The Iranian EFL Journal   December 2015   Volume 11 Issue 4

The Iranian EFL Journal   December 2015   Volume 11 Issue 4

Table of Contents:

December 2015 Foreword

By Paul Robertson and Rouhollah Askari Bigdeli

This issue includes six papers with focus on such diverse issues as corrective feedback, identity, out-of-class activity, cooperative assessment, demotivation, and vocabulary learning in the EFL context of Iran. In the first paper, Moussa Ahmadian and Azar Tajabadi took a sociocultural perspective on corrective feedback in L2 using a pretest, posttest, delayed post-test design. The authors investigated whether negotiated and nonnegotiated feedback resulted in different accuracy improvement in both revision of the texts and production of new texts. Involving 40 Iranian EFL learners in a 7-week treatment, they found that negotiated feedback, as compared to nonnegotiated feedback, turned out to be more effective in improving grammatical accuracy in writing.

Conducting a qualitative study, Gholamreza Zareian and Hamid Reza Hashemi took a critical look at the issue of identity in Iranian high school EFL textbooks. Their study aimed to investigate how diverse identity options are addressed in such textbooks. By interviewing eight experienced Iranian EFL teachers, the authors found that a) the cultural identity of both target language group and the home group was ignored by the writers, b) the multiple, dynamic and contradictory identity of the learners as the intended audience of the textbooks was denied, and c) writers by adopting authoritarian identity left limited identity options for the audiences.

In the third study, Masoud Tavakoli Dinani and Ehsan Rassaei investigated the differential impact of the teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches on Iranian EFL learners' out-of-class activities. Involving 44 Iranian EFL learners in a 10-week treatment and using a questionnaire and interviews to collect the data, the authors found that learner-centered class, as compared to the teacher-centered one, was more effective in engaging the learners in out-of-class activities. They also found that although the learner-centered approach was capable of

encouraging the learners to do different out-of-class activities, the activities were more associated with receptive skills rather than productive skills.

In the fourth study, Gholam-Reza Abbasian and Leila Fayezi Manshouri Moghaddam investigated if collaborative assessment can develop Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing ability and alleviate writing anxiety. In this study, 42 Iranian intermediate EFL learners were randomly assigned to a team-based collaborative assessment group and a learner-teacher assessment group. After a ten-session treatment, the authors found that collaborative assessment which was implemented in team-based assessment group was more effective in enhancing the learners' writing ability and alleviating their writing anxiety.

In the fifth study, Touraj Talaee and Frezia Sheikh.ol. Eslami involving 142 Iranian language learners from private language institutes in a survey study explored the concept of demotivation among Iranian EFL learners. In particular, the authors focused on three potential sources of demotivation, that is, learners, teachers and class environment. The results of their study indicated that all three sources could cause demotivation among language learners.

The last study carried out by Zivar Dinarvand and Shahin Sheikh investigated the effect of pictorial strategy on EFL vocabulary learning and retention. Adopting a control-group design with 40 Irnaian intermediate learners, they compared two techniques of vocabulary learning: pictorial strategy and word list learning technique. The authors found that pictorial strategy, as compared to word list learning technique, was more effective both in learning and long-term retention of EFL vocabularies.

We hope that this first quarterly issue contributes to the betterment of teaching English as a foreign language and helps language teachers improve their teaching practices. At the end, we woud like to express our gratitude to the contributors and the reviewers who made this issue possible.

A Sociocultural Perspective on Corrective Feedback in L2: The Effect of Negotiated versus Nonnegotiated Feedback on the Accuracy Improvement in Writing

Moussa Ahmadian[1] **and Azar Tajabadi**
Arak University, Arak, Iran

Biodata

Moussa Ahmadian is an associate professor in Deptarment of English Language and Literature at Arak University, Arak, Iran. He received his PhD in SLA from The University of Sheffield, UK, in 1995. His fields of interest are Psycho/sociolinguistics and Instructed SLA, TEFL, Critical Discourse Analysis, Translation Studies, and Literature, on which he has published and presented a number of papers in inter/national journals and conferences. He has carried out a number of research projects on Translatology, Textology, and Intertextuality, and has supervised a great number of MA theses relating to his fields of study. Email: m-ahmadian@araku.ac.ir

Azar Tajabadi is a Ph.D. student of TEFL at Arak University. Her research interests include sociocultural theory of learning, task-based instruction, language assessment, and writing in a foreign language. She has published a number of papers relating to her fields of interest in international journals. Email: a-tajabadi@phd.araku.ac.ir

Abstract

A key component of teaching second language writing is corrective feedback. The sociocultural theory of mind, with its focus on social negotiations, views corrective feedback as a form of joint participation and transactions between the learner and the teacher. This article examined whether the type of feedback (negotiated versus nonnegotiated) resulted in different accuracy improvement in both revision of the texts and production of new texts. To this end, 40 homogenous EFL learners participated in a 7-

---

1 Department of English Language and Literature, Arak University, Arak, Iran

week instruction on paragraph writing in different genres and wrote 6 in-class texts, which they revised later. They were also assessed in three testing periods (i.e. pre- post- and delayed post-tests). The learners' revised drafts of their writings, and their performance on three testing periods were analyzed via t-tests and ANOVA. It was found that negotiated feedback was more effective than nonnegotiated feedback in both short-term (revisions) and long-term (post- and delayed post-tests) assessments of grammatical accuracy in writing. Also, the variation observed in the uptake of feedback across the 6 pieces of writing in the revision phase suggested that L2 learners do not exhibit static knowledge and production of new linguistic forms on different occasions.

Keywords: Grammatical accuracy, Negotiated corrective feedback, Sociocultural theory, Written corrective feedback.

1. Introduction

Written corrective feedback (henceforth CF) in L2 writing, also known as 'grammar correction' or 'written error correction' (Truscott, 1996, 1999), has been hotly debated in the context of second or foreign language acquisition for more than two decades since Truscott (1996, 1999) recommended adopting a 'correction-free approach'. A different view towards this issue was put forward by Ferris (1999, 2004) and Hyland and Hyland (2006) who argued that feedback is a central aspect of ESL/EFL writing classes around the world. The significance of this debate is evident in the growing body of research in this field. As an instance, in the *Journal of Second Language Writing,* the articles of written CF are among the most cited and downloaded ones (Ferris, Liu, Sinha, & Senna, 2013).

The importance of CF in L2 writing is closely related to the paramount status of writing accuracy in second and foreign language contexts. When the aim of writing classes and courses is to develop learners' overall quality in producing texts in the target language, linguistic accuracy deserves a considerable attention, especially in academic and professional settings. To achieve this goal, providing L2 learners with corrective feedback has been regarded as a responsibility by most teachers of second or foreign language (Bitchener, 2012) and a great deal of time and energy is devoted by teachers in L2 writing classes to providing written CF (Ferris, Brown, Liu, & Stine, 2011; Ferris, Liu, & Rabie, 2011; Lee, 2008, 2009).

In the same line, Nassaji (2011) maintains that an essential aspect of classroom pedagogy deals with learners' errors in an L2. Furthermore, it is suggested that "in writing classes, the ways teachers choose to express their feedback can affect students' reactions to it" and may have a significant impact on writing development (Panahi, Birjandi, & Azabdaftari, 2013, p.3). However, research on feedback has yielded different and even conflicting results. With the aim of contributing to the field of research on CF, the present study investigated the effect of negotiated versus nonnegotiated feedback on the accuracy improvement in EFL writing. The following section surveys some of the major findings from research that has examined the issues in CF in the scope of this study.

2. Literature Review

This part is divided into two sub-sections: The first one covers an overview of major categories and research on CF; the second one deals with explaining the theoretical framework of the study.

2.1. Overview of Corrective Feedback

There has been an extensive debate in second language acquisition literature on the role CF plays in treating L2 written errors. The starting point of the debate was put forward by Truscott's (1996). He questioned the extent to which ESL learners benefit from written CF on the basis that the gradual and complex process of acquiring linguistic knowledge in a second language is overlooked by error correction (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005). Maintaining that giving feedback on grammatical errors is a waste of time, Truscott argued that teachers' focus in language classrooms can be directed to more constructive practices. He concluded that "grammar correction has no place in writing courses and should be abandoned" (p. 328). Truscott's view has been criticized by many researchers (e.g., Chandler, 2003, 2004; Ferris, 1999, 2004; Ferris & Helt, 2000). Ferris (1999, 2004) argued that Truscott's viewpoint is based on inadequate research findings and maintained that growing research evidence is providing support for the effects of CF for some learners (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Chandler, 2003; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Sheen, 2010).

Scholars who support the crucial role of CF in learning second and foreign language writing propose that in such environments learners usually receive inadequate positive feedback to lead

them towards the correct forms of the language and help them realize the mismatch between their existing interlanguage and the knowledge of the target language (Rutherford, 1987; White, 1989, 1991). This feedback can also help L2 learners "narrow the range of possible hypotheses that can account for the data" (Carroll & Swain, 1993, p. 358). Moreover, from teachers' perspective, giving feedback is necessary for three main reasons: providing a reaction to learners' efforts, helping them improve their writing skill, and justifying the grade the learners are given (Hyland, 2003). Learners, also, consider CF important and expect to receive it on their writings (Ferris, 1995; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

Thus, generally, current research in this field is in more agreement regarding the facilitative role of CF. According to Ferris et al. (2013), in more recent research and for most practitioners, "the question around written CF is not *if*, but *how best* to provide it" (p. 308). One category of different types of feedback is that of direct versus indirect CF. Direct or explicit feedback is the instance in which the correct form is provided near or above the linguistic error (Bitchener et al., 2005; Ferris, 2003). This feedback can take different forms such as crossing out an unnecessary (or inserting of a missing) word/phrase/morpheme, provision of the correct form or structure, and written (or oral) meta-linguistic explanation (Bitchener, 2008). Indirect CF, on the other hand, indicates the occurrence of an error in one of these four ways: circling or underlying the error, indicating the number of errors in a sentence on the margin, using a code for showing the place or the type of error (Bitchener, 2008; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Thus, the diagnosis and correction of the error is left for the learner. A distinction in the indirect feedback strategy is that of coded versus uncoded feedback. Coded feedback points to the exact location and type of the error (e.g., PP means an error is the use of propositions), while uncoded error does not specify the type of the error (e.g., underlining or circling the error).

The results of research on the effects of indirect and direct feedback are not consistent. The research findings range from effects of indirect CF (e.g., Ferris & Helt, 2000; Lalande, 1982; Lee, 1997), direct CF (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Chandler, 2003), to no difference between the two (e.g., Ferris et al., 2000; Robb et al., 1986; Semke, 1984). Also, the reports on the coded and uncoded indirect feedback have more frequently yielded a non-significant difference between the two (e.g., Ferris & Robert, 2001; Robb et al., 1986). Overall, the indirect type of CF has been supported because of its value in engaging learners in guided

learning and problem solving, thus fostering long-term acquisition and retention (James, 1998; Lalande, 1982). In this strategy, first the learners notice the errors and then are pushed to engage in hypothesis testing which, according to Ferris (2002), induces deeper internal processing leading to the internalization of the correct target language linguistic form.

Another distinction that has been made in the CF literature is related to the number of targeted error categories. Focused feedback refers to feedback that is pre-selected and provided on a few error categories. Some scholars have suggested that since learners acquire different domains of linguistic knowledge and error categories in different ways, error categories should be narrow (Schwartz, 1993; Truscott, 1999). Bitchener (2008, p.108) recommends "one or only a few error categories at a time". The studies adopting this approach have focused on one error category (e.g., Nassaji & Swain, 2000), two error categories (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Nassaji, 2011; Sheen, 2007), or three error categories (e.g., Bitchener et al., 2005), at large.

Unfocused feedback, on the other hand, is given on a comprehensive range of error types. Few studies have used unfocused CF (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2006; Nassaji, 2007). In the present study, the unfocused approach to error correction has been employed. One reason is that it is believed that targeting one or few error categories may result in the learners' neglect of others (Xu, 2009). If a narrow error category is chosen, learners might become aware of the research focus and this might invalidate the findings (Bitchener, 2009). Furthermore, this approach does not meet the requirements of a real writing classroom. Learners, in most cases, do not hand in their compositions expecting to be corrected only on articles or preposition, especially in lower proficiency levels and foreign language learning in which the learners have not yet mastered numerous linguistic features of the target language.

Ferris and Roberts (2001) suggested that research should investigate both short-term effects of CF on learners' revisions of the same text and long-term effects of CF on learner's production of new texts. Writing scholars have maintained that feedback is effective in terms of language learning when it is noticed, processed, and acted upon (Bitchener, 2012; Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Sachs & Polio, 2007). Engaging learners in revising their texts might be a beneficial strategy for adding to the effects of feedback they receive on their original texts. Thus, in L2 writing studies, revision is considered central in the development of learners' writing abilities (Ferris, 2010).

According to Chandler (2003), "having the students do something with the error correction besides simply receiving it" is a crucial factor in improving their accuracy (p. 293).

While research on effects of CF in revision is abundant (e.g., Ashwell, 2000; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1999, 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Nassaji, 2011), revision by itself is regarded inadequate and insufficient because it does not demonstrate the effects of CF extended to future texts (producing new texts) (Sheen, 2007; Truscott, 2007). The need for investigating the long-term effects of feedback in the production of subsequent and new texts has been emphasized by Bitchener et al. (2005) and Nassaji (2011). In a longitudinal study Van Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken (2012) found out that written CF led to improvement in accuracy in both text revisions and new texts. Similar studies have shown the long-term effects of written CF on writing of new texts (e.g., Bitchener, 2008, 2009; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Sheen, 2007; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009). Other studies, however, have found non-significant results (e.g., Fazio, 2001; Polio et al., 1998; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992).

Providing some learners with CF and depriving others from that have been an ethical issue in research in the field (Ferris, 2004, 2006). According to Bitchener (2008), studies that have not included a control group (e.g., Chandler, 2000; Ferris, 1995; Lalande, 1982) cannot be read as evidence of the effects of CF in general but only of the relative effects of different types of feedback. However, Bitchener seems to have overlooked the realities of the context of writing classes. Guenette (2007, p.43) addresses a similar point by stating that "there is no virtue in using a no-correction group" and 'no feedback' is not an option for a real writing class. Learners have frequently stated that they expect to receive CF on their errors (Ferris, 1995; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Neglecting this expectation might dissatisfy and even demotivate learners. Also, some teachers find it unethical to withhold feedback from their learners when they require it. Some studies have attempted to compensate for the lack of feedback by giving 'summary end notes on the errors' (Ferris, 2006) or feedback on the quality and organization of content (Bitchener et al., 2005) in control group. Although these strategies have been employed to satisfy the ethical concerns of the researchers and the institutions, they might act as intervening variables and contaminate the results.

2.2. Theoretical Framework: Negotiation and Guided Learning

Most studies on CF on written errors have focused on unidirectional feedback which is characterized as lacking interaction or negotiation between the teacher and the learner. In this non-reciprocal type of feedback, the teacher always provides the feedback and the learner receives it (Nassaji, 2011). In such cases, the type of CF that the learners need and how they respond to the CF are not taken into account. The alternative and possibly more effective type of feedback might be CF which is provided through negotiation and interaction. Negotiation is considered as a technique for reaching solution to the communicative problems which arise in interaction and can take the form of meaning negotiation or form negotiation. In the former, the aim is facilitating communication through making input more comprehensible; while in the latter the attention is paid to producing more grammatically correct utterances (van den Branden, 1997). CF on grammatical errors belongs to the category of negotiation on form. Although, the positive role of negotiation in CF has been shown in numerous studies (e.g., Lyster, 1998, 2002; Nassaji, 2007; Ohta, 2000; van den Branden, 1997), they have mainly focused on oral errors rather than written ones.

In the same line, the issue of feedback in L2 learning has been studied from the perspective of sociocultural theory of learning (e.g., Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Nassaji, 2011; Nassaji & Swain, 2000). From a sociocultural perspective, learning of second languages is a process that can be attributed to learner's participation in social activities. During the instruction in an L2 classroom, the learners and teachers negotiate the meaning and socially develop the structure and function of the language. This joint construction enables the learners to learn and to develop. Accordingly, in this framework, CF is considered to focus on the social negotiation. Thus, the unidirectional conventional view in which the teacher is the provider and the learners are the receivers of feedback is changed into a social interactionist view in which feedback takes the form of joint participation and transactions between the learner and the teacher.

The sociocultural perspective highlights the social and dialogic nature of feedback (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). A similar concern has been stated by Bitchener (2009) who suggested that, in order to examine individual performance issues, studies on CF should have a sociocultural focus in their designs. In such a framework, feedback is effective to the extent that negotiation and meaningful transactions are established between the learner and the teacher, because this

12

negotiation (referred to as scaffolding in literature) enables the teacher to discover what Vygotsky (1978) referred to as the learners' 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) and attuned the feedback accordingly (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000; Nassaji & Swain, 2000). The emphasis on social interaction, collaboration, and joint problem solving is embedded in Vygotsky's conceptualization of ZPD which is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Closely related to this concept in the sociocultural framework is the notion of guided support or scaffolding which according to Donato (1994) is "a situation where a knowledgeable participant can create supportive conditions in which the novice can participate, and extend his or her current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence" (p. 40). In such a scaffolded interaction, the effects of feedback are dependent on how it is negotiated and adapted in the course of negotiation between the teacher and the learner. In an early but influential study, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) focused on the role of negotiation in correcting L2 written errors using their "regulatory scale" for providing feedback in oral negotiations between three English learners and a tutor. This scale, which was also used in the present study, is discussed in details in the design section. Their study showed that the negotiated feedback was effective in facilitating learning of new forms.

