings revealed that both teachers and students perceived NS and NNS teachers as possessing their own strengths. NS teachers had the capability of using English functionally, having a high level of proficiency in English, and being aware of English speaking countries in terms of culture. However, not all students and teachers were of the opinion that there was discrimination against NNS English teachers in Hong Kong.

Empirical research studies into different types of learners' perceptions conducted in foreign language classroom contexts (Allwright, 1984; Block, 1996; Breen, 1991; Huang, 2006; Mackey et al., 2007; Slimani, 1989) have yielded evidence that learners have idiosyncratic views about the same classroom events. According to Mahboob (2003), both NS and NNS teachers were provided with positive and negative comments from the students. For example, regarding NS teachers, positive comments were made about oral skills, vocabulary and culture; moreover, negative comments were made about the methodology, experience as an ESL learner, and grammar. However, in case of NNS teachers positive comments were related to grammar, oral skills, hard work, vocabulary, culture, capability of answering the questions, literacy skills, and the experience as an ESL learner considered as the most important one. Besides, it is worthwhile to include oral skills and culture as some few negative comments made about the NNS teachers. The present study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do Iranian senior EFL students perceive their NNS teachers' level of oral proficiency?
2. What are the perceptions of Iranian senior EFL students towards their NNS teachers' dominant teaching styles?

3. Method

Using a quantitative method design, the study collected multiple data in order to answer the proposed research questions. According to Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Razavieh (2010), quantitative research uses objective measurement to gather numeric data that are used to answer questions or test predetermined hypotheses.

Taking everything into consideration, the foundation of present study has been laid on a descriptive cross-sectional survey method. Acknowledging the substantial criticality attributed to cross-sectional survey, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argued that where different respondents are studied at different points in time, the study is called 'cross-sectional'. Following items will build up a much more vivid picture of the pertained procedure.

3.1. Participants

In the present study, EFL students of three available universities, University of Yasouj, University of Shiraz, and University of Isfahan, were chosen as the population of the study because they were conveniently accessible to the researchers. Through multistage cluster sampling, 103 EFL senior B.A. and M.A. students from Yasouj, Shiraz and Isfahan universities were chosen. All the participants were of the same field of study, i.e. TEFL; however, they were different in terms of level of education, age, gender, years of English study, and university. They consisted of 38 (36.9%) male and 65 (63.1%) female students with 5 to at least 13 years of English study, whose ages ranged from 22 to 32, doing their B.A. (75.7%) and M.A. (24.3%) degrees from three universities of Shiraz (36.9%), Isfahan (32.0%), and Yasouj (31.1%). Generally speaking, it was assumed that senior students and M.A. students had spent a long period of time at the universities, so they were to a great extent familiar with the major issues in oral language proficiency and teaching styles of their NNESTs.

3.2. Instruments

Two questionnaires including Benke and Medgyes's (1994) teaching style questionnaire (TSQ) and an Analytic Scale for Assessing Oral Proficiency (ASAOP) (www.nclrc.org, 2015) were used in the study to collect the data. The questionnaire developed by Benke and Medgyes (1994) was adopted to scrutinize the degree to which the senior university EFL students perceive their teachers' dominant teaching styles. It is comprised of 23 items and 2 components. The first component of the questionnaire is related to classroom management issues (13 items) and the second component is pertinent to the personal characteristics (10 items). The questionnaire is based upon a five-point Likert-type scale whereby "1" indicates "strongly disagree", "2" means "disagree", "3" indicates "neither agree, nor disagree", "4" indicates "agree", and "5" means "strongly agree". As regards validity, the questionnaire items were reviewed by two PhD holders in TEFL. They confirmed the face and content validity of the questionnaire. For the sake of its

reliability; it was piloted with 40 students of Yasouj University that were comparable with the subjects in the study and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed to be 0.88.

ASAOP scale was categorized into four components of "pronunciation", "fluency", grammar/language use", and "vocabulary" within the framework of a four-point Likert scale whereby "1" indicated "poor", "2" indicated "fair", "3" meant "good", and "4" indicated "excellent". To ensure the face and content validity of the ASAOP, it was given to two experts, holding Ph.D. in TEFL, for acknowledging its overall appearance and content. As regards reliability, a use was made of a test-retest reliability method in consultation with the pertinent experts because the very items of ASAOP are too low, i.e., 4 items and Cronbach's alpha coefficient is not appropriate for measuring the reliability of this scale (Ary, et al, 2010). The scale was piloted with a sample of 15 EFL students in their last year of study at Yasouj University. Table 1 shows the result for test-retest reliability.

Table 1.

Test-retest reliability for ASAOP1 and ASAOP2

A 3-week interval	Pearson	Correlation	SD	Mean	N	Sig.
ASAOP 1 (test)	.704**		0.33	2.96	15	0.003
ASAOP 2 (retest)		.704**	0.29	3.10	15	0.003

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

As illustrated, the test-retest correlation is substantial for both scores obtained from the ASAOP($r=.704$, $p<0.01$).

3.3. Data Collection

The required data were collected through the questionnaires. All the participants were explained thoroughly on the issue and were asked to fill in the questionnaires individually in 20 minutes during their free time. Almost 37 participants received the questionnaires through email to complete, out of whom 32 participants replied the emails accurately. The rest of questionnaires were handed in directly. To sum up, one hundred and eleven participants answered the questionnaires, eight of whom were removed from the total number of questionnaires owing to the missing data.

4. Results

The first research question of the study was concerned with how Iranian senior EFL students perceive their NNES teachers' level of oral proficiency. Table 2 illustrated descriptive statistics for the scale of ASAOP which is comprised of four parts, namely "*pronunciation*", "*fluency*", "*grammar/language use*", and "*vocabulary*".

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for ASAOP Scale

Items	N	Mean	SD	Poor	Fair	Good	excellent
Fluency	103	3.18	0.93	5 4.9 %	22 21.4 %	25 24.3 %	51 49.5 %
Grammar/Language use	103	2.80	0.9	11 10.7 %	21 20.4 %	48 46.6 %	23 22.3 %
Vocabulary	103	2.71	0.87	7 6.8 %	37 35.9 %	37 35.9 %	22 21.4 %
Pronunciation	103	2.42	1.14	24 23.3 %	22 21.4 %	26 25.2 %	31 30.1 %

As indicated in Table 2, the highest mean referred to fluency ($M=3.18$) while the lowest mean belonged to pronunciation ($M=2.42$). In respect of standard deviation, the lowest value is concerned with the vocabulary element ($SD=0.879$); however, the highest standard deviation referred to the pronunciation element ($SD=1.147$). According to the results, it is possible to conclude that the respondents of the study paid considerable more attention to their NNES teachers' oral fluency with 49.5% of the excellent option rather to the other elements of oral language proficiency including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In the area of grammar/language use, the good option captured most of the students' responses, 46.6% as the second highest percentage. With regard to vocabulary, both good and fair options were equally reported to be the third highest percentage with frequency of 37 and 35.9%. Finally, it is worth mentioning that as regards the pronunciation element, the percentages ranged from 23.3% in the poor option to 30.1% in the excellent option. That is, there was no outstanding difference between the options marked by the students.

The second research question of this study was to explore students' perceptions of their non-native English-Speaking teachers' teaching styles. In Table 3, the descriptive statistics of all items of the questionnaire are summarized.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics for TS Questionnaire

Responses to miscellaneous statements (frequency, mean, SD, and percentage for each item)							
Items	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Q4	4.50	0.92 7	3 2.9 %	2 1.9 %	7 6.8 %	19 18.4 %	72 69.9 %
Q3	4.33	1.06 9	5 4.9 %	2 1.9 %	11 10.7 %	21 20.4 %	64 62.1 %
Q5	4.25	1.14 3	6 5.8 %	2 1.9 %	15 14.6 %	17 16.5 %	63 61.2 %
Q16	4.25	1.06 3	6 5.8 %	3 2.9 %	3 2.9 %	38 36.9 %	53 51.5 %
Q11	4.14	1.09 7	7 6.8 %	3 2.9 %	4 3.9 %	43 41.7 %	46 44.7 %
Q1	4.13	1.25 2	9 8.7 %	3 2.9 %	11 10.7 %	22 21.4 %	58 56.3 %
Q6	4.08	1.18 9	8 7.8 %	2 1.9 %	14 13.6 %	28 27.2 %	51 49.5 %
Q21	4.06	0.93 1	1 1.0 %	4 3.9 %	23 22.3 %	34 33.0 %	41 39.8 %
Q10	4.02	1.20 8	7 6.8 %	7 6.8 %	10 9.7 %	31 30.1 %	48 46.6 %
Q9	3.94	1.17 8	7 6.8 %	5 4.9 %	17 16.5 %	32 31.1 %	42 40.8 %
Q22	3.64	1.24 3	10 9.7 %	6 5.8 %	26 25.2 %	30 29.1 %	31 30.1 %
Q20	3.55	1.16 9	8 7.8 %	9 8.7 %	28 27.2 %	34 33.0 %	24 23.3 %
Q12	3.54	1.30 4	12 11.7 %	10 9.7 %	19 18.4 %	34 33.0 %	28 27.2 %
Q2	3.48	1.27 4	10 9.7 %	14 13.6 %	21 20.4 %	32 31.1 %	26 25.2 %
Q18	3.45	1.45 3	16 15.5 %	10 9.7 %	25 24.3 %	15 14.6 %	37 35.9 %
Q23	3.45	1.45 3	16 15.5 %	10 9.7 %	25 24.3 %	15 14.6 %	37 35.9 %
Q7	3.04	1.33 3	11 10.9 %	17 16.5 %	18 17.5 %	29 28.2 %	28 27.2 %
Q8	3.38	1.19 8	12 11.7 %	7 6.8 %	31 30.1 %	35 34.0 %	18 17.5 %
Q19	3.22	1.21	10	17	35	22	19

		2	9.7 %	16.5 %	34.0 %	21.4 %	18.4 %
Q14	3.18	1.21 0	13 12.6 %	13 12.6 %	34 33.0 %	28 27.2 %	15 14.6 %
Q17	3.11	1.56 1	23 22.3 %	19 18.4 %	15 14.6 %	15 14.6 %	31 30.1 %
Q13	2.77	1.44 7	46 44.7 %	14 13.6 %	20 19.4 %	13 12.6 %	10 9.7 %
Q15	2.49	1.39 7	36 35.0 %	26 25.2 %	13 12.6 %	13 12.6 %	15 14.6 %
Total	84.00	16.6 2	282	205	425	600	857

As illustrated, the top part of the table lists the most characteristic features of the Iranian NNES teachers, whereas the least typical characteristics are presented in the lower part of the table. It is interesting to note that 88.3%, 82.5% and 77.7% of the participants asserted that their NNES teachers would always or often *assign a lot of homework* (Item 4, M=4.50), *set a great number of tests* (Item 3, M=4.33), and *apply group work regularly in class* (Item 5, M=4.25). On the other hand, the relatively low means for the last two items suggest that *NNES teachers lose their patience* (Item 15) once in a blue moon (M=2.49, 60.2%) and *stick rigidly to the lesson plan* (Item 13, M=2.77, 58.3%). The highest frequency together with its percentage (72, 69.9%) refers to Item 4 with *strongly agree* category and it is considered as the most significant issue while item 21, *my teachers are too harsh in marking*, with *strongly disagree* category was observed with the least frequency and percentage (1, 1.0%). Besides, item 17, i.e. *my teachers are happy to improvise*, was found to have the highest standard deviation (1.561) whereas item 4 received the lowest standard deviation (0.927).

5. Discussion

The findings of the present study indicated that fluency was one of the crucial elements of oral language proficiency for NNES teachers as perceived by the students. On the other hand, the students perceive their NNESTs' level of oral pronunciation negatively. Possibly this could be due to the assumption that NNES teachers mostly speak their native languages that is congruent with the results of studies conducted by other researchers (e.g., Kim & Elder, 2005; Liu, et al, 2004; Macaro, 1997; Turnbull, 2001). They claim that most NNES teachers use more than 10% of their native language in the classrooms. Probable reasons for this gap could be owing to the lack of enough proficiency, lack of self-confidence in their proficiency, and NNES teachers'

beliefs about target language use (Bateman, 2008; Cooper, 2004; Fraga-Cañadas, 2010; Franklin, 1990). Interestingly, it may be consonant with the general consensus that there is no single agreed-upon definition of effective teaching as in method (Brophy & Good, 1986; Brown & McIntyre, 1993 & Kern, 1995). The results of Huhn's (2012) review of related literature underlying NNS teachers' incompetence in oral language proficiency, especially pronunciation, suggested that NNS teachers need oral language proficiency, the ability to create a classroom environment which facilitates student oral proficiency development, and the ability to think critically about texts and concepts in the foreign language because a strong language classroom requires that teachers can do more than just impart grammatical knowledge. Consequently, it is essential that NNS teachers develop the skills that support this kind of classroom.