A similar line of study was adopted by Nassaji and Swain (2000). They compared the effect of negotiated help versus random help on the learning of English articles. They characterized negotiated help as the CF which is provided within the learners' ZPD and random help as the CF which is provided irrespective of the learners' ZPD. Qualitative and quantitative data gathered in tutorial sessions on writing English compositions by two Korean learners of English showed that negotiated help was more affective in improving the learner's accuracy in producing English articles. More recently, Nassaji (2011) distinguished between 'negotiated CF' in which "the teacher encourages and pushes the learner further to discover and correct their errors" using regulatory scale, and 'nonnegotiated CF' in which "the teacher provides a correction of the error with no negotiation and interaction with the student" in correcting students' written grammatical errors (p. 323-3). In a classroom-based study, he examined the effect of oral negotiation on L2

written errors through providing three types of CF: nonnegotiated CF, CF with limited negotiation, and negotiated CF. The results provided supporting evidence for the effectiveness of feedback involving negotiation even when such negotiation is limited. An interesting finding of Nassaji's study was that negotiated CF was more effective in reducing learner's article errors than preposition errors. This finding led him to conclude that although negotiated CF plays a facilitative role in addressing L2 written errors, there is a difference in the degree of its effect for different linguistic features.

Overall, the conflicted body of evidence in the field of CF makes it rather impossible and illogical to make any firm conclusions. According to Ferris et al. (2013) there is an 'obvious' and 'startling' gap in the recent research on CF and the "individual learner characteristics as they receive, process, and apply written CF" (p. 308). A similar gap, though much wider, is evident between the studies on the potential effects of negotiation in correcting written errors. Arriving at conclusions on the superiority of negotiated CF over nonnegotiated CF is only possible if both types are incorporated within a single study and their effect is compared. Such was the motivation for this research. Thus, the present study builds on and adds to the research base on CF in L2 writing by posing two research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between EFL learners receiving negotiated corrected feedback and those receiving nonnegotiated corrective feedback on their short-term accuracy improvement (revision of the same text)?

2. Is there any significant difference between EFL learners receiving negotiated corrective feedback and those receiving nonnegotiated corrective feedback on their long-term accuracy improvement (producing new text)?

3. Method

3.1. Participants and Instructional Context

The study was conducted in the English Language and Literature Department at Arak University, Iran from December 2014 to March 2015. A number of 40 learners, in two intact classes, participated in all treatment and testing sessions. They were male and female L2 learners majoring in English literature and English translation, aged 19 to 22. Based on their results on a proficiency test, the learners were at low-intermediate level. The two intact classes were randomly assigned to negotiated CF group (20 learners) and nonnegotiated CF group (20

learners). The course in which the participants had enrolled was entitled *Advanced Writing*. The aim of the course was familiarizing the learners with different genres of writing (e.g., narrative, process) and the focus was on paragraph writing. The learners attended this course as a prerequisite for enrolling in *Academic Essay Writing* course. According to their oral reports, none of the participants had any previous experience of academic writing in English. Both groups were instructed by an instructor with teaching experience in English as a foreign language for 10 years and general and academic writing for 7 years.

3.2. Design

In this study, a variation of blended design recommended by Ferris (2010) was used. During 10 weeks, learners first wrote a pretest; in the instruction they wrote different texts, received teacher CF, revised the same texts (iteration repeated for six times); wrote a posttest; and finally, they wrote a delayed-posttest with a one month interval. In some studies on corrective feedback, the delayed-posttest has been administrated with a two month interval (e.g., Bitchener, 2009) or a 10-week interval (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010) after the instruction. Considering the fact that the participants in the present study were university students and the possibilities for language learning and receiving feedback in the other courses they attended, this interval was reduced to one month for controlling intervening variables more. The same interval was used by Pashazadeh and Marefat (2010) and Van Beuningen et al. (2012). A visual representation of the design of the study is provided in Figure 1.
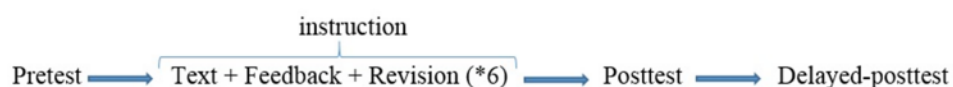
Figure 1. A Blended Design for Providing CF in 10 Weeks (adapted from Ferris, 2010)

3.3. Targeted Linguistic Errors

As discussed in the literature review, an unfocused approach to error correction was employed. A number of 14 error categories were coded to be used and addressed in the feedback phase of the study. The learners received a sheet containing the Table of error codes with their descriptions (Appendix A) and one example for each error code.

3.4. Procedures

As shown in Appendix B, in the first day of the treatment, proficiency level of learners was determined by the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). The test is developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and includes 60 multiple-choice items assessing the learners' knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar. The writing section of the test was considered as the pretest which also functioned as a diagnostic test for placing learners in the same level of writing ability. Based on their OPT scores, all the learners were at low-intermediate level with similar accuracy performance in their pretest. The learners were assigned to two groups: negotiated CF and nonnegotiated CF. The same kind of instructions, activities and writing topics were used in both classes.

From week 1 to week 7 the learners received instructions on paragraph writing in six different genres (*narrative, description, reason, process, compare & contrast, classification*) based on the course book *Developing Composition Skills* by Ruetten (2012). In each session, after being instructed on one of the writing genres, the learners were given 30 minutes to write a paragraph in that genre. The texts that learners produced during these timed-writing assessments were collected and learners received two different CF types (i.e., negotiated or nonnegotiated). In the nonnegotiated CF group, the learners' received their texts in which the linguistic errors were underlined and indirectly coded, while in the negotiated CF group, the learners attended one-to-one conferences with the instructor/researcher during which their linguistic errors were located and discussed through negotiation. Learners in both groups were required to rewrite their compositions using the feedback they had received (revision, short-term effect).

On the last day of the instruction, an immediate posttest was administered in order to measure the long-term effect of the two types of CF (producing new text). Bitchener (2008) proposed that in order to have a valid measurement of progress, the pretest and posttest need to be comparable (the same genre should be used). Accordingly, in this study, in the pretest, the topic was '*Why did you choose Arak University for studying English*'. In the posttest, the learners wrote about '*Why did you choose your course of study (English literature or translation)*'. Also, a delayed posttest was given to the learners with a one-month interval. The topic was '*Why did you choose enrolling in Advanced Writing course*'. Thus, the topics in all the three testing periods belonged to the genre of 'analyzing reasons'. A sample of these three tests is also provided (Appendix C).

3.5. Types of Corrective Feedback

In this section, the two feedback types employed in this study are discussed.

3.5.1. Nonnegotiated Indirect, Coded, and Focused Written Feedback

In this type of feedback the teacher read learners' compositions carefully and underlined any instances of grammatical errors and wrote a code above them. Then, he returned the compositions to students for revision. An example of this feedback is provided below. Also, for a sample of nonnegotiated CF on learners' texts refer to Appendix D:

Example 1

<p style="text-align:center;">PP</p>

But there was nothing I could do <u>for</u> it then.

3.5.2. Negotiated Focused Feedback

This type of feedback involved negotiation between the teacher and the learner guided via the step-by-step regulatory scale of Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994). In this scale, each episode of negotiation can consist 12 levels beginning with the most indirect and implicit feedback (self-regulation) and moving gradually (and attuned to the learners' needs) toward the most direct and explicit help (other-regulation). In other words, the responsibility of identifying and correcting the error was first put on the learner and then jointly shared by the teacher and the learner, and finally assigned to the teacher. Different levels of this scale along with their descriptions and examples are provided in Appendix E. An example of levels 3, 5, 6, 7 is provided in the following extract. Also, for a sample of negotiated CF on learners' text refer to Appendix F.

Example 2

Teacher (T):	Let's check here 'when I was choosing Arak University I hadn't any reasons'. Do you think there is something wrong with this sentence? (Level 3)
Student (S):	Umm… No!
T:	Focus on this part 'I hadn't any reasons' (Level 5)
S:	(some pauses) I had not? Is more formal? Is better?
T:	That is a good point! But my point is that there is something wrong with the way you made the past tense (Level 6)
S:	'Hadn't'?! Oh ok (laughs)! 'Didn't have'
T:	Yes! Very good.

3.6. Analysis

The handwritten texts were collected by the researcher and word-processed (with no changes). This was done to make the rating process easier. To insure the reliability of analysis of error identification and correction, two other TEFL teachers with an average of 9.5 years of teaching experience assisted the researchers in rating the students' writings. The inter-rater analysis of error identification and correction was done in three phases:

(1) The errors in the learners' texts in the instruction phase were coded and identified by the researchers. Checking the inter-rater reliability showed an initial agreement of 94% in error identification and 93% in error coding. A further collaborative analysis solved the respective 6% and 7% of agreement.

(2) Following Ferris and Roberts (2001), the learners' editions in the revision phase were marked by the raters as *correct* or *incorrect/no change*. They reached a 98% agreement on the texts they analyzed. The remaining 2% disagreement was collaboratively solved.

(3) For the three testing periods (pre-post- and delayed post-tests) the errors were identified and coded by one of the researchers. The raters did an inter-rater reliability check on this analysis. Initially they reached 91% and 93% rates of agreement in error identification and error coding, respectively. They collaboratively analyzed the remaining 9% and 7% until they reached 100% agreement.

4. Results

In this section, the result of investigating the extent to which two different types of feedback were effective in improving the accuracy of the learners' writing when making revisions and producing new texts is presented. Statistical procedures used in analyzing the data includes descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation), t-tests (to compare the differences across treatment groups), and repeated-measure ANOVA (to assess differences across treatment groups and assessment phases).

The first research question investigated the difference in the effect of negotiated and nonnegotiated CF on short-term accuracy improvement of learners. To answer this question, first, the percentage of error uptakes were calculated for learners' revisions of each of the six in-class texts they had written. A variation of Chandler's (2003) formula was used for calculating

the value of uptake. While she measured error rate as a ratio of the total number of errors to total number of words, here the focus was on the number of corrections out of the total number of errors. So the measure used was $\frac{number\ of\ corrections}{number\ of\ errors}$. The mean percentage of uptake was computed. Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics and Figure 2 shows a visual representation of the uptake.

Table 1

Percentage of Error Uptake and Paired-Sample T-Tests for Revisions

	Session 1: Narrative		Session 2: Description		Session 3: Reason		Session 4: Process		Session 5: Compare & Contrast		Session 6: Classification	
Group	%	*p*	%	*p*	%	*p*	%	*p*	%	*p*	%	*p*
Negotiated	89.67	.00*	90.37	.001*	85.26	.00*	92.50	.00*	92.04	.00*	94.78	.00*
Nonnegotiated	78.82	.00*	65.94	.00*	78.41	.00*	75.12	.013*	80.44	.00*	77.02	.00*

%: mean percentage of uptake = number of corrections/number of errors × 100
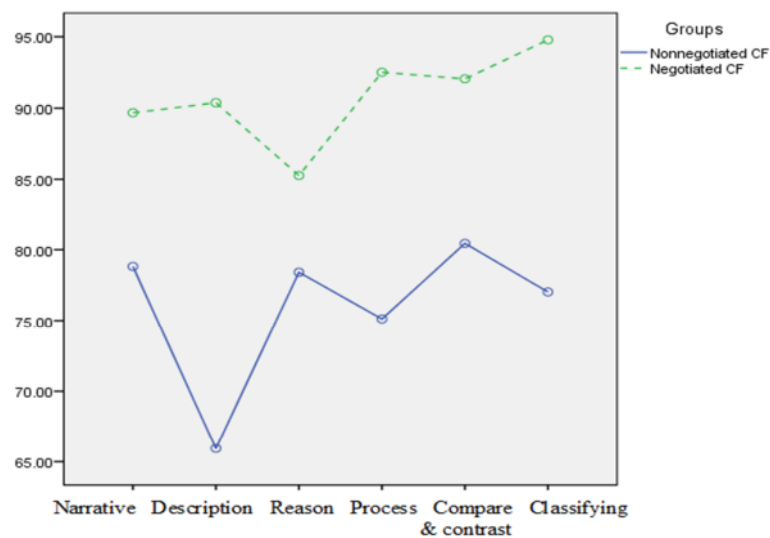*p:* Paired-samples t-tests (time 1: error correction; time 2: error revision)
*p <.05

Figure 2. Error Uptake in the Groups across Six Revisions

As can be seen, there is not a linear and upward pattern of uptake across the six revisions for the two groups. The learners in the negotiated group had their lowest rate of uptake in session 3:

Reason (M= 85.26, SD= 7.31) and their highest rate in session 6: Classification (M= 94.78, SD= 4.64). On the other hand, in the nonnegotiated group the lowest gain in uptake occurred in session 2: Description (M= 65.94, SD= 15.39) and their highest rate was in session 5: Compare and Contrast (M= 80.44, SD= 4.24).

A series of paired-samples t-tests were run to see if the uptake that occurred in each text and for each group is significant or not (within-group analysis). As seen in Table 1, the results are significant for all the six texts across all the sessions indicating that the uptake significantly occurred as a result of both types of CF.

To further compare the overall extent of this effect, an independent-sample t-test was run using the overall mean percentage of uptake in all the sessions for each group (between- group analysis). Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and the results of t-test analysis. As can be seen, there is a significant difference between the rate of uptake in nonnegotiated (M=66.80, SD= 1.79) and negotiated (M=90.77, SD= 3.94) groups indicating that learners in the negotiated group corrected their errors significantly better than those in the nonnegotiated group. This difference is also evident in the considerable distance between the two uptake lines of Figure 2.

Table 2

Independent-Sample T-Test for Uptake

	Groups	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Uptake	Negotiated CF	20	90.77	3.94	38	-24.737	.00
	Nonnegotiated CF	20	66.80	1.79			

The second research question dealt with the difference in long-term effects of negotiated and nonnegotiated CF on learners' accuracy improvement. Another variation of Chandler's (2003) formula was adopted. While she used the total number of errors and the total number of words for calculating *error rate*, here the researchers intended to measure the *accuracy rate* through calculating number of accurate forms by subtracting the total number of errors from the total number of words. Riazantseva (2012) argued that for having a valid comparison of error rates across samples with different length, the word count must be normed on the basis of an averaged length. In the present study, the average length of students' writing samples was equal to 100. Thus, as in Chandler's study, the measure of accuracy over 100 words was calculated. Table 3

shows the accuracy mean for the three testing periods for each group. Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the data. As can be seen, both groups show a nearly equal level of accuracy at the pretest. At the posttest, both negotiated (M=94.05, SD= 1.09) and nonnegotiated groups (M=88.80, SD=1.47) had gains in their accuracy mean. Although more subtle, the increase in the accuracy mean is also evident in the delayed posttest for both negotiated (M=95.50, SD= .71) and nonnegotiated groups (M=90.15, SD= 1.13).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Accuracy Mean By Group and Testing Periods

Groups	N	Pretest		Posttest		Delayed posttest	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Negotiated	20	81.10	1.74	94.05	1.09	95.50	.71
Nonnegotiated	20	81.40	1.81	88.80	1.47	90.15	1.13
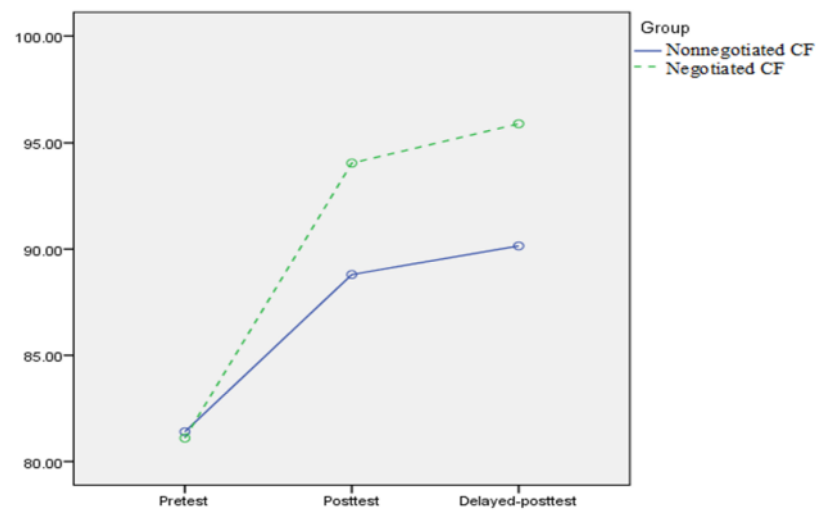
Figure 3. Accuracy Mean for the Groups over Time

In order to compare the groups' accuracy means, a mixed between-within ANOVA was computed for which the accuracy scores were considered as the dependent variable with time/test (three levels) and CF type (two levels) as independent variables. Table 4 shows the results of the analysis. The test revealed that there was a significant interaction between CF type and testing periods, Wilk's Lambda=.23, F (2, 37) = 59.24, p =.00. There was a substantially main effect for time, Wilk's Lambda= .02, F (2, 37) = 922.05, p =.00, with both groups showing an increase in

their accuracy means across the three testing periods. The main effect comparing the two types of CF was also significant, F (1, 38) = 114.64, p =.00, suggesting a significant difference in the effects of the two CF types.

Table 4

Mixed Between-Within ANOVA Analysis

Source	df	F	p
Between subjects			
CF type	1	114.64	.000
Within subjects			
Time	2	922.05	.000
Time x CF type	2	59.24	.000

5. Discussion

The findings of this study show the effectiveness of negotiated over nonnegotiated CF on a new piece of writing (posttest). Also, the significant extent to which this level of accuracy was retained over a month is shown in the learners' performance on another new piece of writing (delayed posttest).

With regards to the short-term effects of the two types of CF, the results of this study provided more support for a causal relationship between feedback and revision. Learners in both negotiated and nonnegotiated feedback were successful at revising, the majority of their errors in the revisions. In her study, Chandler (2003) found support for inclusion of the revision phase in CF research. She found that accuracy improvement of learners who were not required to revise their texts was equivalent to those who received no feedback. In other words, if learners do not revise their texts, it might be the same as they have not received any feedback. This is in line with Ferris's (2010) proposition that in the revision phase, learners have enough time to "think about and process the corrections and attempt repairs and modifications" (p. 194).