As regards the second research question, the study found that Item 4 received the highest mean score ($M=4.5$). Surprisingly enough, this item was related to the classroom management component indicating that *teachers assign a lot of homework*. Moreover, the lowest mean referred to Item15 suggesting that *teachers rarely lose their patience* ($M=2.49$). The results seem to prove that the students appreciate their teachers for what they can do best in the classroom, which is in agreement with the findings of Benke and Medgyes' study (1994). As a matter of fact, they maintained that although teachers were perceived to have their own particular style in teaching, the differences failed to make one better than the other. The results also do correspond with that of Brown (2013) who held that students do, in fact, see differences between their teachers. One of the possible reasons for this congruency may lie in the fact that the globalization of the language is causing a shift towards a more communicative style of ELT, which the NEST is still perceived to be in the best position to accomplish (Kachru, 2004). By the same token, according to Brown (2013), controlling classroom discipline, investing time, choosing syllabi, and constructing a facilitative learning environment impose a huge burden on NNS teachers.

Important to note is that the above-mentioned studies were conducted in ESL contexts which are quite different from an EFL context such as Iran. Item 8 sheds a great deal of light on this issue indicating that "*NNS teachers prefer traditional forms of teaching*". In line with this issue, the study conducted by Yasar (2008) showed that most of NNS teachers in Turkey try to apply a teacher-centered classroom management approach, hence exercising a more controlling management orientation. Therefore, traditional forms of teaching are still used in their academic institutes as perceived by their students.

6. Conclusion

The current study aimed to investigate Iranian NNES teachers' dominant teaching styles and level of oral language proficiency, as perceived by their students. By utilizing an analytic scale for assessing oral proficiency (ASAOP), the results showed that fluency with the highest mean score plays the most significant role in comparison with the other elements including vocabulary, grammar/language use, and pronunciation. Surprisingly enough, pronunciation, as an unsatisfactory factor, received the least mean score that was below the normally presumed mean score. That could have been due to the lack of enough proficiency, lack of self-confidence in their proficiency, and NNES teachers' beliefs about target language use. Then, by adopting a teaching style questionnaire (TSQ) developed by Benke & Medgyes (1994), perceptions of the students toward their NNES teachers' teaching style were reflected in the second research question. In this regard, Item 4 gained the highest mean (4.5) "*my teachers assign a lot of homework*" while the lowest mean (2.49) belonged to Item 15 "*my teachers are impatient*". The first component i.e., classroom management issues, had the greatest mean (3.81) whereas the second component, namely, personal and/or teaching related characteristics gained the lowest mean score (3.44). The results of the current study have practical implications for NNES teachers and students themselves. NNES teachers can benefit from their students' perceptions to better apply diverse and helpful teaching styles and to ameliorate their general language proficiency if they feel they should do.

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The Relationship between Iranian ELT M.A. Students' Mindsets on the Use of Critical Pedagogy and Their Academic Achievement

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Biodata

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Abstract

Nowadays, critical pedagogy (CP), as a recent mode of pedagogy, aims to empower learners and provide justice by offering preferential options and deconstructing authoritative and logocentric tendency in education. This study was conducted to investigate any probable relationship between Iranian ELT M.A. students' mindsets on the application of critical pedagogy and their academic achievement. Besides, this study was an attempt to discover if there is any difference between Iranian male and female ELT students in critical pedagogical mindsets. To this end, a critical questionnaire was administered to 60 ELT M.A. students who were randomly selected out of 90 students at Fars Science and Research University, Iran. Analyzing the data collected through the survey questionnaire revealed that all the students were in favor of utilizing critical pedagogy. The results also indicated that there was a positive correlation

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between students' critical pedagogy mindsets and their academic achievement. However, no significant difference between male and female ELT learners was found.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy, Academic achievement, Students' mindsets, ELT MA students

1. Introduction

At present, one of the key issues to be considered in any educational enterprise is the potential for implementation of critical pedagogy in the tertiary level, where college learners can get prepared for their future plans and occupations, as it can augment the learners' ability to think critically, become creative about subject matter content, strengthen aspiration to learn and create a classroom of an active community which revolves around the learning materials.

Critical Pedagogy (CP) is regarded as a mode of pedagogy which aims to empower learners and provide justice by offering preferential options and deconstructing authoritative and logocentric tendency in education. Moreover, critical pedagogy roots itself in the belief that every citizen deserves an egalitarian education. Education involves passion for one's subject matter, the ability to get student to think critically, being creative about subject matter content, creating a classroom of an active community revolved around the learning of material, and the strong desire to teach and to learn are the passions of education (Rahimi, 2013). Thus, students' education is needed that supports critical reflection and pedagogy.

Based on Sahragard, Razmjoo, and Baharloo (2014), enhancing students' academic achievement and preparing them to progress their society are the primary goals of education; these goals are achieved only if learners are trained to become critical thinkers and responsible for their own learning. However, it seems in traditional approaches not sufficient attention is paid to the crucial role that learners can play in learning, and so the students' lives and society are most often separated from educational contexts. Consequently, this failure has urged scholars to make remarkable contributions to the development of a transformative pedagogy, frequently referred to as critical pedagogy (Abednia, 2009).

According to Monchinski (2008) critical pedagogy addresses the "shortcomings of mainstream educational theory and practice and promotes the humanization of teacher and student, hence critical pedagogy is often treated as a discourse of academics in universities" (p.14). On the other hand, McLaren (2003) defined critical pedagogy as "a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production

of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state” (p. 75). Therefore, to sum up, an educational theory which tries to make student informed of hidden curriculums and inherent inequalities and encourage them to facilitate and perpetuate systematic forms of oppression both within and outside the classroom is concerned with critical pedagogy.

Regarding the importance of the role of critical pedagogy in any learning context, especially EFL contexts and in order to fill the gap in the body of research, this study is conducted to provide insights about the relationship between Iranian ELT M.A. students’ mindsets on the use of critical pedagogy and their academic achievement. In addition, it is aimed to investigate whether there is any difference between male and female ELT M.A. students’ mindsets about the use of critical pedagogy and their academic achievement.

2. Literature Review

The application of critical pedagogy in educational contexts has received adequate research attention over the last decades. In fact, critical pedagogy as one of the most radical changes in English language teaching has turned into a common theme of research and discussion in recent years. Despite its practical implications, however, most of the research on this issue has been limited to its theoretical and conceptual dimensions. In this regard, there have been a few studies in the field of critical pedagogy and its impact on students’ achievements (Milner, 2003; Sadeghi, 2008; Yilmaz, 2009; Zhang, 2009).

Carrilo and McCain (2004) did a survey study to know if critical pedagogy is taught and assimilated by the students to confront the new realities of the crisis of capitalism, or is an academic therapy to reproduce and hold to the traditional educative mode. The results of the study indicated that most educators were not prepared to teach critical pedagogy as a component to their educational program. Moreover, most participants in the study, indicated through surveys, had not received formal education courses in teaching critical pedagogy. In addition, several participants in this study did not have a clearly defined philosophy of critical pedagogy in educational process.

Shin and Crookes (2005) employed critical pedagogy in the classroom through applying slide presentations, travel plans, discussion groups, poster presentations, and written essays. The

findings reported that students highly valued class discussions as sites for listening to their peers' thoughts to further their views and experiences.

Most of the statistical researches indicate that applying critical pedagogy has positive effect in students' outcomes. In this line, Sahragard et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate Iranian EFL teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy and its principles. The results indicated that the majority of Iranian EFL instructors are aware of the principles of critical pedagogy and support the helpfulness of such pedagogy and its premises. The study revealed that in spite of language teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy and their agreement with the positively effective CP principles, they rarely apply this methodology in their teaching.

Abdelrahim (2007) investigated the relationship between gender and experience in teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy. The findings indicated that there was no significant difference between gender and experience in teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy. To support those findings Yilmaz (2009) conducted a study in Turkey to determine the views of elementary school teachers concerning critical pedagogy by gender, education, seniority, and place of school, teachers were moderately in agreement with the principles of critical pedagogy. There was a significant difference among their views according to educational background, professional seniority, and the environment of the school where they worked, while there was no significant difference among their views according to gender.

Alibakhshi and Macky (2011) examined the status of critical pedagogy among Iranian EFL teachers. They suggested that although Iranian EFL teachers were somehow familiar with critical pedagogy principles, they did not have the ability to implement the principles in their EFL classrooms. The findings of their study indicated that the main barriers of applying critical pedagogy are organizational and personal barriers as well as barriers related to learners.

Davari, Iranmehr, and Erfani (2012) investigated another study of Iranian ELT community's mindsets to some practical implications of critical pedagogy in ELT. The findings obtained from the questionnaires revealed that in three categories, namely basing teaching on learners' local culture, including real-life local and global concerns as teaching topics, and developing materials in periphery, the ELT community clearly tended to critical pedagogy. These results indicated that critical pedagogy is going to find a position in Iranian ELT community.

Although critical pedagogy has gained much attention in recent years, it seems that not sufficient pieces of research have been conducted in this field, and Iran's share of these studies is

minimal. Besides, reviewing the related literature indicates that most of the studies done following the application of critical pedagogy by teachers and the role of students are ignored. In addition, much of the available related research has employed some sort of case study in which a single group is studied with regard to the instruction that the participants have received, and their performance has been studied. Very few studies have intended to study critical pedagogy on the part of learners and consider their mindsets in this approach, let alone investigating its application as well as its relationship with the students' academic achievement in learning process by the aim of optimizing their achievements. Accordingly, in this study, the following research questions are addressed:

Q1. What are the Iranian ELT M.A students' mindsets on utilizing critical pedagogy?

Q2. Is there any relationship between critical pedagogical mindsets and academic achievement among Iranian ELT MA students?

Q3. Is there any significant difference between mindsets of Iranian male and female ELT MA students in the application of critical pedagogy?

Considering the research questions, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

H01: Iranian ELT MA students have negative mindsets on utilizing critical pedagogy.

H02: Iranian ELT M.A students' mindsets on the application of critical pedagogy don't have any effect on their academic achievement.

H03: There is not any difference between the mindsets of male and female ELT MA students on the application of critical pedagogy.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were 60 Iranian ELT M.A learners of TEFL at Fars Science and Research University, Iran. They comprised 30 male and 30 female students of TEFL whose ages ranged 22-26. The participants were randomly selected from among 100 students for further data collection procedures. All the participating students had completed 6 years of education and had graduated from university. According to their answers to the pedagogical questionnaire they

were assigned to the three groups: 1) students with traditional mindsets, 2) students with pedagogical mindsets, and 3) students that did not belong to any group.

3.2. Instruments

In order to collect the data, the following instruments were utilized for the purposes of the present study: a critical pedagogy questionnaire and students' grade point averages (GPAs).

3.2.1 Critical Pedagogy Questionnaire

Critical pedagogy questionnaire developed and validated by Davari et al. (2012) contained a total of 10 items using a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"; therefore, the items were typically coded from one to five. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated through Cronbach alpha coefficient and reported as 0.81, and so the questionnaire could be considered as both reliable and satisfactory.

3.2.2 Students' GPAs

As a yardstick to the Iranian male and female students' achievement, their grade point averages (GPAs), calculated by the students' mean score of courses passed by the learners through their academic instruction, were achieved from university archive.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis

Ninety questionnaires were distributed by the researcher through face-to-face contact in Fars Science and Research University, Iran. Some of the students filled it out in the university and some others completed them at home. Finally, 60 forms were returned. Before filling out the questionnaire, the students were informed that their participation was on a voluntary basis, and that their identity would never be disclosed. They were given no additional information about the nature of the research project.

To find the relationship between the students' mindsets on critical pedagogy and their academic achievement, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were applied to describe data collected throughout the research process. In order to compare the normal distribution of the obtained data in the present study Kolmogorov - Smirnov test was used. Person Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient procedure was run to illuminate any significant relationship existed between students' mindsets and their academic achievement. In order to answer the third research question an independent sample t-test was applied to show the differences between EFL male and female students' mindsets on the principles of critical pedagogy.

4. Results

Considering the importance of the role of critical pedagogy in any learning education and context especially in EFL contexts such as Iran and in order to fill the gap in the body of research, the present study attempted to investigate the extent to which critical pedagogy has relationship with Iranian M.A students' academic achievement. The second objective was to find out if there is any significant difference between male and female M.A students' mindsets on the application of critical pedagogy.