The results of the revision phase of the present study corroborate the results found by Bitchener et al. (2005). Like their study, although an increase in the overall accuracy of the participants' writings across the three tests and the six writing genres was observed, the pattern of improvement from one time to another was not a linear and upward one. One reason can be

that, the learners' initial ability at using a form correctly regresses later before it eventually is used according to the target language norms (Ellis, 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Pienemann, 1989). In other words, "L2 learners, in the process of acquiring new linguistic form, may perform them with accuracy on one occasion but fail to do so on other similar occasions" (Bitchener, et al., 2005, p. 191). As a result, it is most likely that a form is not acquired immediately or permanently after it has been highlighted through feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This variation in accuracy can also be attributed to the differences in the nature of the tasks (different writing genres) and individual performance factors. This latter point is also highlighted in sociocultural theory of mind (especially the activity theory) which proposes that an individual might perform differently on the same task in different occasions "as a result of complex interaction of individual, situational, and task factors" (Bitchener et al., 2005, p. 202).

Another contribution of the findings to the study on CF is the measurement of accuracy not only on the revisions of the original texts but also on the new pieces of writing (posttest and delayed posttest). The support for inclusion of these new compositions comes from the view held by (Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2004) and Ferris (1999, 2004) that only when accuracy is measured on new texts, the effect of written corrected feedback can be assessed (Bitchener, 2008).

Overall, the findings of the present study are in line with studies that have proposed that the feedback delivered through the dialogue between teacher and learners helps learners develop their writing abilities and improve the quality of their texts (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Williams, 2002). Negotiation can be more efficient because through interaction with the teacher opportunities are provided for learners to receive the guided help within their ZPD. In the interaction with their teachers and peers, learners need to be scaffolded and supported (Nassaji & Swain, 2000) in negotiating the meaning and socially developing the structure and function of the language. In the present study, this joint construction helped the learners to move along in their ZPD so that they could identify their errors and correct them with fewer levels of help in subsequent texts. This is evident in how student A received negotiated CF on her errors on verb-subject agreement in two successive texts with the scaffolding provided by the teacher. This scaffolding which took the form of dialogic interactions between the teacher and the student is presented in Episode 1 and Episode 2 below.

Episode 1, Text 1

Teacher (T):	Read this sentence please. (Level 2)
Student (S):	"One of the main reasons are university's location".
T:	Is there something wrong in this sentence? (Level 3)
S:	No!
T:	There is something wrong with the verb. (Level 6)
S:	Main reasons were?
T:	No. (Level 4)
	The verb does not agree with the subject. It is not suitable for it. (Level 7)
S:	Um.. but there are many reasons like location!
T:	You're right! Are you writing about many reasons or just one reason? (Level 9)
S:	University's location as a reason.
T:	You say "one of the reasons", so you should use "is". "One of the main reasons is university's location". (Level 10)
	There must be an agreement between your subject and verb. If your subject is singular, your verb should be too. (Level 11)

Episode 2, Text 2

T:	Let's read this sentence. "There are many strategies which may works in this situation" (Level 2)
S:	It's a good sentence [laughing].
T:	It is. But is there something wrong with it? (Level 3)
S:	Ah… work? Strategies refer to more than one so "strategies which may work".
T:	Yes! Good.

These two episodes represent examples of improvement in the learner's ability to both identify and correct her errors. The first time that the learner encountered the error in Episode 1, she could not locate and identify the error after receiving four levels of scaffolded help. Even when the error was identified by the teacher at Level 7, the learner was not able to correct it and three more levels of help had to be provided. Thus, eight levels of help in the regulatory scale were used to help the learner to identify and correct her error on verb-subject agreement. However, when an error in the same category was encountered during receiving negotiated CF on the second text, the learner was able to identify the error with receiving only two levels of help and could correct it by herself. Thus, the process of proving and receiving CF was carried out much more quickly, which indicates the effectiveness of negotiated CF on both the speed and the quality with which the feedback is adopted and incorporated by the learner. Through mediation, the teacher in consort with the learner dialogically con-constructed a ZPD in which "feedback as regulation becomes relevant" and is incorporated by learner to modify her interlanguage system (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994, p. 480).

Another support for using negotiated feedback in writing development is that "what is effective feedback for one student in one setting is less so in another" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 88). Adopting a sociocultural perspective towards providing feedback, teachers tailor their feedback to suit their learners' backgrounds, needs, and preferences. A mediated interaction provides abundant opportunities for learning (Lee, 2014). The knowledge which is co-constructed and appropriated through the interaction between the learner and the teacher can become a linguistic resource available for subsequent individual use (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012).

Additionally, the importance of focusing on individual differences is more evident in research which has shown that some learners benefit from CF while others do not, irrespective of what approach teachers take (Guenette, 2007). Form a sociocultural perspective, the learners' receptiveness of CF can be under the influence of their activities, goals, and attitudes (Bitchener, 2012). Activity theory distinguishes between the task that learners are given to perform and the activity that they engage in while performing the task (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010). Thus, the success and rate of information processing is bound to individual factors related to context, performance, and motivation. Accordingly, it can be proposed that the context of joint problem solving and scaffolded help in the negotiated feedback group might have contributed to an increase in learners' positive attitude toward the feedback they received which in turn might have fostered its long-term effect.

Furthermore, learners' might be inattentive to teachers' feedback because of their fear of being corrected. In a joint problem-solving and scaffolded help, teacher guides the learners step-by-step towards error identification and correction. This can bring about an atmosphere of trust and support which in turn may help learners in reducing or overcoming their uncomfortable feelings of being corrected.

Another reason for the superiority of negotiated feedback over written indirect feedback can stem from the research that has argued the indirect feedback causes confusion among learners because in some occasions they fail to understand or remember the meaning of the error codes. Since in the present study the learners were given a table of error codes, it is most likely that rather than forgetting the meaning of the codes, they might have simply ignored referring to them, relying on their memories, and mixing the codes or confusing one for another. Ferris and

Roberts (2001) explained how this can be recurrent phenomenon with lower proficiency learners. In such situations the learners in the nonnegotiated feedback had no access (both in correction and revision) to the teacher/researcher to clarify the vague points for them. On the other hands, those in the negotiated feedback group had teacher/researcher at their immediate disposal at least while receiving the feedback (not in the revisions), and could ask for clarifications or explanations.

Finally, according to Hyland and Hyland (2006), "the ultimate aim of any form of feedback should be to move students to a more independent role where they can critically evaluate their own writing and intervene to change their own processes and products where necessary" (p. 92). Based on the findings of the present study, the negotiated feedback is more successful at achieving this goal.

6. Conclusion and Implications

With the aim of contributing to further research on the effect of providing different types of CF on writings of L2 learners, the present study investigated the difference in the short- and long-term effect of negotiated and nonnegotiated CF on the accuracy improvement of EFL learners' writings. It was found that negotiated CF had more significant effects on both revisions and production of new texts. The findings adds to the growing body of research in this field by supporting the propositions that there is no what Guenette (2007, p. 51) refers to as "CF recipe", and a 'one-size-fits-all-approach' approach to error treatment is unlikely to be effective or appropriate (Ferris, 2010). A collection of factors related to classroom context, type of error, proficiency level of learners, genre and type of writing contributes to the success or failure of CF.

The findings of the present study have several implications in L2 writing classrooms. Teachers might consider adding negotiated CF to their current practice with the aim of aiding their learners in short-term and long-term accuracy improvement. Also, instead of focusing only on revision or producing new text, teachers can employ a combination of both these approaches which in turn may be more beneficial for the learners in improving their writing accuracy.

Since few or no research has compared the effect of oral negotiated feedback with written nonnegotiated feedback on the improvement in accuracy in writing, the findings of the present

study are noteworthy. However, future research should take into consideration a variety of factors before generalizable findings can be obtained. Further studies should be carried out in different contexts and with learners at different proficiency levels. Also, the effects of feedback on other genres and different types of writing such as argumentative essays should be investigated.

One concern in the present study, which is shared by other similar studies (e.g., Nassaji, 2011; Nassaji & Swain, 2000), is the different amount of time-on-task in conducting negotiated versus nonnegotiated feedback: the nonnegotiated CF is static in term of time-on-task meaning that the duration in which the learners receive feedback is equal for all of them. On the other hand, the negotiated CF has a fluctuating time-on-task because the duration, nature, and amount of negotiation between the teacher and each of the learners are not fixed or predictable. Although Nassaji and Swain (2000, p. 48) regard this "negotiated rather than static" time-on-task as one of the reasons for the effectiveness of negotiated feedback, further research which is in favor of equal time-on-task in experimental designs should be cautious about this difference.

Furthermore, providing effective feedback requires skilled teachers (Panahi et al., 2013). Teachers should be equipped with thorough knowledge of the target language forms and structures. Also, in case of employing negotiated and scaffolded feedback, teachers should be familiar with concept and principles of scaffolding (see Van Lier, 1996) and be experienced in working flexibly with regulatory scale and providing CF on-the-spot. Some teachers might not have that enough time or patience for giving such a detailed, scale-based, and step-wised feedback. Teachers might be encouraged to practice developing the skill of using negotiated CF for both themselves and their learners provided that they are made aware of the beneficial short-term and long-term effects of such a feedback type.

The diversity of the learning and teaching contexts and the varying characteristics of individual learners and teachers raise new questions for future investigations on the effects of different CFs. It is to be hoped that continuing research in this field can be of benefit for both teachers and learners.

References

Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (1994) Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the zone of proximal development. *Modern Language Journal,* 78, 465-483.

Ashwell, T. (2000). Patterns of teacher response to student writing in a multiple-draft composition classroom: Is content feedback followed by form feedback the best methods? *Journal of Second Language Writing, 9*(3), 227-257.

Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 17*(2), 102-118.

Bitchener, J. (2009). Measuring the effectiveness of written corrective feedback: A response to ''overgeneralization from a narrow focus: A response to Bitchener (2008)''. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 18*(4), 276-279.

Bitchener, J. (2012). Written corrective feedback for L2 development: Current knowledge and future research. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(4), 855-860.

Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2009). The relative effectiveness of different types of direct written corrective feedback. *System, 37*(2), 322-329.

Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2010). The contribution of written corrective feedback to language development: A ten month investigation. *Applied Linguistics, 31*(2), 193-214.

Bitchener, J., Young, S., & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 14, 191-205.

Carroll, S., & Swain, M. (1993). Explicit and implicit negative feedback: An empirical study of the learning of linguistic generalizations. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 15, 357-386.

Chandler, J. (2000). *The efficacy of error correction for improvement in the accuracy of L2 student writing*. Paper presented at the AAAL conference.

Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 12, 267-296.

Chandler, J. (2004). A response to Truscott. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 13, 345-348.

Donato, R. (1994). Collective scaffolding in second language learning. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 33-59). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fathman, A., & Whalley, E. (1990). Teacher response to student writing: Focus on form versus content. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 178-190). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fazio, L. (2001). The effect of corrections and commentaries on the journal writing accuracy of minority- and majority-language students. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 10*(4), 235-249.

Ferris, D. R. (1995). Can advanced ESL students be taught to correct their most serious and frequent errors? *CATESOL Journal,* 8, 41-62.

Ferris, D. R. (1999). The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes. A response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 8, 1-11.

Ferris, D. R. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Ferris, D. R. (2003). *Response to student writing: Implications for second language students*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ferris, D. R. (2004). The ''Grammar Correction ''debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 13, 49-62.

Ferris, D. R. (2006). Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues* (pp. 81-104). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ferris, D. R. (2010). Second language writing research and written corrective feedback in SLA. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 32, 181-201.

Ferris, D. R., & Helt, M. (2000). *Was Truscott right? New evidence on the effects of error correction in L2 writing classes.* Paper presented at the American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference.

Ferris, D. R., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be? *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 10, 161-184.

Ferris, D. R., Brown, J., Liu, H., & Stine, M. E. A. (2011). Responding to L2 students in college writing classes: What teachers say and what they do. *TESOL Quarterly,* 45, 207-234.

Ferris, D. R., Liu, H., & Rabie, B. (2011). The job of teaching writing: Teacher views of responding to writing. *Writing and Pedagogy, 3*(1), 39-77.

Ferris, D. R., Chaney, S. J., Komura, K., Roberts, B. J., & McKee, S. (2000). *Perspectives, problems, and practices in treating written error.* Colloquium presented at TESOL Convention, Vancouver, BC.

Ferris, D., Liu, H., Sinha, A., & Senna, M. (2013). Written corrective feedback for individual L2 writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 22*(3), 307-329.

Guenette, D. (2007). Is feedback pedagogically correct? Research design issues in studies of feedback on writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 16, 40-53.

Hyland, F. (2003). Focusing on form: Student engagement with teacher feedback. *System,* 31, 217-230.

Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). Feedback on second language students' writing. *Language Teaching,* 39, 83-101.

James, C. (1998). *Errors in language learning and use.* White Plains, NY: Addison-Wesley Longman.

Kepner, C. G. (1991). An experiment in the relationship of types of written feedback to the development of second language writing skills. *Modern Language Journal,* 75, 305-313.

Lalande, J. F. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal,* 66, 140-149.

Lee, I. (1997). ESL learners' performance in error correction in writing: Some implications for college-level teaching. *System,* 25, 465-477.

Lee, I. (2008). Understanding teachers' written feedback practices in Hong Kong secondary classrooms. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 17, 69-85.

Lee, I. (2009). Ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written feedback practice. *ELT Journal,* 63, 13-22.

Lee, I. (2014). Revisiting teacher feedback in EFL writing from sociocultural perspectives. *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(1), 201-213.

Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (1999). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lizotte, R. (2001). Quantifying progress in an ESL writing class. *MATSOL Currents, 27*(1), 7-17.

Lyster, R. (1998). Negotiation of form, recasts, and explicit correction in relation to error types and learner repair in immersion classrooms. *Language Learning, 48,* 183-218.

Lyster, R. (2002). Negotiation in immersion teacher-student interaction. *Interactional Journal of Educational Research, 37,* 237-253.

Nassaji, H. (2007). Elicitation and reformulation and their relationship with learner repair in dyadic interaction. *Language Learning, 57,* 511-548.

Nassaji, H. (2011). Correcting students' written grammatical errors: The effects of negotiated versus nonnegotiated feedback. *Studies in Second Language and Teaching, 1*(3), 315-334.

Nassaji, H., & Cumming, A. (2000). What's in a ZPD? A case study of a young student and teacher interacting through dialogue journals. *Language Teaching Research, 4,* 95-121.

Nassaji, H., & Swain, M. (2000). A Vygotskyan perspective on corrective feedback in L2: the effect of random versus negotiated help on the learning of English articles. *Language Awareness, 9*(1), 35-51.

Ohta, A. S. (2000). Rethinking interaction in SLA: developmentally appropriate assistance in the zone of proximal development and the acquisition of L2 grammar. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 51-78). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Panahi, P., Birjandi, P., & Azabdaftari, B. (2013). Toward a sociocultural approach to feedback provision in L2 writing classrooms: The alignment of dynamic assessment and teacher error feedback. *Language Testing in Asia, 3*(13), 1-10.

Pashazadeh, A., & Marefat, S. (2010). The long-term effect of selective written grammar feedback on EFL learners' acquisition of articles. *Pazhuhesh-e Zabanha-ye Khareji, 56,* 49-67.

Pienemann, M. (1989). Is language teachable? Psycholinguistic experiments and hypotheses. *Applied Linguistics,* 10, 52-79.

Polio, C., Fleck, N., & Leder, N. (1998). ''If only I had more time'': ESL learners' changes in linguistic accuracy on essay revisions. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 7, 43-68.

Qi, D. S., & Lapkin, S. (2001). Exploring the role of noticing in a three-stage second language writing task. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 10, 277-303.

Riazantseva, A. (2012). Outcome measure of L2 writing as a mediator of the effects of corrective feedback on students' ability to write accurately. *System,* 40, 421-430.

Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly,* 20, 83-93.

Rutherford, W. E. (1987). *Second language grammar: Learning and teaching*. New York: Longman.

Ruetten, M. K. (2012). *Developing composition skills: Academic writing and grammar* (3rd ed.). Boston: Heinle ELT.

Sachs, R., & Polio, C. (2007). Learners' uses of two types of written feedback on a L2 writing revision task. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 29, 67-100.

Schwartz, B. (1993). On explicit and negative data effecting and affecting competence and linguistic behavior. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 15, 147-163.

Semke, H. (1984). The effects of the red pen. *Foreign Language Annals,* 17, 195-202.

Sheen, Y. (2007). The effect of focused written corrective feedback and language aptitude on ESL learners' acquisition of articles. *TESOL Quarterly,* 41, 255-283.

Sheen, Y. (2010). Differential effects of oral and written corrective feedback in the ESL classroom. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 32, 203-234.

Sheen, Y., Wright, D., & Moldawa, A. (2009). Differential effects of focused and unfocused written correction on the accurate use of grammatical forms by adult ESL learners. *System,* 37, 556-569.

Sheppard, K. (1992). Two feedback types: Do they make a difference? *RELC Journal,* 23, 103-110.

Storch, N., & Wigglesworth, G. (2010). Students' engagement with feedback on writing: the role of learner legacy. In R. Batstone (Ed.), *Sociocognitive perspectives on language use/learning* (pp. 166-85). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning, 46,* 327-369.

Truscott, J. (1999). The case for ''the case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes'': A response to Ferris. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 8*(2), 111-122.

Truscott, J. (2004). Dialogue: Evidence and conjecture on the effects of correction: A response to Chandler. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13*(4), 337-343.

Truscott, J. (2007). The effect of error correction on learners' ability to write accurately. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 16,* 255-272.

Van Beuningen, C., De Jong, N. H., & Kuiken, F. (2012). Evidence on the effectiveness of comprehensive error correction in second language writing. *Language Learning, 62*(1), 1-41.

Van den Branden, K. (1997). Effects of negotiation on language learners' output. *Language Learning, 47,* 589-636.

Van Lier, L. (1996). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural perspective*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

White, L. (1989). *Universal grammar and second language acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

White, L. (1991) Adverb placement in second language acquisition: Some effects of positive and negative evidence in the classroom. *Second Language Research, 7,* 133-161.