Concerning the relationship between Iranian M.A students' mindsets on critical pedagogy and their academic achievement, as Table 1 reveals, most of the items got high to moderate ratings with items number 9, 7 and number 6 getting the highest rating (mean No. 1.36, 1.28, and 1.22), respectively. This indicates that learners considered the application of critical pedagogy as an effective way. Items 4, 10, 3, 5, 2, 8 also got high rating with mean score .95, .93, .90, .85, .84, and .84, respectively. The findings, unquestionably, show that learners had highly positive mindsets on the application of critical pedagogy.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics for All Items of the Questionnaire

	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. English should be thought only through the medium of English.	1.15	.54
2. The international course books used for English instruction are culturally, socially and politically acceptable for our society.	.85	.63
3. The cultural content of ELT materials should be from the English language.	.90	.57
4. First language can be used to facilitate communication and comprehension of English classes.	.95	.54
5. Local and real life concerns and experiences are not good topics in English classes.	.85	.43
6. It is a necessity for Iranian professionals to develop materials and textbooks themselves.	1.22	.63
7. Students' local culture can be a suitable content.	1.28	.57
8. Native speaker of the English is the best teacher of English.	.85	.53
9. Global issues and problems (environmental, social, etc. issues) can be a suitable source of English classes.	1.36	.43

10. American or British pronunciation should not be the only standards in pronunciation.	0	.93	.53
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According to Davari et al. (2012) this questionnaire is categorized in 5 factors. As shown in Table 2, there is not any significant difference between mean scores of all items; that is, according to the mean score norms (students' agreement: $1 < m < 2.3$, students' neutrality: $2.3 < m < 3.6$, and students' disagreement: $3.6 < m < 5$) all factors refer to agreement. These statistics also show there is not any disagreement and natural idea. So it can be concluded that, actually there is no significant difference between the Iranian ELT M.A students' mindsets on the application of critical pedagogy.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for All Factors of the Questionnaire

Factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
fac1	60	1.00	3.50	2.11	.54
fac2	60	1.00	3.36	2.18	.57
fac3	60	1.40	3.40	2.22	.43
fac4	60	1.00	3.75	2.07	.63
fac5	60	1.00	3.40	1.78	.53
Valid N (listwise)	60				

In order to compare the normal distribution of the obtained data in the present study Kolmogorov -Smirnov test was used. Table 3 indicates the significant level (Sig.) for all four factors in this study are more than the norm (0.05). Therefore, no significant difference is seen between different parts.

Table 3.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Factors	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	
	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Fac1	1.05	.221
Fac2	.85	.47
Fac3	.85	.47

Fac4	.97	.30
Fac5	.90	.36

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient was applied to illustrate the relationship between Iranian M.A students' mindsets on the application of critical pedagogy and their academic achievement. The results are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4.

Correlation between Variables of the Study

		Critical Pedagogical Mindsets	Academic Achievement
Critical Pedagogical Mindsets	Pearson	1	.455**
	Correlation	.	.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)	60	60
	N		
Academic Achievement	Pearson	.455**	1
	Correlation	.003	.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	60	60
	N		

Based on the results of Table 4, the Pearson correlation between critical pedagogical mindsets and academic achievement is 0.45 and Sig. is 0.003. So, it could be concluded that there is a positive correlation between learners' critical pedagogical mindsets and their academic achievement.

Independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there was significant difference between mindsets of male and female Iranian ELT MA students in the application of critical pedagogy and their genders. The results are represented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Independent Samples T-Test for Males and Females' Mean Scores

	N	mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference s	f	Sig. tailed)	(2-
Male	30	5.09	1.25	-.30	8	.83	.41
Female	30	5.39	.79				

The findings illustrated in Table 5 report that the mean score is ($M= 5.09$, $SD=1.25$) for males' mindsets on the application of CP and is ($M= 5.39$, $SD=.79$) for females'. In this table the t score is $-.833$ and Sig. is $.410$. Accordingly, although there is a difference between mean scores for males and females, this difference is not statistically significant.

5. Discussion

As stated before, the goal of this study was to identify at first, the Iranian ELT M.A students' mindsets on utilizing critical pedagogy; also to probe if there was any relationship between Iranian M.A students' critical pedagogical mindsets and their academic achievement; and finally, to clarify the probable difference among male and female Iranian M.A students concerning their critical pedagogical mindsets.

Concerning the results of Table 1 all the student participants in this study have the same mindsets on the application of critical pedagogy. According to Z scores and Sig. (2-tailed) illustrated in Table 3, no significant difference is seen between different factors of the questionnaire in the present study. Therefore, it can be concluded that the hypothesis of distribution of data is normal. And single-variable parameters test such as Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient and independent sample t -test to examine students' mindsets on the use of critical pedagogy can be used. Also, based on the results of Table 2, the actual mean scores gained are between 1 and 2.3; thus, 99% can be concluded that from the perspective of Iranian ELT MA students, their mindsets on the use of critical pedagogy are highly positive. As a result, the first null hypothesis is not confirmed.

According to the results obtained from Table 4 there is a positive significant relationship between Iranian M.A students' critical pedagogical mindsets and their academic achievement. Because of the degree of this correlation ($r = 0.45$) it is revealed that the closer Iranian M.A students' mindsets are in the application of critical pedagogy, the more likely they are to be viewed achievement in their academic study. Thus, the second hypothesis in the present study is not verified; that is, the academic achievement of Iranian ELT MA students increased through using the application of critical pedagogy.

With regard to the third research question that deals with the role of gender in critical pedagogical mindsets among Iranian ELT MA students, it is found there is no significant difference among male and female Iranian M.A students concerning their critical pedagogical

mindsets (the total scores of Sig. 0.41); therefore, the third null hypothesis in the present study is verified.

In line with the current study, Sadeghi and Ketabi (2009) investigated the alternative role for Iranian critical pedagogues. The findings showed that students who were enabled to challenge the oppression and subjugation that may distort and constrain their modes of thinking and acting had more positive attitude towards critical pedagogy. Similarly, the results of McLaren (1989) on the true nature of critical pedagogy indicated positive attitudes towards the application of CP among language learners, since they believed the true nature of critical pedagogy promotes students' empowerment. It was also reported that students believed that CP was relevant to their needs and agreed that CP gives them useful information, and hence, more CP should be used in their education.

The findings of this investigation are also in line with Huang (2011) who examined the students' perspectives of critical literacy in EFL reading and writing in Taiwan. The findings revealed that ELT students had positive attitudes towards using critical pedagogy to learn English. The results also indicated that "reading became a conscious process through which students uncovered hidden messages and contemplated multiple perspectives" (p.152).

In the same vein, to support the findings of the previous studies, Shin and Crookes (2005) employed critical pedagogy in the classroom through applying slide presentations, travel plans, discussion groups, poster presentations, and written essays. The findings reported that students highly valued class discussions as sites for listening to their peers' thoughts to further their views and experiences. The outcomes also pointed out that students could engage in dialogues by asking questions, revealing disagreements, as well as clarifying others' comments.

6. Conclusion

As a post-modern approach and a relatively new paradigm in thinking about education, critical pedagogy derives its interest from critical theory. Accordingly, critical pedagogy provides principles, inspirations and recommendations to improve human education and to direct it to democratic and oppression-free direction. In this vein, CP as an educational approach aims to remove social and political injustice and tries to empower learners to critically question, reflect and act in an undemocratic and inequitable society. That's why critical pedagogy is occasionally referred to as other terms including critical work, transformative pedagogy,

participatory approach, emancipatory literacy, critical education, pedagogies of resistance, liberatory teaching, radical pedagogy, post-modern pedagogy, border pedagogy, and pedagogies of possibility.

Critical pedagogy in Iranian educational context, in spite of its overall support by teachers, may be related to the principles of the education system in both national education system and in-service teacher training system. It is almost well known that every student in critical pedagogy classrooms must be an independent and creative learner. However, it seems that critical thinking is one of the controversial issues that has been largely overlooked in teacher training in Iran.

EFL/ESL research on the prevailing concept of critical pedagogy has for the most part rotated around improving social equality and injecting it into educational system. In an attempt to extend this line of research to ELT students' academic success, the current study aimed to investigate the Iranian ELT M.A students mindsets towards the utilizing of critical pedagogy and to probe if there was any relationship between learners' critical pedagogy mindsets and their academic achievement. Besides, the study examined the role of gender in critical pedagogical mindsets.

Concerning the final results of the study, the findings obtained rejected the first null hypothesis, and it was concluded that Iranian ELT M.A students generally had positive mindset and supported critical pedagogy. In terms of academic success, the results of this study rejected the second null hypothesis, indicating that students who agree with critical pedagogy were more successful than others. In addition, no statistically significant difference was reported between male and female students' attitudes towards the application of critical pedagogy; that is, gender did not have any role to play in perception of critical pedagogy.

Considering the afore-mentioned results achieved in the study, it is concluded that it is necessary to develop and design programs for TEFL students the focus of which is critical pedagogy. This will in turn help them to enhance their awareness, independence and creativity and cope with their flexibility in a more suitable and productive style.

The results of the current study show that students' critical pedagogical points are significant in their academic success. In this vein, several implications can be drawn from the present study, as follows:

1. One implication for language teachers is that any kind of critical pedagogy instruction can be more useful and productive than the traditional type. In addition, as students' critical

pedagogical points are significant in their academic achievement, it can offer ways to help the learners to improve their second language skills while developing a sense of critical consciousness of issues of social structures in the world around them.

2. Developing critical pedagogy instruction could be helpful for local materials writers and language teachers in developing and critically evaluating ELT materials. Subsequently, the model might contribute to students' becoming more critical consumers of information.

3. Language learners are also advised to make themselves familiar with critical pedagogy and its application in their learning. In a similar vein, it is necessary to develop and design programs for TEFL students the focus of which is critical pedagogy. This will in turn help them to cope with their flexibility in a more suitable way and more productive style.

The findings of the present study can generate new questions for the study of critical pedagogy which can be addressed in the future studies. Some prospects for further research are as follows:

1. The current study only used a limited number of EFL students. However, having a greater number of students as a source for data may lead to different and more comprehensive results.
2. This study was conducted quantitatively, yet another study can be done qualitatively to triangulate the findings.
3. The study can be replicated at different subjects in other educational settings such as different schools to compare and contrast the results. In this way, it would be interesting to know whether or not critical pedagogy in diverse subjects can have similar effects.
4. This study did not examine the role of some social factors such as religion and socioeconomic conditions on critical thinking, so another study can investigate the role of such salient factors in religious nations like the Middle East.
5. Further studies need to be carried out taking into account different variables which may have an effect on students' attitudes including age, motivation, stereotypes, and so on.

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Conversation Analysis: A Case Study of Teacher Talk, IRF Structure and Teachers' Questions in Junior High School

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Biodata

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Abstract

Conversation analysis, as one of the best tools for critical reflection of what happens in the class, is employed to find problems and remedies through a cyclical and ongoing research process. The present case study sought to investigate the amount of teacher talk versus student talk, IRF structure of conversation (i.e. Initiation, response and feedback) and the type of teachers' questions in the English text book used for the third grade at junior high school in Iran. All of the 160 participants were native speakers of Persian language, and also, all of the six

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teachers had the same educational background that is B.A in TEFL. The transcripts of all the six classes were recorded for a period of two month four hours per week in a natural setting. The conversations of the transcripts were analyzed in terms of teacher talk, IRF structure and types of questions, and finally the means and average percentage of them calculated. The result shows that the frequency of teacher talk and IRF structure are more than student talk, and other types of structure while the amount of display and referential questions are almost the same. The findings concluded that although the syllabus used in this book is communicative-oriented, the classes are more teacher-dominant. The results also have some implications for teachers to have balance between teacher talk time and student talk time.

Keywords: Classroom conversation analysis, Teacher talk, IRF structure, Teachers' questions

1. Introduction

Classroom conversation analysis includes the analysis of text and talks in classroom context on the one hand and language socialization of ESL learners, co-construction of social relationships, identities, ideologies and social positioning (power and gender) on the other hand. Among the domains mentioned above, the analysis of text and talks in EFL classroom contexts are more significant than others since they are more accessible and empirical than other scopes of classroom conversation analysis. The analysis of interaction between teacher and students has more pedagogical implications for teachers who lead the process of learning than the analysis of other types of interactions (Abdolrahimi Javid, Zahed- Babelan, & Namvar, 2013; Rashidi & Rafieerad, 2010).

1.1 Classroom Conversation Structure

The first systematic study of classroom conversation was concerned with ethnographic studies dated back to 1910 and the first audio recorder device was used in the 1930s and 1960s in order to transcribe the conversation of classroom to be analyzed later on (Arthur, 2008).