Williams, J. (2002). Undergraduate second language writers in the writing center. *Journal of Basic Writing, 21*(2), 73-91.

Wigglesworth, G., & Storch, N. (2012). What role for collaboration in writing and writing feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 21,* 364-374.

Xu, C. (2009). Overgeneralization from a narrow focus: A response to Ellis et al. (2008) and Bitchener (2008). *Journal of Second Language Writing, 18*(4), 270-275.

Appendices

Appendix A

Error codes used in marking learners' texts

Error Type Code	Description
VT	Verb tense (time)
WF	Word form (part of speech)
ART	Article is missing, unnecessary, or incorrect
AGR	Subject and verb do not agree
PP	Preposition is missing, unnecessary, or incorrect
WO	Word order in sentence is incorrect
PUN	Punctuation is missing, unnecessary, or incorrect
SP	Spelling error
FRAG	Sentence fragment (incomplete sentence)
CAP	Capitalization
VV	Verb voice (active versus passive)
PL	Noun plural marker is missing, unnecessary, or incorrect
WW	Wrong word (meaning is incorrect for the sentence)
PRO	Pronoun used is incorrect for sentence

Adapted from Ferris et al. (2012)

Appendix B

Procedures: Data collection time line

Time	Data Collected
First day of treatment	Pretest
Week 1	Narrative paragraph
Week 2	Descriptive paragraph
Week 3	Reason paragraph
Week 4	Process paragraph
Week 5	Compare & contrast paragraph
Week 6	Classifying paragraph
Last day of treatment	Posttest
Week 10: A month after the last day	Delayed posttest

Appendix C

Samples of Writing Pretest, Posttest, and Delayed-posttest

Pretest
Why did you choose Arak University for studying English?

When I was supposed to choose a University for my academical education, I was wondering which University to choose. It took me a while to decide about this. But after doing a lot of research, I had decided to choose Arak University which has one the best literature faculty among other Universities. I also had decided to study English translation so, the English department of that University was one of the important factor for me to consider. English department of Arak University has highly educated and skillful professors which was one of the main factor in my decision. To sum up, Arak University could offer good educational options which convinced me to chose it.

Posttest
Why did you choose your course of study (English literature or translation)?

I chose English translation basically because I like to know English as an international language in general, so that, I could expand my knowledge and could be familiar with English speaking- countries culture through translating their books, movies and other transferring information. In addition, I liked to learn English in practice and challenge myself by dealing with translating difficult text. I think translation would give me chance to learn different areas of knowledge which is not just literature. These reasons made me choose translation over literature.

Delayed-posttest
Why did you choose enrolling in Advanced Writing course?

Writing is one of the four skills which every language learner should learn and it's really practical and an absolute necessity since writing is an important part of communication. As an English translation student I felt the need of learning the writing skill in an advanced level so that I could write better and more accurate texts and essays which is really important in academic education, especially in my major. I also wanted to know the important techniques and strategies of writing a well-written essay and be able to distinguish a good or bad writing.

Appendix D

A sample of nonnegotiated CF on learners' texts

Appendix E

Regulatory scale of the Tutor's Intervention in ZPD (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994)

0.	Tutor asks the learner to read, find the error and correct them independently, prior to tutorial.
1.	Construction of a 'collaborative frame' prompted by the tutor as a potential dialogic partner.
2.	Prompted or focused reading of the sentence that contains the error by the learner or the tutor.
3.	Tutor indicates that something may be wrong in a segment (e.g. sentence, clause, line): 'Is there anything wrong in this sentence?'
4.	Tutor rejects unsuccessful attempts at recognizing the error.
5.	Tutor narrows down the location of the error (e.g. tutor repeats or points to the specific segment which contains the error).
6.	Tutor indicates the nature of the error, but tries not to identify the error (e.g. 'There is something wrong with the tense making here').
7.	Tutor identifies the error ('You can't use an auxiliary here').
8.	Tutor rejects learner's unsuccessful attempts at correcting the error.
9.	Tutor provides clues to help the learner arrive at the correct form (e.g. 'It is not really past but something that is still going on').
10.	Tutor provides the correct form.
11.	Tutor provides some explanations for use of the correct form.
12.	Tutor provides examples of the correct pattern when other forms of help fail to produce an appropriate responsive action.

Appendix F

A sample of negotiated CF on learners' texts

The Tragedy of the Denial of Multiple Identities in Iranian EFL Textbooks:

A Grounded Research

Gholamreza Zareian[1] and Hamid Reza Hashemi

Hakim Sabzevari University, Iran

Biodata

Gholamreza Zareian is an assistant professor of TEFL at Hakim Sabzevari University. He has been teaching MA and PhD courses for more than seven years. He has also published articles in diverse fields of applied linguistics with focus on Second language acquisition theories and ESP. Zareian has taught courses of Second Language Acquisition theories and Syllabus Design to MA and PhD students since 2008. Email: g.zareian@hsu.ac.ir

Hamid Reza Hashemi is a PhD candidate of TEFL at Hakim Sabzevari University, Iran. He received BA from Tehran University and earned MA of TEFL from Kharazmi University, Iran. He has thus far published articles in diverse fields of identity, culture and psycholinguists in IC, and ISC-indexed journals. He is also the author of the book "Basics of SPSS". Hashemi has been teaching general and special English as a lecturer at Medical university of Birjand since 2008. Email: h.hashemimoghadam@gmail.com

Abstract

Analysis of the role of identity aspects in textbooks has recently gained ground in EFL Literature. However, there has been dearth of qualitative research concerning the analysis of this multi-dimensional construct in Iranian high school EFL textbooks. This research attempted to shed light on how diverse identity options are addressed in Iranian high school EFL textbooks. The paper adopted grounded research to better capture the inherent intricacies of identity as a

---

[1] Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran

multi-dimensional construct. The participants of the study included eight experienced Iranian EFL teachers from Birjand, Iran, holding MA in TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language). After coding the interviews and analyzing the pertinent documents, the results yielded the writers of EFL books failure to portray the multi-dimensionality of identities in the books as the core category pulling together three sub-categories including 1) ignorance of the cultural identity of both target language group and the home group, 2) denial of the multiple, dynamic and contradictory identity of the learners as the intended audience of the textbooks, and 3) writers' failure to generate engaging texts due to the authoritarian identity that they have adopted and therefore, providing limited identity options for the audiences of these books.

Keywords: Identity construction, Identity negotiation, Multiple identities

1. Introduction

Any attempt to analyze the role of identity in EFL textbooks is abortive if the pertinent underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions of this multi-faceted term are not taken into account. Firstly, it was philosophy that gave birth to the most fundamental reflections upon identity and Descartes (1637) was the first philosopher to put forward the concept of *autonomous self (as universal disposition),* which laid the theoretical framework for the Essentialist perspectives of identity. In essentialist account of identity, there are predisposed orientations as the constituents of human identity, irrespective of time and space. Subsequent to Descartes, Hegel (1857) interrogated the notion of the *independent Identity* by means of a phenomenological analysis of the dialectic between the universal mind (as an abstract entity) and the material world (manifestation of abstractness). In the realm of post-structuralism, Derrida (1980) interrogated the slogans of modernity by challenging the hegemonic *binary opposites* that overshadowed the western thought patterns and vocally questioned Essentionalists' account of human identity and highlighted the multilayered, unpredictable and dynamic identity which is by no means fixed and unitary. Foucault (1980) in his provocative book, *Power and Knowledge,* revealed the complicated mechanism (capillaries) of power terms in the scientific and cultural discourse as well as the ways these disciplines impose their monolithic interpretation from human essence and the world as an object in an exceedingly distorted way to others. The trajectory of Foucault thought was pursued by scholars (e.g., Barth, 1989; Baudrillard, 1983;

Boeurdio, 1984, to name a few) with the goal of de-constructing the hidden layers of power mechanism deployed to monitor and formulate the identities desired by the dominant elites.

Generally, the emergence of the recent operational constructs from identity, namely *Collective identity* (Melucci, 1995), *Personal identity* (Ericson, 1975), *Social Identity* (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), *Cultural identity*, (Hall, 1992) were the outcomes of the interrelations among philosophy, psychology and sociology.

Second language acquisition as a highly diversified and interdisciplinary field has been widely informed by the novel conceptualizations from identity inhuman science. In SLA literature, Norton's (1995) article was among the monumental achievements that broadened the scope of identity studies by resorting to post-structuralists' conceptualization of language and human agency. Norton widely drew on Vygotsky's (1978) *social constructivism*, Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) concept of *symbolic capital* and Bakhtin's (1984) *dialogic self* as well as Weedon's (1987) realization of identity as *subjectivity* along with Kristava's (1987) notorious term of *gender performativity*. For Norton, mere including the cognitive parameters of the learners coupled with the binary categorization of affective factors (motivated vs. unmotivated, extrovert vs. introvert, etc.), while ignoring their nexus to the socio-cultural context ushers in a distorted understanding from the learners' subjectivity and agency in language acquisition. She went on to say that a learner experiences different socio-culturally-oriented identities even at the same time and space. For example, a learner may be conceived of as a student in one identity position, teacher in another context, mother in the family and an immigrant in a new country (all these identities pertinent to the same person). Each of these social positions imposes multiple subjectivities (different way of thinking and doing things) on the learner and thus makes the process of learning easier or more difficult. Subsequent to Norton's inspirational contribution, a host of scholars (e.g., Canagarajah, 1993; Duff, 2008; Mackay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; Shardkova & Pavlenco, 2004; Wenger, 1998) began to reflect upon different aspects of identity (socio-cultural identity, gender identity, national identity, imaginative identity, etc.) with reference to social and cultural context. They also investigated the interplay between power and language learning, the impact of imaginative identity on learning/acquiring language as well as the learners' investment in the new language and so forth.

Iranian EFL researchers have been widely inspired by the rushing waves of current research on identity aspects in textbooks. They have struggled to answer questions such as the role of national identity, cultural, social and gender identity in various textbooks. In this regard, the researchers (e.g., Ahmadi Darani, 2002; Ansary & Babai, 2003) investigated the representation of gender identity in the high school EFLtextbooks. In a similar venue, cultural identity was probed by Aliakbari (2004) and Razmju (2007) and national identity by Khajavi and Abbasian (2011). It can be noticed that the type and the theoretical basis of this issue needs much more analysis from multiple perspectives.

To the best of our knowledge, there has been no qualitative research regarding the critical analysis of the repertoire of identity options in the Iranian EFL textbooks as well as the way students' identities are dealt from the perspective of professional teachers. This qualitative research drawing on post-structuralism and the principals of critical discourse analysis explored the teachers' experiences, perceptions and interpretations of EFL textbooks to dip into the identity-related issues as a central concern in SLA studies. In practice, this paper is a modest attempt to fill this wide gap in the field of EFL curriculum development.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

1.2. Multiple Identities in Post-structuralism

The emergence of the post structuralists' theories of human identity can be conceived of as the inception of a prominent paradigm shift from cognitive and rational to the socio-cultural and constructivist aspects of identity formulation with the goal of analyzing different types of textual and meta-textual narratives. In this regard, constructivists and essentialists account of identity play the central role for the analysis of the textbooks. In the view of essentialist intellectuals, the core of human identity is fixed, predetermined and unitary in orientation (Adel & Hashemi, 20015; Ghaniabadi & Hashemi, 2015; Gordani, 2010). In contrast, constructivists argue that human identity is contradictory, changeable and in the state of flux. In their account, identity is the product of the multifaceted interaction between past, present and future self with the context (culture, society, etc.). Unlike the incessant struggles, the *essentialist* definition of identity fueled by religious and rational philosophy remained intact for centuries. Religious scholars espoused the theories that assumed the core of human identity as the love and quest for God. Rationalist proponents influenced by enlightenment philosophers conceived rationality as the core of

humanity (the faith in human intellectuality to answer any questions). However, with the advent of post structuralism which was born out of constructivism, no core remained and the essentialists' realization of human identity was vocally interrogated and dramatically faded away.

Bakhtin (1981, 1984), as the prominent precursor of postmodern philosophy, had key role in expanding our understanding of identity by proposing the construct of *dialogical* self. He assumed that identity is formulated as the outcome of the intricate interrelation among the wide array of historical, social and cultural variables. For Bakhtin (1984) identity is the product of the constant dialogue between the present and past and such event is far from over. In this conceptualization, we adopt multiple identities with respect to the socio-cultural context of our life and as a reaction to the self and others. He withheld that every word or utterance we generate is a part of a chain from the past to the present and future. Such attitude is attributable to identity in the sense that learners show different reactions (based on their identities) to the voices expressed through the words and discourses of others and these variables constitute the stalwarts of language. Based on Bakhtin, the contents of the textbooks cannot be neutral (due to different voices in texts) with respect to the learners and teachers, therefore maximum attention should be devoted to the process of textbook evaluation and development.

Likewise, Weedon (1987) criticized the coherentists' and essentialists' account of identity, while citing many instances of identity contradictions experienced by the same person. For Weedon, the subjectivity of human is established through the multi-directional linkage between language and power. To put it another way, she maintains that since both power and language are heterogeneous in nature, the concept *of core identity* is indisputably nonexistent. She holds that while we act within the social context, we are the subject or the object of the of power relationship texture depending on the situation. She adds that *Subjectivity* constitutes the conscious and unconscious thoughts as well as the relation to self and others and therefore identity is a historical and socio-cultural phenomenon.

Lave and Wenger (1991) propounded the concept of *situated learning* which was another fundamental step to bring the construct of identity to the forefront. They conceived of learning as a type of socialization activity taking place in a socio-cultural environment and is accomplished when the new-comers as peripheral *participators* (learners) interact with the *old-timers (the more*

experienced ones). Such a broad definition of learning signaled that language acquisition is not restricted to the mere cognitive aspects of learners; rather it is a social and context-embedded phenomenon in which the learners' identity negotiation and construction with those of higher level of knowledge is of central concern.

2. Literature Review

As previously stated, studies focusing on different aspects of identity have flourished since the last two decades. With respect to the analysis of identity in textbooks, Canagarajah (1993) investigated the US-published textbooks widely used in Serlinka classrooms. His in-depth analysis revealed that dialogues and narratives in the books mostly portray racial and gender biases as well as the implicit western middle class values like consumerism, democracy, etc. He also studied students' reactions to the contents of the texts which were the mixture of hostility, exaggeration, mockery or admiration toward them. In a similar line, Ohara (2001) argued that normative, stereotypical and traditionally gendered worlds represented in Japanese official language textbooks elicit resistance on the part of female American students, because American culture did not adopt such honorific language code in their interaction. Kinginger's (2004) qualitative analysis of French textbooks showed that the implied audiences of these books were members of the middle class who lived in apartments in a nuclear family. In another study, Poliney (1995) held that because American students were commonly taught Russian in gender neutral way, American women did not have the necessary linguistic resources for self presentation due to lack of reference to texts. Sigel (1996) found that Japanese textbooks aimed at American students present highly stereotypical, biased linguistic norms on the basis of hegemonic ideology of class, language and gender. In a more recent study, Sahragard and Davartgarzadeh's (2010) analysis of the Interchange third edition revealed the differential representation of males and females as social actors. Their mixed-method study demonstrated that females were portrayed as more prominent and active in comparison with males. Amalsaleh's (2004) evaluation of EFL textbooks highlighted that all the books, irrespective of their goals and audience, mostly seemed to follow similar trends. For instance, all of them showed males and females differently, portraying the female social actors as belonging to the home context with limited job opportunities. Bahrami (2013) took into account the identity options offered to Iranian learners in EFL textbooks. The results of their study were

disappointing in the sense that the range of identity options in the texts were very limited. By and large, the above-mentioned studies suggest that the imaginary world portrayed in language textbooks may offer misrepresented, biased and stereotypical identity options to EFL learners. It is of crucial significance to understand how the multiple and dynamic identities have been dealt with in Iranian EFL textbooks. The distressingly complicated nature of identity-pertinent issues can be captured through the qualitative analysis of the intended corpus with respect to the post-structuralist theories of identity. The goal behind this research is to critically analyze how different aspects of identity as well as the identity options are dealt with in Iranian EFL textbooks by textbook developers.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of the research were comprised of eight EFL teachers from high schools of Birjand, Iran, selected through the convenient sampling procedure. The selected teachers held MA degree in TEFL, with the range of three to nine years of experience. Five of the participants had the experience of teaching ESP English at Islamic Azad university of Birjand, at least for one year. These participants were willing to share their experience with the researchers in exploring the process of identity representation and construction in Iranian high school EFL textbooks.

3.2. Materials

The present study focused on four Iranian high school EFL textbooks developed by the curriculum development and planning department of the ministry of the education under the supervision of Iranian higher Cultural Consul (Atai & Mazlumi, 2013). The text -books included English Book one and English Book two (Birjandi, Noroozi, & Mahmoodi, 2007), English book three (Birjandi & Noroozi, 2007) and English for pre-university students (Birjandi & Anani, 2007). Each of the books included eight lessons encompassing comprehension texts, grammatical exercises and language functions.

3.3. Theoretical Sampling

In contrast to most quantitative sampling procedures which begin with a representative sample of participants, theoretical sampling is accomplished by the selection of subjects with regard to the information emerged from the data already coded by the researchers. Based on the intended purposes, the participants were sampled according to their level of practical and theoretical knowledge as well as their willingness to express their views and experience of identity issues in the textbooks to the researchers. The theoretical sampling of concepts ended after interviewing eight participants and coding their narrative experiences about the content of the books until the researchers reached the level of *theoretical saturation*.