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) were the first scholars who developed a system of classroom conversation analysis based on Halliday's scale and category grammar. Based on the data they collected from primary school children, they proposed the IRF structure (that is, IRF respectively stands for Initiation from teacher by asking a question, Response from the student by answering to that question and Feedback by teacher to verify or reject the answer and make students to follow up the course of interaction. Mehan (1979) investigated the effective pedagogical

practices, and described classroom interactions to uncover the “good sense” or local rationality of these practices. The aim of his research, however, was not an apologetic one (i.e., to support existing practices) but to realize how classroom participants are doing what they are doing to uncover why they are doing it, in another term describing the interaction and then finding the whys behind them.

Griffin and Shuy (1978) studied the development of communicative functions of some primary school children, and found the systematicity of social order in classroom conversation through communicative processes, such as turn taking and attentional norms. Tsui (1994) also differentiated three primary classes of acts based on three moves of exchanges between teachers and students (initiating acts, responding acts and follow-up acts).

Among different models of classroom analysis, conversational model of analysis is the concern of our research since it studies the description of turns, sequences, meaning and the recurrent sequences of utterances in the classroom, and also our research studies three aspects of classroom conversation: teacher talk, IRF structure and teacher’s type of questions.

1.2 Teacher Talk

The importance of teacher talk as the main medium of transferring information is vivid for all researchers. Let’s begin with an example to illustrate the problem; if an English teacher talks about 45 minutes for a class of 1.5 hours with 20 students, every student could only find the chance of speaking about 2 to 3 minutes, let alone the crowded classes of some countries that take about one hour. Teacher Talk develops more and attracts the attention of scholars when Krashen and Terrell (1983) introduced the natural approach in which they focused more on comprehensible input with teacher talk as the main source of this input. Wesche and Ready (1985) investigated the differences between teacher talk in first and second language in terms of speech rate, the number and duration of pauses, frequency of tensed verb and sentence nodes (clauses), percentage of imperative sentences and the amount of nonverbal information use. They found significant differences between first language teacher talk and second language teacher talk. Another study was done by Chaudron and Richard (1986). They investigated the influence of two types of discourse markers on learner’s comprehension: macro-markers that show macro-structure of a lecture, for instance what the topic of today’s discussion is, and micro-markers, such as now, so, then, that signify links between sentences within the conversations. The result indicated better comprehension on the macro-markers version of the spoken lecture information

than the baseline version whereas the micro-marker version did not reveal significantly better scores on comprehension than the baseline version. The other study investigated the teacher talk in terms of its alignment or congruence with second language learning theories, such as interactionalists, functionalists and cognitivist, and some authors' pedagogical recommendation. The teacher talk was not compatible with a real life communication since they lacked variety and novelty; on the contrary, their talk was hurtful, stressful and pernicious to students (Gharbavi & Iravani, 2014). The role of teacher talk was analyzed in terms of constructive talk, for example direct error correction, content feedback, prompting, extended wait time and repairing and also in obstructive talk, for instance turn completion, teacher echo and extended use of initiation-response-feedback turn taking (Inceçay, 2010).

Based on the above-mentioned research inquiries, teacher talk is one of the determinant factors for increasing teaching learning efficiency in pedagogical settings. Since the amount of teacher talk necessarily restricts students' interaction with their teachers and peers, it is important to be explored in language classes.

1.3 Teacher's Question

The types of Teacher questions construct or destruct the ongoing interaction between teacher and students. Questions serve as a tool for both initiative feedback and even following up conversation. There are different classifications for questions. Barnes (1978) introduced the first classification in which four types of questions are distinguished: Factual questions (what), Reasoning questions (how and why), Opening questions (those that need no reasoning) and Social questions that influence students' behavior. Another classification based on conversational data was introduced by Kearsley (1976) and developed by Long and Sato (1983). They divided questions into echo and epistemic ones; the former is used for student's understanding of information and the latter is used to excite acquisition of information. In this research, we adopt Ellis' (1994) taxonomy of question type as display and referential questions. Display questions ask about the knowledge that you have already known whereas referential questions ask about the knowledge you spontaneously use based on your inferences and reasoning. Another research done by Boyd and Robin (2006) proved that in IRF conversation structure, the use of display questions are more referential ones since the nature of this structure does not easily generate students' output. Almost a similar study was carried out by Christoph and Nystrand (2001). They proposed that teacher should use authentic questions, almost

referential ones, to increase teacher-student interaction in the language classroom. Most of the questions asked by teachers were display questions in the study conducted by other researchers (e.g., Faruji, 2011; McNeil, 2012; Xin, Luzheng & Biru, 2011). Display questions are commonly used in first language acquisition process which was studied by Walsh (2011), but referential questions are more common in natural conversations (McNeil, 2012).

The present study aims to find the frequency of these two types of questions because one of them makes students produce imitative conversation and short responses, and the another one have the students make creative conversations and long compound sentences. Since finding the frequency of teacher talk time, IRF conversation structure and teacher's type of questions are probably interrelated to one another, it is significant to be investigated. These three variables are also determinant factors for evaluation of an efficient English language class. Another reason that justifies this investigation is that no study has been done with the characteristics of this sampling. The following research questions were answered in the present study:

How is teacher talk distributed across class time in grade three in junior high school?

How well does classroom conversation structure follows IRF structure in grade three in junior high school?

How frequently are display and referential questions used by teachers in grade three in junior high school?

2. Method

A descriptive case study research design was used to explore the issue under investigation. The nature of the study is qualitative that is represented through frequency and percentage.

2.1 Participants

Three classes of male and three classes of female students who were 15 years old studying in grade three junior high school were randomly selected among the educational districts of Esfahan. All of them were Persian native speakers with the same educational background. The three female and three male teachers were also native Persian with 10 years of teaching experience who had B.A in TEFL (teaching English as a Foreign Language). Also all of them took part in an in-service learning program, about 130 hours, held for English teachers. All of the 160 students took part in English classes four hours per week and studied Prospect Series, Book 3, (Alavimoqadam, 2014).

2.2 Instruments and Data Collection

The six English classes were audio recorded for two month. Since the observer had to be present in the class for taking field notes to clarify data transcription and analysis, observation etiquettes were performed. It means permission from administrators of the schools and instructors of the classes had been gotten first to visit and observe their classes; likewise, we had a debriefing session for each class in order to minimize intrusion. The objectives and benefits of the research are stated to student, and the contribution of the participant to this study were explained generally. The detailed account of the research were not discussed in order not to change the performance of teachers and students.