3.4. Data Collection

Structured and semi-structured interviews are the touchstones of qualitative analysis due to their holistic and inclusive nature. Interviews as Dörnyei (2003) implies are designed to acquaint the participants with the nature of study, to establish rapport, and attain the depth and details of their personal experiences. In the present study, the semi-structured interviews held with the teachers about the contents of EFL books from diverse outlooks were continued until the saturation level was reached. The interviews were held both in Persian and English and then were transcribed to vividly represent the dynamicity of the performed conversation. Each of the transcriptions was then returned to the participants for their final review of the transcribed documents. Throughout the study, each teacher was assured about the confidentiality by adopting pseudonyms in reporting the data. It should be noted that the participants were given no information of the goals of the research in order to avoid the threats to the internal validity of the research. In addition to the conducted face to face semi-structured interviews both in English and Persian, the teachers were asked to write their account of EFL books during and after the teaching process. An interview protocol consisting of seventeen questions probed the interviewees regarding their typical experience with high school EFL textbooks focusing on identity aspects. During the interviews, the participants were asked additional questions and comments. Such intuitions on the teachers' part during the class time were of prime importance for the aims of this qualitative research.

3.5. Data Analysis

Grounded research is built upon the systematic coding of the qualitative data (in this study, transcribed interviews). The analysis of the data involves different stages of coding. These coding procedures are outlined as the touchstones of the grounded research which involve three types of *open*, *axial and selective* coding procedure (Dörnyei, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

3.5.1. Open Coding

Theoretically speaking, the analysis of the raw data commences with open coding procedure. The goal behind open coding is to categorize the data gathered through two main analytic procedures: constant comparing and asking questions with regard to the data (Straus & Corbin, 1998). Open coding starts with the labeling of many individual phenomena which seem central to the researcher. These seemingly separated concepts are reorganized based on the shared similarities. Then they are classified in terms of properties and dimensions. Armino and Hultgren (2002) illustrate how each property can vary along a continuum. It should be noted that open coding is implemented after line by line or even paragraph by paragraph transcription of the data. In this research, after transcribing the interviews, those phenomena and concepts that seemed to be central for researchers were labeled initially. These coded concepts were broadly related to identifying aspects in EFL textbooks.

3.5.2. Axial Coding

Axial coding is the second stage of data analysis in grounded research. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), axial coding is the process of relating categories to their sub-categories and linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions. In axial coding, four analytical processes are implemented: a) continually relating subcategories to a category b) comparing categories to the collected data c) expanding density of the categories by detailing their properties and dimensions, and (d) exploring variations in the phenomena. With reference to the present research, the labeled concepts from the open coding were constantly compared in terms of their shared properties and dimensions in order to identify the main categories and the pertinent sub-categories. Consequently the number of categories was reduced to more comprehensive ones to meet the standards of axial coding.

3.5.3. Selective Coding

The processes of open and axial coding technically function as a pre-requisite for the selective coding procedure. Selective coding is the ultimate stage in grounded research, in which the central or core category is linked to other sub-categories. Merriam (2002) stated that the central or core category should have the explanatory power to pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole conducive to the ultimate hypothesis.

4. Results and Discussion

On the basis of the constant comparisons of the codes and the analytic scheme of the grounded theory, the results yielded the writers of EFL books failure to take into account different aspects of learners' identities as the core category which included three sub-categories involving 1) overall ignorance of the cultural identity of both target language and the home group, 2) under-representation of learners' identity by ignoring the contradictory, multiple and in the state of flux phenomenon and offering very limited identity options for the learners, and 3) writers' failure to generate engaging texts due to their adopted authoritarian identity and therefore providing limited identity options for the students in the books.

For the first category, the interviewees maintained that the authors of the books widely disregarded the cultural identity of the target language community. Cultural identity, as the researchers (e.g., Canagarajah, 1993; Kanno, 2003; Mackay & Wong, 1996; Shardkova & Palvenko, 2004, to name a few) maintain, encompasses different sub-categories as ethnic, linguistic, national, religious identity and so forth. The results of this qualitative analysis indicated that in the series of Iranian EFL textbooks, there is no text to represent the cultural issues of the Native American or British speakers as the focal constituents of the target language culture. There has even been no reference to the racial, geographical, traditional, historical and religious identity of target language speakers as if they never existed. Additionally, the depicted images of the protagonists (of both men and women) were by no means in harmony with the norms and values of western people (British or American, etc.). High level of negligence was also observed in depicting the native culture of Iranian students in EFL textbooks. As a proof, there were very few hints to the ethnic, historical and religious identity of Iranian people, except

very few cases in all the four books of EFL. In practice, the native culture was totally missing from the textbooks.

The second category propounds that the book writers impose on the readers (high school EFL learners) a subordinated, inferior and even degraded identity position. With reference to participants' attitude, in most of the conversations and reading comprehensions, the identities of the protagonists of the texts and conversations are not motivating and informative to students (due to their age, needs, social positions, cultural identities, etc.). Given that there is limited and even no contextualization provided for the protagonists in the texts, the readers cannot identify themselves with most of these characters and consequently do not establish a cognitive or affective relationship with them. For this reason, the level of students' engagement with the text is so low. In the accounts of the participants, the texts are mostly bound to the content knowledge that is neither novel nor inspiring to many learners since their topics are outdated or the students know about them beforehand. The social and occupational identities of the people incorporated into the text by the authors are also of no attraction to learners since their verbal and non-verbal behaviors seem routine, highly predictable and unnatural (teacher, worker). Such misrepresentation of the characters do not reflect the real life experiences of learners that have the experience of interacting with many different people from highly diversified social groups in a rather modern society. That is why the students who rely on these books mostly encounter problems in intercultural communication. In addition, even the identity of the people conveyed through pictures barely looks like the people in the real life (Exaggerations in faces, unnatural facial expressions with a horrific laughs and grimes, etc.). Consequently, how is it possible for students to identify themselves with the characters that have the least possible similarity to them?

With respect to the third category, the analysis of the participants' attitudes indicated that the book writers had provided very limited identity options for the learners in the contents of the books. The participants maintained that a huge part of the textbooks was dedicated to transferring low quality (in terms of their novelty and usefulness) and unbelievably disorganized factual information and grammatical points to the learners, whereas the students whose ages ranged from 14 to 18 had much discrepant social and psychological needs than kids, middle-aged, or older people. These needs have barely been addressed in the textbooks. In other words, teenagers as the main audiences of the textbooks have not been supplied with the lessons to

provide them sufficient identity options in order to provide them with the linguistic resources for self presentation in L2 context. For instance, providing lessons about challenging, informative and novel issues that trigger their interest will be highly beneficial. The titles of these texts could be about new fashions, successful people, recent scientific achievements, etc.

4.1. Denial of Cultural Identity of Both Target and Home Language

Cultural identity, in the view of Lantolf (2000), represents the emotional significance that we attach to our sense of belonging or affiliation with the larger culture. It is tangible that culture and identity are inextricably interrelated phenomena (Canagarajah, 1993; Crandall, 2000; Cummins, 2000; Kramsch, 2003; Mackay & Wong, 1996, to name a few).A new language cannot be acquired optimally in a vacuum and irrespective of the context. It is through cultural knowledge that students obtain information about the life, rituals, taboos, social norms and customs of other nationalities. To put it another way, as Bachman (1990) confirms, sociolinguistic knowledge is an inseparable component of the communicative competence that is of paramount importance for teaching in EFL context. If the authors of EFLbooks invest on the target language culture, they will generate a desirable source that enriches the students' *imaginative identity*. This notorious term was first introduced by Anderson (1991) and applied by Norton (1997, 2000) in the SLA literature. Imaginative identity implies that students with no access to the target culture conjure up their imagination and based on it approach language practice. For this purpose, they draw on the information from their textbooks, teachers and other sources to form an identity in conformity with their desirable characteristics. In Iran, while learners have very limited possibilities to interact with target language speakers, provision of this genre of knowledge (socio-cultural knowledge) in the form of interactional and engaging passages in the textbooks will be highly informative for them with respect to their performance in the real life encounters. Unfortunately, such important issue has been widely neglected by EFL textbooks writers. For instance, one of the teachers argued that:

During these seven years of teaching the EFL textbooks for the first and second year students, I have hardly noticed any student direct engagement with the contents of the passages and language functions sections. In fact, it seems that these books have been written for robots not human, since they are devoid of the cultural identity of target langue speakers and also….

The texts really seem blunt to me. It seems that authors have hastily reformulated ranges of sentences to transfer the linguistic knowledge with no reference to cultural issues. For instance, in most of the passages, there is no hint to the religious, historical and national icons of the target culture. There is no reference to sightseeing places, interesting traditions, beloved celebrities, cuisine of the target language speakers and …. . I sometimes ask myself that with these texts are there remaining any motivation, excitement and curiosity in learning English language for our learners?

Regarding the attitude of the above participant about the under-representation of the target culture, he signals authors' indifference to the efforts for acquainting students with the cultural identity of target language speakers. The dissatisfaction and pessimism of this teacher and some other participants represent that these books have taken somehow hostile stance toward the target culture. Although a broad spectrum of political issues does not allow the syllabus designers to encompass some ingredients of the target culture, there are other aspects that are not problematic in this regard. For instance, providing a text about England population, its history and some eating habits and so forth does not bring about any problem in this regard. In the same venue, another participant said:

I believe that there are many appealing and informative issues within our own cultural identity, if were pointed out in the texts, they would dramatically enhance the learners' motivation for learning. For instance, the authors could provide learners a text about Norooz embellished with beautiful images or eye- catching texts favoring real life and interactional conversations among Iranians of different ethnic background, for instance a Kurd and an Azari, a Northern with the Southern to include the national and ethnic identities. These sorts of interactions would lead learners to identify themselves with those in text and consequently foster their engagement with it. Moreover, our country favors an outstandingly rich socio-cultural heritage that can be introduced to the learners, in simplified English and thus gear to students' learning. However, no trace of the name of a poet, philosopher, historian, king or scientist can be observed in these strange books!Except forTakhti,one of the famous Iranian wrestlers.

4.2. Ignorance of Multiple Identities of Learners

It goes without saying that students are not just the passive recipients of the information provided by the textbooks or teachers. Myriad of studies conducted by scholars (e.g., Cummins,

2006; Kanno, 2008; Toohey, 2000) implied that the learners' agency largely influences the rate and the level of their learning efficiency. One of the evident shortcomings in Iranian EFL textbooks was that they widely disregarded the multiple identities of the learners and did not provide engaging texts for the students' active involvement. Giving voice to students in the text or piece of conversation can be observed while it captures their attention by being exciting, novel, authentic and informative. In this regard, most of the participants implied that these factors have been extensively neglected in the EFL books. In this respect, one of the participants remarked that:

When I compare our high school EFL textbooks with the commercial ones like interchange and Top -notch, I find significant difference among them. The conversations in the international text-books are engaging, funny and also highly informative about the things that today students mind and admire, like (music, internet, celebrities, films, cultural diversities, etc.).The roles of interlocutors in conversations are not routine and predictable *and this either adds to their attraction to the readers or involves their higher -order processing skills. For instance, you can see many texts in which, adults make funny mistakes (representative of the real world). While in our [Iranian]textbooks, adults are recurrently shown as infallible agents holding the whole power while interacting with younger people as subdued persons. In commercial EFL books, adults are conveyed , while arguing about the casual issues in today society , playing jokes with or challenging others and interacting in a simulated real -life conversations. But, when we come to our textbooks, we realize that most of the information presented to students is not attractive, authentic and applicative. For instance, in one of these books, there is a reading about the role of TV in people's life, while today many students have provided themselves Internet- identities. Hardly can you find a text to be beneficial for the students or at least create them fun, curiosity or excitement...., Most of them (identities in textbooks) are male, middle- aged and middle class people involved in a predictable range of de-contextualized and artificial talks. The very few occasions where teens are represented, they are in the subordinated and degraded position (mostly doing homework, considering social norms, being admonished, etc.). The same is also through about the images (ugly, unrealistic depiction of faces).*

Considering the above-mentioned remarks, it is worth mentioning that as Ericson (1975) maintained the age between fourteen and eighteen is the stage of identity consolidation. How

seriously have the writers taken this notion into their account? Are the identities of the protagonists in the texts are of the expected attraction, authenticity and authority to capture the students' attention and consequently lead to the process of their identity construction and identity negotiation? Have the writers of the textbooks included the Norton's (1995, 2000) informative remark that whenever language learners speak or read a text, they automatically negotiate a sense of self in relation to the context, which means that readers of the text are not just the passive recipient of the information supplied in the text? The experience and interpretation of the participants propounded that most of the students do not find joy in the texts since they do not enjoy the mentioned protagonists and their social position EFL textbooks amply downplayed this crucial aspect of the learners' subjectivity and agency in the contents that in turn ushers in what Wenger (1998) pinpointed as *non-participation* and lack of *investment* in the language practices despite the students 'sizable motivation.

4.3. Authoritarian Identity and Limited Identity Options

Iran is among the countries highly influenced by the rushing waves of the innovative technologies especially in the field of information science. These days, Iranian students have access to an overwhelmingly large number of sources to obtain broad range of information from web. Studies implemented by the researchers (e.g., Cummins, 2000; Duff, 1996; Mackay & Wong, 1996; Toohey, 2000) have confirmed the raising of new identities among students and their impact on their language acquisition. In this light, web-based identity can be one of the identity options that have been brought by technology. To put it another way, social transformations of Iranian society have drastically amended the communication patterns among different members of societies. For instance, numerous studies have implied that the authority of parents and teachers exerted over students has dwindled to a great extent in recent years. These relations tend to be more interactional rather than authoritarian in their orientations. This issue has been largely neglected in Iranian EFL high school books. The contents of these books are still based on the traditional asymmetrical power relationship between interlocutors. Texts that take interactional and corporative approach toward learners' identity put emphasis on the needs and wants of the learners. For the authors of Iranian EFL high schoolbooks, it is imperative to amuse, energize and enrich the students by means of appropriate material selection. In these texts, students are not posited as the mere passive recipient of knowledge without the right to

challenge the content of the text. In other words, the content of these books are democratically-oriented. In contrast, if we review the conversations and the texts of the Iranian high school EFL books, we hardly find one in which learners are actively and constructively involved in. In no text, can you notice parents challenged by children, or useful internet sites be introduced or the air of intimacy exist among the identities of the people involved in the text. The tone of the voices of text is advisory and authoritative which indicates that the authors claim a superior identity stance from which they address the learners. As if, students just need to improve their content knowledge about the outdated and somehow slightly applicative issues and do not need fun. Very few texts stirred the learners' sense of curiosity and none led to establishing a cooperative air among students. In this regard, one of the participants holding MA in TEFL said:

One of the nagging problems I often encounter during teaching is purported to creating incentives for the student's cooperative learning and... Unfortunately, the information in the texts is not motivating for the students. For example, there is a passage about the value of education with advisory and admonishing tone, or the story of an old little man with a boring plot, or the anecdote of the founder of a kindergarten of no interest for a teenager. It is really hard to foster the students' curiosity about these texts. At this age, I think that student's personal and social identity involve more motivating and useful text. I also teach interchange in a private institute, i find most of the texts and interactions highly functional and appealing, because they are either informative or up to date and involve wide identity options for learners in creative and constructive ways.

Referring to the comments of this participant, we come to realize that learners' positioning (EFL students) in relation to the text is substantially downgraded and devalued by the text developers. The writers have looked upon the readers as entities enjoying very limited agency over their choice of the contents. As researchers (e.g., Norton, 2000; Shardkova & Pavlenco, 2004) implied the texts that do not include the materials appropriate to the learners' social, and psychological identity will eventually usher in their non-participation and lack of investment in learning activities. The stalwarts of the critical analysis of the text offered by Fairclough (1995) highlights the asymmetric distribution of power between learners and leaders in EFL textbooks. In fact, the writers of the text do not feel the urge to include the learners as decisive constituents in learning activity. For instance, in none of the exercises, students are asked to express their

views about the text. In none of the conversational practices, there is trace of the powerful people challenged by the weaker ones (like what we witnessed in the real life in modern societies). That is why in many occasions, learners do not identify themselves with those in the text during interaction. The following figure represents the core and sub-categories.

```
            ┌─────────────────────┐
            │ EFL books failure to take │
            │ into account different │
            │ aspects of learner's │
            │     identities      │
            └─────────────────────┘
        ┌───────────┼───────────┐
┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│ overall ignorance │ │ wrters failure to │ │ Teachers' lack of │
│ of the cultural │ │ generate engaging │ │ awarnes from the │
│ identity of both │ │ texts due to their │ │ students │
│ target language │ │ authorotarian │ │ contradictory │
│ group and the │ │ adopted identity │ │ identification with │
│ home group │ │              │ │ the target culture │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
```

Figure 1. Core Categories and Sub Categories

5. Limitation of the Research

Unlike the participants' validation of the emerged concepts and categories and our attempt to triangulate the data against the official documents, readers should proceed with caution as they read the findings of this inquiry. Qualitative researchers are the instruments for gathering data and as human beings they bring with them, their own interpretations from the world. However, rigorous analytic scheme of grounded theory helped us to ground the findings in the data and avoid bias to a great extent.

6. Conclusion

The results of this qualitative study provided details and insights about the pivotal roles of the learners' identity and also shed light on the reasons for the significance of the inclusion of multiple identities in the EFL text- books. Drawing upon post-structuralist definitions of identity, the study argued that readers approach texts with preconceptions in their minds, based on their identity. It was also pointed out that the students' personal experience from the self and others playa decisive role in their evaluations from the texts. Similarly, it revealed how different aspects of the learners' identity have been neglected, devalued or misrepresented in Iranian EFL

textbooks. This research recognized that the cultural identity of the target language speakers was rarely addressed in the contents of the textbooks. In essence, the writers widely ignored the cultural identity of native speakers. For instance, there was no hint to ancient Persian icons, cultural heritage and diverse ethnic background of Iranian people. These denials have made the texts somehow dumb, boarding and de-motivating to learners. It was also shown that neither conversations nor texts took into account the multiple and changing identity of the learners. This analysis implied that the identity of the constituents of the texts were neither interesting nor informative to the learners, due to their age as well as the socio-cultural changes in Iranian society. Another observed shortcoming was related to the authoritative stance of the text developers which did not allow the readers to share their inclinations, priorities and identity with them. The results of this qualitative study can lead to overall change in the content and the type of activities employed in the EFL textbooks and will consequently enhance the usefulness and validity of the EFL textbooks for either teachers or students. This study struggled to indicate how different texts entail the complicated and multi-directional process of identity negotiation and identity construction on the part of the learners toward the texts. It put emphasis on the use of authentic, engaging, informative and interactive texts by the Iranian EFL textbook authors.

References

Adel, S. M. R., & Hashemi, H. (2015). Ontological analysis of identity formation and its linkage to the theories of second language acquisition. *Cumhuriyet Science Journal*, *36*(3), 1439-1454.

Ahmadi Darani, P. (2002). The evaluation of high school textbooks for EFL education in Iran: The evaluation via checklist. *F L T Journal*, 64, 22-32.

Aliakbari, M. (2004). *The place of culture in Iranian EFL textbooks in high school level*. The ninth pan-pacific association of applied linguistics conference, Korea.

Amalsaleh, E. (2004). *The representation of social actors in the EFL textbooks in Iran* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Shiraz University, Shiraz.

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities*: *Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. New York: Verso.

Ansary, H., & Babai, E. (2003). Subliminal sexism in current ESL and EFL textbooks. *Asian EFL Journal*, 5, 200-241.

Armino, J. l., & Hultgern, F. H. (2002). Breaking out from the shadow: The question of criteria in qualitative research. *Journal of College Student Development*, *43*(4), 446-60.

Atai, M. R., & Mazlumi, F. (2013). English language teaching curriculum in Iran: Planning and practice. *The Curriculum Journal*, *24*(3), 389-411.

Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental consideration in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bahrami, S. (2013). Personality development by means of investment in l2 and its impact on EFL proficiency: A survey of Iranian MA EFL students. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, *5*(3), 83-105.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*: *Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Austin, TX: University of Minnesota Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky poetics*. Minneapolis. MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Barth, R. (1989). The death of an author. In P. Rice & P. Waugh (Eds.), *Modern literary theory*: *A reader* (pp. 185-188). Edward Arnold: London.

Baudrillard, J. (1983). *Simulations*. Newyork: Semitext.

Birjandi, P., & Noroozi, G. (2007). *English high school 3.* Tehran: Iran Textbook Publishers.

Birjandi, P., & Noroozi, G., & Mahmoodi, G. (2007). *English high school 2*. Tehran: Iran Textbook Publishers.

Birjandi, P., & Anani, M. (2007). *English for pre-university students' high school 1*. Tehran: Iran Textbook Publishers.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). The economics of linguistic exchanges. *Social science information*, *16*(6), 645-668.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of judgment of taste*. London: Rutledge & Kegan.

Canagarajah, S. (1993). American textbooks and Tamil students: Discerning ideological tensions in the ESL classroom. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *6*(2), 143-156.

Crandall, J. J. (2000). Language teacher education. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 20, 34-55.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy*: *Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Clevdon: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (2006). Identity texts: The imaginative construction of self through multi-literacies pedegogy. In O. Garcia, T. Skutnab-Kanges, & M. Torres-Guzman (Eds.), *Imagining multilingual schools: Language in education and globalization* (pp. 51-68). Clevdon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Derrida, J. (1980). *Writing and difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Descartes, R. (1637). *Meditations on first philosophy*. Netherland: Polity.

Dörnyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research: Constructing, administrating, and processing.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Associates.

Duff, P. (2008). *Case study research in applied linguistics*. New York: Lawrence: Taylor & Francis.

Ericson, E. (1975). *Life history and the historical moment*. NewYork: Norton.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power and Knowledge*. NewYork: Pantheon Books.

Ghaniabadi, S., & Hashemi, H. R. (2015). Exploring teachers' reaction to the identity construction of Iranian students in EFL context. *Ciencia & Natura*, *37*(3), 25-35.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*: *Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Gordani, Y. (2010). An analysis of English textbooks used at Iranian guidance schools in terms of Bloom's taxonomy. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, *7*(2), 249-278.

Hall, S. (1992). The question of cultural identity. In S. Hall, D. Held, & A. G. McGrew (Eds.), *Modernity and its futures* (pp. 274-316). Cambridge: Polity Press

Hegel, G. (1857). *Lectures on the philosophy of history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kanno, Y. (2003). *Negotiating bilingual and bicultural identities*: *Japanese returnees between two worlds*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Kanno, Y. (2008). *Language and education in Japan: Unequal accessbilingualism*. Basingstoke: Macmillano.

Khajavi, Y., & Abbasian, R. (2011). English language teaching, national identity and globalization in Iran: The case of public schools. *International Journal of Humanity and Social Science*, *1*(10), 181-186.

Kinginger, C. (2004). Alice doesn't live here anymore: Foreign language learning an identity reconstruction. In A. Pavlenco & A. Blackledge (Eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts* (pp. 219-242). Clevdon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Kramsch, C. (2003). From practice to theory and back again. In M. Byram & P. Grundy (Eds.), *Context and culture in language teaching learning* (pp. 4-17). sClevdon: Multilingual Matters.

Kristava, J. (1987). *In the beginning was love: Psychoanalysis and faith*. Newyork: Columbia University Press.

Lantolf, J. P. (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lave J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MacKay, S. L., & Wong, S. (1996). *Chinese multiple discourse, multiple identities. Investment and agency in second language learning among immigrant students*. Harvard: Educational Center.

Melucci, A. (1995). *The process of collective identity*. Newyork: Temple University Press.

Merriam, S. B. (Ed.) (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Fransisco: Jossy-Bass.

Norton, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, *29*(1), 9-31.

Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity and ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, *31*(3), 409-429.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning*: *Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Ohara, M. (2001). Finding ones voice in Japanese. In A. Pavlenco (Ed.), *Multilingualism, second language learning and gender* (pp.37-49). Berlin: Muton.

Poliney, L. (1995). Language learning and living abroad: stories from the field. In B. Freed, (Ed.), *Second language acquisition* (pp.271-291). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Razmju, A. (2007). Language and identity in the Iranian context: The impact of identity aspects on EFL learners' achievements. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills, 2*(1), 101-125.

Sahragard, R., & Davatgarzadeh, G. (2010). The representation of social actors in interchange third edition series: A critical discourse analysis. *The Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, *2*(1), 67-89.

Shardkova, M., & Pavlenco, A. (2004). Identity options in Russian textbooks. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 3*(1), 25-46.

Sigel, M. (1996).The role of learner subjectivity in second language sociolinguistic competency: Western women learning Japanese. *Applied Linguistics*, *17*(3), 356-382.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998).*Basics of qualitative research*: *Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tajfel, E., & Turner, J. C. (1986).The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & Austin, J. (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relation* (pp.67-98). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hal.

Toohey, K. (2000). *Learning English at school: Identity, social relation and classroom practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Vygotsky, L. (1987*). Mind in society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice:* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The Effects of Teacher-centered versus Learner-centered Classrooms on Iranian EFL Learners' Out-of-class Activities

Masoud Tavakoli Dinani[1] and Ehsan Rassaei

Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch, Iran

Biodata

Masoud Tavakoli Dinani received his M.A. in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch. He has been teaching English for over fifteen years. His area of interest includes language teaching methodology. Email: mtdinani@gmail.com

Ehsan Rassaei is an assistant professor at Islamic Azad University Shiraz Branch where he teaches graduate and post graduate courses such as language testing, statistics and research methods. He has published a number of articles in top journals such as system, language teaching research and modern language journal. Email: ehsanrassaei@yahoo.com

Abstract

Due to the fact that opportunities to practice and use English in the EFL context of Iran are mainly confined to the setting of classroom and because the time students study and use English, if at all, in class often does not exceed a few hours each week, it is highly essential to engage the learners outside the classroom doing activities that can contribute to the betterment of their knowledge and proficiency in English. Furthermore, having little or no access to technology can compound this problem. It appears that to respond to this situation, much attention needs to be directed to out-of-class activities. It is quite clear that having the learners participate in learning activities outside the classroom is not an easy task and much depends on teaching methods and practices teachers employ in their class. This study was an attempt to investigate the differential

1 Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch, Shiraz, Iran

effect of teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches on EFL learners' out-of-class activities. To this end, 44 Iranian EFL learners took part in this study. They were assigned randomly to either teacher-centered or learner-centered classes and were taught over 10 weeks. The questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data. The results of the study revealed that the learner-centered classroom, compared to its counterpart, could enhance the learners' out-of-class activities. Further, the results indicated that the learners in the learner-centered class tended to focus on and participate in receptive activities more than productive activities.

1. Introduction

The learning and teaching environments to which language learners are exposed can greatly influence their success in the complicated journey of language learning. Learners might be motivated and engaged and consequently allocate greater time and attention during this journey or conversely they might get demotivated and abandon the journey owing to unfavorable learning and teaching environments. Creating learning environments together with influential relevant factors that could foster language learners' performance and further enhance their contribution have been issues that researchers have paid undivided attention. Teachers' teaching style, that is the distinct qualities of a teacher in organizing and presetting teaching materials to the learners, has been argued to have a bearing on the presence of a learning environment in which language learners not only display enthusiasm in class and participate in task completions but they also spend a great amount of time outside the class engaging in different tasks relevant to language learning. Implementing different teaching styles gave way to the emergence of two different instructional approaches, that is, teacher-centered and student-centered. Student centered classes provide opportunities for negotiation (of form, content and classroom rules of behavior) which creates an environment favorable to L2 learning. In student-centered teaching, the focus is on building on learners' experiences and strengths as well as teaching them how to use specific learning strategies in the process of language learning (Ellis, 2008; Nunan, 1988, 1999). Student-centered teaching provides negotiation opportunities for students to use the target

language to communicate meaning with teachers and peers in group work, project work, and task-based interactions (Adams, 2008; Anton, 1999; Beckett, 2005; Crookes & Chaudron, 2001; Gutierrez, 2008; Lin & Chien, 2009; Morris & Tarone, 2003; Nunan, 1991). In contrast, under the guidance of teacher-centered context, it is the teacher that is at the core of attention and students are perceived as passive entities absorbing what the teacher transmits. In teacher-centered classes, students are not engaged in the process of learning, and the teacher and peer relationship is too weak (Brown, 2001; Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Since learning a foreign language is a lifelong process, there has been a considerable attention to the means of enhancing this kind of learning. It is argued that learning is not limited to what is carried out in class and on the contrary can be carried out outside the class at any time in any place. For the same reason, out-of-class activities are thought to be a means through which students can be engaged in the process of learning (Hyland, 2004). According to Griffiths and Keohane (2000), since learners are not largely involved by textbooks, learning needs not be restricted to the classroom with textbooks and practice and, as pointed out by Field (2007), Students need to strengthen the ability to get information that is available both inside and outside the classroom context. Hyland (2004) held that context in which teaching is taken place is a very important consideration in studying out-of-class activities.

Out-of-class study is an essential factor that can influence students' language learning. Due to the fact that the chance of practicing and communicating English for Iranian English learners is confined to the limited time of class, it is highly important to engage the learners outside of class completing different types of learning tasks. Implementing different instructional approaches might affect the learners' motivation in doing learning activities outside of class. In other words, the amount of time language learners spend on language learning out of class might be affected by the style of instruction, teacher-centered or student-centered, employed by their teachers. Although considerable amount of research has been conducted on different aspects of student/teacher-centered dichotomy, scant attention has been paid to the impact of such dichotomous instructional approaches on learners' out-of-class activities. As such, this study set itself the objective of investigating the differential impact of tea teacher-centered and student-centered methods on EFL learners' out-of-class activities.

The main objective of this study was twofold. The first was to investigate the differential

impact of two different instructional methods, i.e. teacher-centered and student-centered, on the EFL learners' out-of-class activities. In other words, the study aimed to find out which method better enhanced the learners' out-of-class activities. The second one was to find out which out-of-class activities, if at all, were the least and the most frequent among the learners undergoing the learner-centered instruction.

2. Literature Review

Out-of-class English learning activities are defined as students' activities in listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary learning, and grammar learning to foster and improve their English outside of the classroom. By the same token, Benson (2001) classified out-of-class learning into three categories: (a) self-instruction through which students seek resources that help them improve their language ability (b) naturalistic language learning in which students communicate and interact with the target language group unintentionally, and (c) self-directed naturalistic language learning that students are in the pursuit of a language learning situation.

Out-of-class activities address multiple needs and interests of students and provide them with a variety of authentic English language inputs (Bas, 2008; Hillyard, Reppen, & Vasquez, 2007; Pearson, 2004), helping students go beyond the limitations of a traditional English syllabus (Foss, Carney, McDonald, & Rooks, 2007; Fried-Booth, 2001). Nunan (1989) found that a majority of students found classroom instructions not sufficient to develop English competence, and they believed that engagement in outside classroom learning had the capability to enhance their language development, highlighting the need for incorporating activities outside the classroom for greater learning success. Further, Nunan's (1991) studies of successful language learners revealed that students' preferences to employ their developing skills out of class can have an influential impact on their second language development. Having investigated out-of-class learning activities, Pickard (1996) argued that students inclined to prefer activities involving, for the most part, receptive skills including listening and reading. In contrast, they showed a very little interest in productive skills such as speaking and writing. The same results were reported by Yap (1998) who, studying on 18 secondary school students, found that students tended to engage in receptive rather than productive activities, including reading newspapers and watching English language television.

Freeman (1999) highlighted the importance of out-of-class learning as an important aspect of language learning, and the author further argued that in order for the time and effort devoted to learning the language outside the classroom to have a positive and influential impact, students should be equipped with the most effective ways to use this time. Benson (2001) argued that a considerable amount of research has been carried out with the aim of exploring learning inside the classroom while research on out-of-class language learning is scarce and needs more attention.

Pickard (1996) found that listening to the radio, reading newspapers, and novels outside of the classroom seem to be among the top activities language learners were engaged in. However, students made very little use of other facilities in out-of-class English learning including English newspapers, satellite TV, and self-study materials in the library. Freeman (1999) maintained that teachers should allocate some time to assure that their students use some time wisely practicing English outside of classroom because EFL students spent 88% of the time in out-of-class language learning, such as listening to the radio and chatting to foreigners.

Researchers (e.g., Brooks, 1992; Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002; Suh, Wasanasomsithi, Short, & Majid, 1999), argued that a large number of activities including watching television, going to the cinema, listening to music and interacting with native speakers are the major out-of-class activities English learners can do. Suh et al. (1999, p.14) continued arguing that "Out-of-class leisure activities will probably never replace the need for in-class second language instruction"; however, some leisure activities are useful in the development of students' English conversation skills. They advised ESL instructors to help students identify appropriate leisure activities and provide sufficient guidance to students to prevent the fossilization of bad language habits.

Pickard (1996) and Yap (1998) agreed that when it came to doing activities outside of classroom, students had different preferences in that they tended to choose activities involving receptive skills, such as reading and listening, rather than the productive skills, such as speaking and writing. In the same vein, Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002) found that most activities adult learners interested in doing are those related to communication and entertainment, such as watching movies and television in English and using the internet.

Additionally, Bligh (1997) discovered that an hour spent on a range of learning activities out of class has been shown to be as effective as an hour in a lecture, for the purpose of memorizing information, and more effective for understanding and problem solving. Hyland (2004) noted that the activities students did outside the classroom are speaking with family members, talking to people in the stores, talking on the phone, speaking with friends, listening to the radio, attending meetings, reading novels, speaking with colleagues, listening to songs, reading newspapers and magazines, watching TV programs, watching videos, surfing the internet, reading academic books, and writing e-mails in ranking order.

There exist a host of factors affecting studies in pursuing doing out-of-class activities. There is a consensus of opinion that motivation and metacognition influence out-of-class learner behavior (Lamb, 2002; Pickard, 1995; Victori & Lockhart 1995; Ushioda, 2001; Yorozu, 2001; Wenden, 2001). Both factors have been identified as determining aspects of learner autonomy which influence the type of activities learners intend to complete and why, as well as what they learn from them. Research has also shown that a range of mediating factors such as the social context, gender and ethnicity of learners may reduce, or enhance, the range of language learning opportunities which learners encounter (Liu, 2002; Polanyi, 1995; Tanaka, 1997).

Taken together, it can be inferred that teacher-centered and student-centered classes entail different instructional practices under two different contexts, affecting students' out-of-class activities differently. This study is an attempt to investigate the differential impact of teacher-centered and learner-centered method on EFL learners' out of class activities. In particular the current research addresses the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between the teacher-centered class and learner-centered class in enhancing out-of-class activities?
2. What types of out-of-class activities are often employed by EFL learners enrolled in learner-centered classrooms?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

For the purpose of this study, 44 (22 males and 22 females) lower-intermediate English learners (aged 20-25) were chosen to take part in the study. The sample was chosen out of 75 (30

males and 45 females) based on the results of the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (Allen, 2004). In other words, 44 learners whose scores were between one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen and considered as lower-intermediate learners. These learners had been coming to this language institute for over 2 years.

3.2. Instruments

In the present study, first, OPT was used to make sure that all the participants in the study enjoyed the same level of proficiency. Second, an English Learning Activities Questionnaire was adapted (Hyland, 2004) to probe the participants' out-of-classroom activities. Third, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants in the learner-centered class.

3.2.1 Oxford Placement Test

OPT, developed by Allen (2004), was employed as a placement test in order to make sure that all the participants in the study enjoyed the same level of proficiency. The OPT is composed of 60 multiple-choice items. The estimated internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) indicated the adequate reliability of 0.95 for this test. As pointed out by Allen (2004), the OPT can be utilized with any number of students of English to ensure reliable and accurate grading and placing of students into classes at all levels from elementary to advanced.