2.3 Data Analysis

Transcriptions of the first three sessions of each class were not considered in order not to have artificial outcome. Finally all the three aspect of the research, teacher talk time, IRF conversation structure and type of teachers' questions, were analyzed based on the transcriptions of the six classes. Three female and three male experienced instructors analyzed the data because of the reliability-related issues and the large volume of the data. The means and average percentage of the teacher talk time, IRF conversation structure and type of teachers' questions were calculated for all of the participants.

3. Result

3.1 Teacher Talk Time, Student Take Time and Other Activities

As it is illustrated in Table 1, the time, percentage and mean of teacher talk, students talk and other activities of all the six classes were calculated. The results showed that the average of teacher talk time within 1.5 hour class is 61 minutes whereas students talk time and other activities are 19 minutes and 9 minutes, respectively. If we divide the average of student talk time to number of students in each class that is 26, less than one minute will be assigned to each student.

Table 1.

Teacher Talk Time

Classes	Teacher Talk Time (min)	Percentage (%)	Student Talk Time (min)	Percentage (%)	Other Activities Time	Percentag e (%)
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Class 1	60	66.66	18	20	12	13.33
Class 2	52	57.77	24	26.66	14	15.55
Class 3	66	73.33	20	22.22	4	4.44
Class 4	63	70	17	18.88	10	11.11
Class 5	72	80	12	13.33	6	6.66
Class 6	54	60	24	26.66	12	13.33
Means	61.16	67.96	19.16	21.28	9.66	10.74

3.2 IRF Conversation Structure

Table 2 shows the number, percentage and mean of IRF structure compared to other types of conversation structure. Analysis of conversation structure of the teachers demonstrated that IRF structure was used more than the other types. So based on Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) IRF model, teachers were more dominant than students. The percentage of IRF structure in six classes during this period is 76% while the average percentage of other type of conversation structure is approximately 24%. Since in this structure the teacher has two turns and students have one turn, it is a problem of teacher-student dialogues in IRF conversation structure.

Table 2.

Conversation Structure

Classes	IRF Structure		Other Structures	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Class 1	30	73.17	11	26.82
Class 2	28	70	12	30
Class 3	36	80	9	20
Class 4	34	77.27	10	22.72
Class 5	40	81.63	9	18.36
Class 6	26	72.22	10	27.77
Means	32.33	76.08	10.16	23.91

3.3 Teacher's Type of Questions

The mean of the referential questions in proportion to the display questions is about equal as it is shown in Table 3. The probability is that more than half of the exercises in the textbook

contains referential questions and the teachers follow the course of instruction based on the content of the book.

Table 3.

Teacher's Type of Questions

Classes	Frequency of Display Questions		Frequency of Referential Questions	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Class 1	17	43.58	22	56.41
Class 2	16	44.44	20	55.55
Class 3	22	61.11	14	38.88
Class 4	19	54.28	16	45.71
Class 5	24	70.58	10	29.41
Class 6	10	29.41	24	70.58
Means	18	50.47	17.66	49.52

To sum up the result, the distribution of teacher talk time compared to student talk time are respectively is 67.96% of 21.28%. It shows that the classes were more teacher-dominant and teachers had authority in the class. To answer the second research question, the finding shows that 76.08% of conversation structure is IRF structure and 23.91% belongs to other type of conversation structure. Again it indicates the prominent role of the teacher in conversation since in this structure teacher has two turn whereas student has one turn. 50.47% of teachers' type of question is assigned to display questions and 49.52% to referential questions although the dominant conversation structure is IRF.

4. Discussion

The results of the study indicate that teacher talk time almost covered more than half part of the class time, and just a little time was assigned to students' interaction and other activities. The findings regarding the IRF conversation structure illustrated in Table 2 indicate that this type of structure is used more than the other types. This again proves teacher dominancy in the classroom with teachers producing more utterance than students. Considering IRF conversation structure, the results have congruence with the outcome of the study done by Boyd and Robin

(2006). However, it has disagreement regarding the compatibility that exists between the increase of IRF structure and display question in that research.

The findings related to teachers' type of questions revealed that the proportion of display questions are almost equal to referential questions. It is somewhat surprising that in other research findings, the proportion of display questions are more than referential ones (Inceçay, 2010; Gharbavi & Iravani, 2014). The study done by Christoph and Nystrand (2001) revealed that the number of display questions is more than referential ones that was against our findings. Teachers were used to asking display questions more than referential questions in the studies carried out by other researchers (e.g., Faruji, 2011; McNeil, 2012; Xin, Luzheng & Biru, 2011). However, the findings of the current study do not support similar previous researches up to now. The reason for this is not clear but it may have something to do with the textbook content and teachers' in-service learning programs held by the ministry of education. There is no congruence between the data illustrated in Table 2 and 3 that show the percentage of IRF conversation structure and the amount of display questions, and they are not in line with the findings reported by Boyd and Robin (2006) who found that most of the questions in IRF structures were display questions. The unique feature of this research in comparison to other researches is that the aforementioned three aspects of the research issue were investigated synchronously in a semi-longitudinal study with a large sample whereas in other studies mentioned in the literature both the time and sample size are limited to one to three classes within a short period of time.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the research regarding the two variables namely teacher talk time and IRF teachers' conversation structure are closely interrelated with one another. Teacher talk time has congruence with the amount of IRF structure whereas teacher's using of IRF structure could not necessarily restrict the amount of display questions and teacher's dominancy in the classroom. Thus all of the inferences indicate that teacher's talk time is not an independent variable to be measured and modified irrespective of taking into account other variables, such as teacher's conversation structure, types of questions, and probably the types of exercises and lessons of the textbook being taught in the classroom. So there exists compatibility between textbook content and types of teacher's questions since half of the questions included in the exercises of the book are referential ones.

It has implications for teachers to use referential question, students' interaction and various types of conversation structure that create negotiation of meaning to increase the efficiency of learning in English language classrooms. It has also implications for syllabus designers to increase the amount of referential questions and classroom activities within the exercises of the book based on the time allocated to this course.

Considering some of the contradictory result of the study in comparison to other research findings, further studies needed to find the congruence between the amount of display and referential questions used by teachers and textbook. Also, further researches needed to pinpoint the correlations between different types of conversation structure specially IRF one and teachers type of question.

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