3.2.2 English Learning Activities Questionnaire

This survey was used to probe the type of activities used by the participants to foster their English language learning outside the classroom. The questionnaire has two parts: a demographic part asking about the participants' first language, their gender and age and the second part which was divided into three sections. The first section consists of 15 5-point Likert scale items. The participants were asked to indicate how frequently they did each activity outside the classroom using a scale from 1 (very often) to 5(never). The second section was used to indicate how useful the participants find the activities useful for improving their English. It consists of 15 5-point Likert scale items. The participants were asked to indicate how useful the activities are in fostering their English outside the classroom using a scale from 1 (very useful) to 5(not useful at all). The third section is comprised of 8 5-point Likert scale items. The participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed with each of the statements using a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5(strongly disagree).

To prove the face and content validity, all items included in the questionnaire were reviewed by two TEFL PhD holders. After the approval of the validity of instruments, the questionnaires

were pilot tested on a group sample of 40 English learners with characteristics similar to those of the main study.

3.2.3. Semi-structured Interview

The semi-structured interviews, each of which lasting approximately 20 minutes, were conducted to collect in-depth data from the participants in the learner-centered class. The advantage of using semi-structured interviews was that they enabled the researcher to collect information with more depth and insight. The semi-structured individual interviews allowed the participants to project on the types of English activities together with frequency and usefulness of these activities. The interviews questions were structured around English Learning Activities Questionnaire.

Interviews were conducted face to face in English. Some questions were followed by expressions such as "please explain" or "Could you explain more, please?". All the interviews were voice recorded for later analysis.

3.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The treatment sessions in the classes lasted over 10 weeks (two 90- minute sessions per week). The learner-centered class was taught by a teacher (one of the researcher) who was familiar with the principles of the learner-centered approach. One of the guiding principles of a learner-centered class is that students share responsibilities for leaning and further influence the content, activities, materials, and pace of learning. In the present study, the teacher tried to take into account learners' experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs and based on which act accordingly to help the learners to achieve their goals. By encouraging the learners to engage in out-of-class activities, the teacher created learning environments and opportunities for language learners to improve their English knowledge. On the other hand, in the teacher-centered class, what the learners did regarding English language learning was confined to what the teacher and students carried out in class in a traditional way. In the teacher-centered class, the teacher was in the center of the classroom giving instruction and the emphasis was on acquisition of knowledge irrespective of the learners' interests and needs. After the treatment session, the questionnaire was administered to the participants in both classes. Following that, the individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants in the learner-centered group.

After gathering the questionnaires from the participants from the two groups, quantifiable data were coded and the responses to the questionnaire items were submitted to SPSS 16.0 version. Interview data analysis included the analysis of tape-recorded interviews with the participants in the learner-centered group. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcribed text from each participant was carefully read to find out the most and the least frequent out-of-class activities pointed out explicitly or implicitly.

4. Results

The first research question was to find out whether there was any significant difference between the teacher-centered class and learner-centered class in enhancing out-of-class activities. Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the experimental and control groups. As the results indicate, the learner-centered group, with a mean of 105.82 outperformed the teacher-centered group (Mean = 83).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Teacher-Centered and Learner-Centered Class

	N	Minimum	maximum	Mean	Std.
Teacher centered	22	53	93	83.23	20.45
Learner centered	22	74	136	105.82	17.80

As it can be seen from Tables 2 and 3, the participants' mean scores on different out-of-classroom activities in the learner-centered class are higher than those in the teacher centered class.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for the Frequency of Activities Carried out in English in Both Classes

	Teacher-centered group		Learner-centered group	
	Mean	Std.	Mean	Std.
Watch TV programs	2.68	1.08	4.18	1.13
Listen to the radio	3.86	1.28	4.13	1.24
Listen to songs	2.72	1.48	3.95	1.52
Read newspapers and magazines	1.31	1.21	3.81	1.09
Read academic books and articles	2.36	1.49	4.36	1.36
Read novels	3.40	1.18	4.04	.998
Speak with colleagues/fellow students	2.05	1.46	3.04	1.17
Speak with friends	1.18	1.00	3.63	1.17
Speak with family members	2.31	1.12	3.18	1.40
Surf the internet	2.02	1.27	4.90	1.30
Watch videos/DVDs/VCDs	2.86	1.42	4.81	1.59
Talk on the phone	2.54	1.29	3.86	.990
Attend meetings	1.80	1.19	3.90	1.06
Write emails	2.22	1.30	4.45	1.43

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Helpfulness of Activities in Both Classes

	Teacher-centered group		Learner-centered group	
	Mean	Std.	Mean	Std.
Watch TV programs	2.45	1.22	4.22	1.30
Listen to the radio	2.00	1.48	4.00	.755

67

Listen to songs	2.08	1.32	3.54	1.18
Read newspapers and magazines	1.18	1.33	4.09	.921
Read academic books and articles	2.27	1.31	4.77	.812
Read novels	2.63	1.17	4.86	4.43
Speak with colleagues/fellow students	1.90	.971	3.31	1.08
Speak with friends	1.72	.827	3.09	1.10
Speak with family members	2.36	1.25	3.94	1.04
Surf the internet	2.31	1.08	4.40	1.09
Watch videos/DVDs/VCDs	2.09	1.23	4.54	1.04
Talk on the phone	2.68	1.28	3.27	1.16
Attend meetings	2.50	1.14	3.90	1.19
Write emails	2.45	1.26	4.90	1.26

In order to check whether the observed difference between the mean scores of the two groups was statistically significant, an independent sample t-test was run to compare the two groups' mean scores. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Results of Independent Samples T-Test for the Participants' Out-Of-Class Activity in Two Classes

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Out-of-class activity	Equal variances assumed	.296	.590	-3.73	28	.003
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.73	24.95	.003

The results indicate that there is a significant difference in the scores of the participants in the teacher-centered group (M=83.23, Std.=20.45) and in the learner-centered group (M=105.82, Std.=17.80), t (28)=3.734, p=.003. These results suggest that the learner-centered method, compared with the teacher-centered method, did enhance the participants' out-of-class activities (with confidence level of more than 0.99%). Thus, the null hypothesis stating that "There is no

significant difference between teacher-centered and student-centered class in enhancing students' out-of-class activities" was rejected.

The aim of the second question was to find out what types of out-of-class activities are often employed by EFL learners enrolled in learner-centered classrooms. To this end, the participants in the learner-centered class were interviewed individually in person after filling out the questionnaire. The interviews were audio taped and then transcribed by the researcher for the content analysis. The analysis began by identifying the most and the least frequent activities the participants did outside the classroom.

Analyzing the interviews indicated that the participants in the learner-centered class relied heavily on independent activities rather than interactive activities to practice English outside of the classroom. The most common independent activity that they carried out outside of the classroom included watching television and videos, listening to the radio and songs, reading novel, newspapers, and comic books, surfing the net, and writing emails.

As one of the students of the learner-centered group satated,

I try to read English newspapers, and magazines and novels out of classroom. When I read them I learn new words. I underline words and later find them in my dictionary and sometimes I write them in my vocabulary notebook.

Another participant from the learner-centered class pointed to the importance of writing emails and surfing the internet in helping her to keep in touch with English outside of the classroom. She explicitly mentioned that:

In this class because we should write emails to our teacher we should use internet. I think it is very good. I mean when I use internet and when I am writing I can have contact with English even at home and not just in class and this can help me not to forget things. You know now I love writing emails in English not penglish.

Another frequent set of independent activities that were mostly used by the participants in the learner-centered class was watching TV, videos, DVDs, etc. some of the participants explicitly stated that they watch television to improve their conversation skills. One of the participants stated that:

I think watching English movies is good because they help me in my speaking. When I watch movies I write words and phrases so I can learn good phrases by watching TV or DVDs. I use them in class when I speak English.

The least frequent out-of-class activities reported by the participants in the learner-centered class were interactive activities like speaking English. One possible explanation for this is that speaking English outside the classroom was not perceived positive from the cultural perspective. A number of participants commented that when they converse in English outside of their class, it appears that they are showing off, make it seems like they are trying to be proud or superior.

5. Discussion

This study sought answers to the following questions: 1) is there any significant difference between the teacher-centered and learner-centered classrooms in enhancing out-of-class activities? 2) What types of out of class activities are often employed by EFL learners enrolled in learner-centered classrooms?

Based on the above findings, the answer to the first research question of the current study is affirmative. In other words, the results indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between the teacher-centered and the learner-centered groups in participating and engaging in language activities outside the classroom.

The study revealed that the learner-centered group, compared to the teacher-centered one, allocated considerable amount of time to studying and practicing English outside the classroom. This indicates that appropriate and innovative classroom practices, like those employed in the leaner-centered method, not only can engage the learners in the process of learning inside the classroom but also can potentially enhance out-of-class activities. In other words, it appears that the participants in the learner-centered group actively participated in the whole learning process to the extent that they could progressively assume greater responsibility for their own learning and accordingly tried to engage in out-of-class activities.

The results obtained from this study showed that the learner-centered method had more positive effect on the participants' out-of-class activities, than the teacher-centered method. As such the results of the study supported the argumentation of Sawada (2009) and Fujioka (2001) that teaching styles together with class structure have a determining effect on learners' learning

experiences beyond the classroom. In particular, the results are in line with those of Fukuda and Yoshida (2013) who found that "classes which are designed to engage students actively, for example through presentations, have a positive influence on out-of-class study" (p. 35).

The first set of the questions in the questionnaire asked the participants to demonstrate how frequently they carried out various activities in the teacher- and learner-centered classes. As it is indicated in Tables 2 and 3, compared to those of the teacher-centered class, mean scores of the participants in the learner-centered class were higher in all activities.

Research within the area of second language acquisition has demonstrated that communicating in English out of the classroom is an efficacious way to learn and practice English. However, despite the paucity of opportunities for speaking English outside the classroom in EFL contexts, much of the talk the learners engaged in has been confined to the setting of the classroom. The results obtained from this study revealed that the participants in the leaner-centered class due to different factors including teaching practices as well as teacher's encouragement and support are likely to engage in using English beyond the walls of their class. According to Rubin (1975), communication in the second language might be considered essential for language learners outside of the classroom due to the fact that they are likely to find themselves in a situation that requires expressing needs during an emergency when only English speakers are available, buying things, or making inquiries. Thus, it is highly important to give the learner ample impetus and by employing appropriate teaching practices increase the likelihood of speaking English outside the classroom. As pointed out by Hyland (2004), one reason that hinders the use of English outside the classroom is the atmosphere that prevails the context of learning. The author continued arguing that the types of teaching practices are employed by teachers can to a great extent influence students' attitudes and intention to speak English outside the classroom. Thus it can be inferred that in the present study the learning-centered method has the capacity of creating a learning atmosphere that fosters the use of English outside the classroom.

With regard to the usefulness of the various activities for improving English outside the classroom, the results (Table 3) demonstrated that the mean scores of the participant in the learner-centered class were higher than those of the teacher-centered group. This shows that under instruction of learner-centered method, the students became aware of many possible ways

they could enhance and improve their English knowledge outside the classroom. The leaner-centered group considered activities associated with reading including reading newspapers, magazines, academic books and novels useful in improving their language. This result reinforced the argument put forth by Nunan (1991) who found that formal classroom instruction was not by any means sufficient to learn a language. He maintained that by applying language skills outside of the classroom and by carrying out activities such as reading newspapers, watching TV, talking with friends in English and talking to native English speakers, language learners can be more successful than restricting their learning opportunities to the setting of their classroom. In the same vein, Norton and Toohey (2001) demonstrated that the great extent of the success of language learners lies in getting access to the variety of English sources outside of the classroom.

As for the second research question which is "What types of out of class activities are often employed by EFL learners enrolled in learner-centered classrooms?", the results of the interviews demonstrated that the participants in the learner-centered class displayed more tendencies towards doing independent tasks than tasks that require a partner (interactive tasks). In this case, the results of the study are in accord with those of Pickard (1996) who found that students most often participated in independent activities outside of the classroom like reading newspapers and novels or listening to the radio and TV. One probable reason is that these activities were easily accessible. In this case the results also make the case for supporting the finding of other researchers (e.g., Chan, Spratt, & Humphrey, 2002; Hyland, 2004; Suh, Wasanasomsithi, Short, &Majid, 1999) who found that due to cultural factors, the use of English outside the classroom was restricted to carrying out more independent tasks than interactive tasks and thus the learners focused more on the private, rather than the public domain for practicing English.

Pooling together, the results of the present study shed the light of the fact that formal classroom instruction was by itself insufficient to learn a language. This study indicated that under instruction of the learner-centered method, language learners have motivation and ability to participate not only in English classes but also in English language activities (e.g., watching TV programs, listening to the radio, reading newspaper, speaking English with friends, surfing the net, writing emails etc.) outside of the classroom.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the differential impact of the teacher- and learner-centered method on EFL learners' out-of-class activities. The finding obtained from the study indicated that the learner-centered method, compared to the teacher-centered method, due to its distinctive features such as the active involvement of the students in the process of learning with the teacher playing the role of a facilitator, taking into account the interests and needs of the students, and paying attention to the learner's real-life language use for social interaction could enhance the participants' out-of-class activities. That is to say, the students who went through the learner-centered method had more tendency to spend some time outside the classroom learning and practicing English. The results of the study explicitly demonstrated the leaner-centered group tried to participate in different out-of-classroom activities including watching TV programs, listening to the radio, reading newspaper, speaking English with friends, surfing the net, writing emails, etc. What is more, it was shown that there was a difference in the frequency of these activities in the leaner-centered group in that the students spent more time doing independent tasks such as watching television and videos, listening to the radio and songs, reading novel, newspapers, and comic books, surfing the net, and writing emails. However, compared to independent tasks, the students spent less time participating in interactive tasks such as speaking with colleagues, friends, and family members, and talking English to people in shops and on the phone.

Findings obtained from the present study shed light on the fact that teaching styles and practices employed by language teachers can to a great measure influence language learners' out-of-class activities. That is to say that the language teachers by creating better classroom environments can motivate the learners in spending considerable time participating in various out-of-class activities. As far as the underlying principle of the learner-centered instruction is concerned, learners are at the heart of instruction with the teacher serving the roles of a facilitator, motivator, director and the like. Having said this, one potential motivator for enhancing out-of-class activities is to give the learners choices about what type of language or material to study outside the classroom. As befittingly pointed out by Fukuda and Yoshida (2013), "authentic student-centeredness … in which students can voice their opinions on activity content or the activity itself, is a potential motivator for increasing out-of-class study time" (p.

39). Hence, the findings of this study can inform language teachers as how to employ the appropriate teaching practices which can contribute better to their learners' out-of-class activities.

References

Adams, R. (2008). Do second language learners benefit from interacting with each other? In A. Mackey (Ed.), *Conversational interaction in second language acquisition: a collection of empirical studies*(pp. 29-51). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Allen, D. (2004). *Oxford quick placement test*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anton, M. (1999). The discourse of a learner-centered classroom: Sociocultural perspectives on teacher-learner interaction in the second-language classroom. *Modern Language Journal, 83*(3), 303-318.

Bas, G. (2008). *Implementation of multiple intelligences supported project-based learning in EFL/ESL classrooms*. Retrieved September 6, 2013, from http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/mi

Beckett, G. (2005). Academic language and literacy socialization through project-based instruction: ESL student perspectives and issues. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 15*(1), 191-206.

Benson, P. (2001). *Autonomy in language learning*. London: Longman.

Bligh, D. (1997). *What's the use of lectures?*. Oxford: Intellect.

Brooks, F. B. (1992). Communicative competence and the conversation course: A social interaction perspective. *Linguistics and Education, 4*(2), 219-246.

Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York: Longman.

Crookes, G., & Chaudron, C. (2001).Guidelines for language classroom instruction. In M. Celce-Murcía (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 29-42). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Ellis, R. (2008). *Principles of instructed second language acquisition.*Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Retrieved September 13, 2013, from http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/digest_pdfs/Instructed2ndLangFinalWeb.pdf

Field, J. (2007). Looking outwards, not inwards. *ELT Journal, 61*(1), 30-38.

Foss, P., Carney, N., McDonald, K., & Rooks, M. (2007). Project based learning activities for short-term intensive English programs. *Asian EFL Journal*, *23*. Retrieved September 10, 2013, from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/pta_Oct_07_ypf&nc&km&mr.php.

Freeman, M. (1999). The language learning activities of students of EFL and French at two universities. *Language Learning Journal,* 19, 80-88.

Fried-Booth, D. L. (2001). *Project work*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Fujioka, K. (2001). A study of the teaching–learning process in the university classroom: through the participant observation in the university classroom. *Kyoto University Researches in Higher Education*, 7, 1-23.

Fukuda, S. T., & Yoshida, H. (2013). Time is of the essence: Factors encouraging out-of-class study time. *ELT, 67*(1), 31-40.

Griffiths, G., & Keohane, K. (2000). *Personalizing language learning*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Gutierrez, A. G. (2008). Microgenesis, method and object: A study of collaborative activity in a Spanish as a foreign language classroom. *Applied Linguistics, 29*(1), 120-148.

Hillyard, L., Reppen, R., & Vasquez, C. (2007). Bringing the outside world into an intensive English program. *ELT Journal, 61*(2), 126-143.

Hyland, F. (2004). Learning autonomously: Contextualising out-of-classEnglish language learning. *Language Awareness*, *13*(3), 180-202.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lamb, M. (2002). Explaining successful language learning in difficult circumstances. *Prospect, 17*(2), 35-52.

Lin, G. H. C., & Chien, P. S. C. (2009).An investigation into the effectiveness of peer feedback. *Journal of Applied Foreign Languages,* 3, 79-87.

Liu, J. H. (2002). *Stress, coping and adaptation for international students of Asian and European origins*. Paper presented at the Foundation Series Lecture, August 31, 2002, Victoria University of Wellington.

Morris, F. A., & Tarone, E. E. (2003). Impact of classroom dynamics on the effectiveness of recasts in second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 53, 325-368.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001).Changing perspectives in good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*(2), 307-322.

Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centered curriculum: A study in second language teaching.*Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Understanding language classrooms*. New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology*. London: Prentice Hall.

Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Canada: Heinle and Heinle publisher.

Pearson, N. (2004). *The idiosyncrasies of out-of-class language learning: A study of mainland Chinese students studying English at tertiary level in New Zealand.* Proceedings of the Independent Learning Conference, 2003.Available from www.independentlearning.org/ila03/ila03_pearson.pdf.

Pickard, N. (1995). Out-of-class language learning strategies: Three case studies. *Language Learning Journal,* 12, 35-37.

Pickard, N. (1996). Out-of-class language learning strategies. *English Teaching Journal,* 50, 150-59.

Polanyi, L. (1995). Language learning and living abroad. In B. F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 271-291). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the «good language learner» can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly,* 9, 41-51.

Sawada, T. (2009). The effectiveness of using students' multidimensional course evaluations: including aspects of formation of a learning community and students' self-evaluation of their learning. *Journal of the Liberal and General Education Society of Japan, 31*(2), 132-139.

Spratt, M., Humphreys, G., & Chan, V. (2002). Autonomy and motivation: Which comes first? *Language Teaching Research,* 6, 245-266.

Suh, J. S., Wasanasomsithi, P., Short, S., & Majid, N. A. (1999). *Out of class learning experiences and students' perceptions of their impact on English conversation skills.* Research report at Indian University.

Tanaka, K. (1997). Language experiences of Japanese students in Auckland. *Tesolanz Journal,* 5, 37-49.

Ushioda, E. (2001). Language learning at university: exploring the role of motivational thinking. In Z. Dörnyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 93-125). Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center.

Victori, M., & Lockhart, W. (1995). Enhancing metacognition in self-directed language learning. *System, 23*(2), 223-234.

Wenden, A. (2001). Metacognitive knowledge in SLA: The neglected variable. In M. Breen (Ed), *Learner contributions to language learning* (pp. 44-64). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Yap, S. L. (1998). *Out-of-class use of English by secondary school students in a Hong Kong Anglo-Chinese school* (Unpublished MA Thesis). University of Hong Kong.

Yorozu, M. (2001). Interaction with native speakers of Japanese: What learners say. *Japanese Studies, 21*(2), 199-213.

The Effect of Collaborative Assessment on Developing Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Ability and Alleviating Writing Anxiety

Gholam-Reza Abbasian[1]
Imam Ali & Islamic Azad University (South Tehran Branch)

Leila Fayezi Manshouri Moghaddam
Islamic Azad University (South Tehran Branch)

Biodata

Gholam-Reza Abbasian is an assistant professor of TEFL at Imam Ali University & IAU. He has presented at (inter) national conferences, written and translated about 15 books, and published scholarly articles. Dr Abbasian offers psycholinguistics, language testing, & research methods at MA and PhD levels. He has been nominated as top scholar and the most successful teacher for seven consecutive years. He is the internal manager of JOMM, reviewer of Sage, FLA and GJER journals and a member of editorial board of JSSIR. Email: gabbasian@ gmail.com

Leila Fayezi Manshouri Moghaddam is an MA graduate student in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch, Iran. She was involved in teaching in various language institutes for ten years. She is interested in doing research in the areas of teaching, testing and language skills. Email: l.fayezi7@gmail.com

Abstract

Writing ability is understood as an important skill of communication these days. However, it has been shown that English language learners feel anxious and have difficulty in this important skill. To help learners alleviate this anxiety as well as to help them enhance their writing skills, various methodological measures have been taken but the beneficial role of collaborative assessment has been

---

1 Imam Ali & Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

largely overlooked to date. In response to this paucity, the current study was an attempt to investigate whether collaborative assessment can develop Iranian EFL learners' writing ability as well as alleviate their writing anxiety. 42 Iranian intermediate EFL learners were selected and were randomly assigned to a team-based collaborative assessment group and a learner-teacher assessment group, receiving respective treatment for ten sessions. Both paired and independent t-tests were run to compare the intra and inter-group mean scores. The results indicated that collaborative assessment had the potential to develop writing ability and alleviate writing anxiety. Further, the findings showed that the team-based assessment group outperformed the learner-teacher assessment group in terms of developing writing ability; however, there were no differences between the two groups in alleviating writing anxiety.

Keywords: Collaborative assessment, Second language writing, Writing anxiety

1. Introduction

Assessment is an integral part of language learning and teaching; however, you may have known teachers with whom you would not dare to discuss a score, and you may have felt certain level of anxiety as you felt the pressure to write an in-class essay that would be judged by the teacher, and returned with no chance for your future revision (Brown, 2001). According to Nunan (2006) producing a coherent, fluent and long piece of writing is the most difficult thing. History of language writing shows that half a century ago teachers were usually focused on the final product of writing. Compositions were supposed to show accurate grammar and a lot of attention was placed on learners' final product which was assessed against a fixed criterion, but there was no attention paid to the process of writing which could help learners to get to the final product. Therefore, pedagogy was controlled by form-focused methods that were consistent with the audio lingual ideology of drilling. But in mid-1970, second language teachers were encouraged to use process-oriented approaches which concentrate on the creation of the text rather than on the end product. The process-oriented approach is an attempt to give learners a chance to think during their writing process because writing is a thinking process (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Some researchers believe that assessment has not been considered and practices as a learning tool rather it has been understood as an evaluative instrument (e.g. Chau, 2005).

Further, the trend of language testing has shifted away from test-based assessment to various forms of assessment, particularly toward learner-centered assessment processes. In other words, focus has swapped from traditional teacher-centered examination to learning process itself, in which students are held responsible for their own learning. The constructivist nature of collaborative learning suggests that this experience can promote learning and delegate a proportion of the assessment responsibility to learners (Swan, Shen, & Hiltz, 2006).

The term assessment is an umbrella term which refers to a variety of means of collecting information about learners' language ability by monitoring and recording their learning (Carter & Nunan, 2001). It is also defined by Brown (2001) as the systematic and ongoing process of collecting information about students' learning in order to describe what he or she knows, is able to do and is working toward. In an educational system, assessment would contribute to instruction by pinpointing students' strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, through meaningful engagement of learners, assessment can increase their motivation in the learning process. Assessment can also function as a fair, valid and efficient tool for learning using different measures (Mousavi, 2012). Angelo and Cross (1993) hold that classroom assessment helps teachers obtain useful information and feedback on what and how well their students are learning.

Collaborative assessment can play a key role in the measurement and development of all skills of language, especially writing. As a basic communicative skill, writing is becoming widely recognized as an important skill for educational reasons. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) discussed the fear of negative evaluation of writing as an important cause of second language writing anxiety. Massa (1997) believed that alternative assessment in writing can foster and develop writing ability. Massa argued that

> [there] is a need to redefine the objective of writing assessment, moving it
> from a punitive, gate-keeping tool that measure deficits, to a facilitative tool
> that informs novice academic writers of the characteristics of clear expression
> of thought, inform teachers of student's potential, and inform the classroom
> curriculum (p.87).

Collaborative assessment as a type of alternative assessment could have positive affect not only on learning but also on minimizing anxiety (Ruddick, 2013). Moreover, studies on

assessment have recently gained interest in greater interaction between assessment and learning as it is believed that collaborative assessment, according to Chau (2005), is a critical means of promoting learning and minimizing anxiety. He added that

> Collaborative assessment (CA) highlights mutual goals (working towards a mutually acceptable assessment grade), dynamic exchange of information (presenting, defending and elaborating views on the grade by tutor and student) and role interdependence (emphasizing individual accountability for meaningful exchange to take place) as key characteristics of collaboration (Chau, 2005, p.27).

In spite of the potential contribution of collaborative assessment to the development of English language learners' writing ability, such a trend has not still been recognized by Iranian EFL teachers and learners. Hanjani and Li (2014) found that Iranian EFL writing courses suffer from the absence of peer collaboration. The learners are heavily dependent on teachers and prefer their tutors' comments to their classmates'. In these traditional teacher-centered classes, only do teachers respond to students' questions and students value teachers' comments (Hanjani & Li, 2014). In such contexts, individual work is superior to teamwork. The authors believed that collaborative assessment could be the best way to move students from a traditional and product-oriented approach to a more process-based and student-centered approach. In another empirical study, Ghoorchaei, Tavakoli and Ansari (2010) examined the impact of portfolio assessment as a process-oriented assessment on Iranian EFL students' writing ability. Their findings revealed that alternative assessment instead of traditional ways of assessment which insist on final product of writing can increase students writing ability. They believe that Iranian English learners rely on their own knowledge and overlooking the socio-cultural factors, especially in terms of negotiations of their reasons.

Considering the enumerated features of collaborative assessment into account, one can draw the conclusion that collaborative assessment has positive role in promoting learning and minimizing anxiety, paving the ground for involving learners in the process of writing (Chau, 2005). Additionally, convincing body of research has offered evidence for the role of alternative assessment in fostering second language writing (Massa, 1997), but only a few studies (e.g. Chau, 2005) have addressed the effect of collaborative assessment on fostering language

development. The present study was set up to investigate the effect of collaborative assessment on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability and also to find out whether collaborative assessment could alleviate writing anxiety.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Alternative Assessment

In recent years, massive attention has been paid to alternative assessment. Huerta-Macias (1995) make distinction between alternative and traditional assessment, stating "students are evaluated on what they integrate and produce rather than what they are able to recall and reproduce" (p. 9). Alternative assessment is more authentic and student-centered because it produces more opportunities for students to get involved in the process of learning and taking responsibility for their own learning (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Different kinds of assessment described as alternative assessment include self-assessment, peer-assessment, portfolio, student-teacher conference, learner diaries, interviews, and observation. They state that alternatives in assessment provide information on students' weaknesses and strengths, and it could make numerous contributions to measurement. It, also, provides options to traditional assessment which does not intervene classroom activities.

2.2. Collaborative Assessment

Assessment could be implemented in a variety of forms. According to Chau (2005), one type of assessment for assessing and promoting learning is collaborative assessment, which focuses on active exchange of information with other students and the tutor to reach a shared agreement. Collaborative assessment aims at involving learners in the process of assessment. In fact, learners evaluate and defend their own work and compare it with a peer, or teacher discusses it with them in order to reach an acceptable assessment grade through discussion and exchange of information. According to Chalmer (2001),

> Collaborative assessment is a problem-solving approach that applies ideas from narrative therapy as an alternative to psychological evaluation. Collaborative assessment seeks to invite the people who are affected a problem to work together against the problem, rather than against each other. The "heat" is put on the

problem, not on any one person. This frees people to assume responsibility for opposing problems, rather than engaging in blame or other damaging practices (p. 1).

Angelo and Cross (1993) discusses the role of collaborative assessment on the personal satisfaction and learning. That is to say, by collaborating with students and actively involving them in classroom assessment, learning and personal satisfaction increases and this can cause law anxiety in learners. Similarly, Philips (1999, p. 1) puts forward "working with a partner is less intimidating than being singled out to answer in front of the class and it brings a realistic element into the classroom by stimulating the natural conversation setting" (as cited in Juan, Daradoumis, Xhafa, Caballe, & Faulin, 2010). He believes that when students talk to their peers, they are less inhibited and anxious to express their meaning to each other because they would have a chance to boost their production and hence promote their communicative skills.

Collaborative assessment is concerned with students' participating in discussion and negotiation in small groups (Ruddick, 2013). One positive element of collaborative assessment is its effect on reducing test anxiety. It has been well documented that collaborative assessment can alleviate the level of anxiety which is associated with language learning (Helmericks, 1993; Kapitanof, 2009). Kapitanof (2009) states that most students have a better performance in collaborative tests than in individual tests. He reports that the majority of the learners involved in collaborative testing reported alleviation in their anxiety levels. According to Helmericks (1993) most of the students participating in collaborative testing reported that their anxiety levels are reduced and their confidence level increases during collaborative assessment.

2.3. Second Language Writing and Assessment

Second language writing takes a long time and learners need to have different cognitive and linguistic information to come up with a coherent text (Kormos, 2012). Additionally Kormos points out that second language writing is the most complicated skill which takes a lot of time, energy and concentration. Among the affective variables involved in writing, the most important one is writing anxiety or apprehension. Hassan (2001, p.2) defined second language writing anxiety (SLWA) as "a general avoidance of writing and of situations perceived by the individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for the evaluation of that writing". To minimize second language writing anxiety in the learner-centered

classroom, he also believes, certain teaching techniques such as writing more, conference during drafting stages, collaboration with students for evaluation criteria, encouraging positive self-talk and the like should be used. Studies carried out on the impact of writing anxiety on writing skill in second language contexts highlighted that writing anxiety has profound effects on writing performance (Hassan, 2001; Chau, 2005). Horwitz et al. (1986) discussed the role of fear of negative evaluation on second language anxiety, especially fear of negative evaluation of writing which is a productive skill as an important cause of second language writing anxiety.

Some researchers have argued for the positive role of alternative assessment in developing writing skill (Massa, 1997). According to Weigle (2002) alternative assessment in writing can allow wider inferences about student's writing ability. Thus, this study was set up to explore the effect of collaborative assessment on developing Iranian intermediate EFL learners writing ability and alleviating writing anxiety. More specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. Does incorporation of collaborative assessment have any significant effect on developing EFL learners' writing ability?
2. Is there any significant difference between team-based assessment and learner-teacher assessment in developing EFL learners' writing ability?
3. Does collaborative assessment significantly alleviate writing anxiety?
4. Is there any significant difference between team-based assessment and learner-teacher assessment in alleviating EFL learner's writing anxiety?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of the present study were chosen from 62 Iranian intermediate EFL students, with the age range from 14 to 25. The sample was selected from the learners of Iran's National Language Institute in Tehran, Iran. Having received a mock version of the PET, 42 students were selected from both male and female intermediate EFL learners (18 male and 24 female) whose scores fell within one standard deviation from the mean. They enrolled in an English institute and they have studied the same materials (Four corners books) over the past three years. Then, the selected participants were randomly assigned into two experimental groups.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Preliminary English Test (PET)

To make sure of the homogeneity of participants in terms of general English, a mock version of the PET was administered before the treatment in order to compare their means and make sure that there was no difference between them.

3.2.2. Diagnostic Test

Before the administration of the treatment, the researcher administered a writing section of the PET (as a diagnostic test) to both groups to capture the initial differences between the groups in terms of writing ability.

3.2.3. Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

In order to capture the learners' second language writing anxiety before the administration of the treatment, the researcher administered the Chenge's (2004) Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), which consists of 22 items, scored on a five-point response scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Reliability analysis conducted by Cheng (2004) showed a Test-retest reliability index of (α= .91) as an acceptable index. The same was also applied as the post-test to measure the writing anxiety level of the participants after the administration of the treatments.

3.2.4. Achievement Test

After the treatment was over, the researcher administered another version of the PET as an achievement test to measure the effect of the treatment on both groups and to measure participants' writing improvement. The participants had to write and answer some questions in 3 parts. In part one they had to write the missing words in a way that each could mean the same as the first ones. In part two they were supposed to write a note in about 45 words and in part three they had to write a paragraph about the given topic in about 100 words in 35 minutes.

3.3. Procedures

At the beginning of the treatment process, both groups were instructed on how to evaluate writing according to Jacobs et al.'s (1981, as cited and discussed in weigle, 2002) analytical

scale. On the basis of this scale, the writings are scored on five dimensions and each part has different points: content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points). (Weigle, 2002, p.114) stated that "analytical scoring is particularly useful for second-language learners, who are more likely show a marked or uneven profile across different aspects of writing". In each of the classes, the researcher distributed and explained the checklist of analytical scale to the participants. Then, the topics for writing which were selected by teacher on the basis of learners' own course books and also PET were given to all the participants and the administration of the treatments started for both groups. The participants in both groups were supposed to write on the same topics in class. The participants of team-based collaborative assessment group were asked to write on a topic every session; then, their writings were collected and distributed to their peers. These writings were scored by the peers in the group (each group consisted of five learners), and every session the writings were given back to the participants to see the feedback and opportunities were given to discuss the points of difference and negotiate in order to reach a mutual agreement among each other. The teacher tried to assist the participants to understand all steps of assessment. In fact, the teacher pushed the participants toward healthy and correct assessment. For the learner-teacher collaborative assessment group, the participants were supposed to write on the same topics which were initially scored by the participants themselves. Later on, each piece of writing was scored by the teacher. The teacher explained the reasons for the given scores and wrote the allotted scores to different parts of the writing. Each participant was given the opportunity to compare the scores, discuss the points of difference, and defend his/her own position against teacher's scores. The treatment lasts for 12 sessions, every session about 1 hour and 30 minutes.

4. Results

4.1. Normality Check

Four assumptions should be met before one decides to run parametric tests (Field, 2009). The data should be measured on an interval scale. The subjects' performance on the test is not affected by the performance of other students. The data should enjoy normal distribution and finally the groups should have homogeneous variances. The present data were measured on an interval scale and the subjects' performed independently on the tests. The assumption of normality was also met. As depicted in Table 1, the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors were within the normal range of +/- 1.96.

Table 1

Testing Normality Assumption

Group		N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Team-Based Assessment	Pretest	21	-.250	.501	-0.50	-.942	.972	-0.97
	Posttest	21	-.783	.501	-1.56	-.199	.972	-0.20
	Homogeneity	21	-.164	.501	-0.33	-1.329	.972	-1.37
	Pre-Anxiety	21	.286	.501	0.57	-.114	.972	-0.12
	Post-Anxiety	21	-.147	.501	-0.29	-.735	.972	-0.76
	N	21						
Learner-Teacher Assessment2	Pretest	21	-.129	.501	-0.26	-.157	.972	-0.16
	Posttest	21	-.357	.501	-0.71	-.938	.972	-0.97
	Homogeneity	21	-.209	.501	-0.42	-1.354	.972	-1.39
	Pre-Anxiety	21	-.529	.501	-1.06	.431	.972	0.44
	Post-Anxiety	21	-.172	.501	-0.34	-.570	.972	-0.59
	N	21						

4.2. Homogeneity Measures

An independent t-test was run to compare two experimental groups' mean scores on the PET in order to prove that both groups enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment. As displayed in Table 2, the team-based assessment (M = 56.20, SD = 8.27) and learner-teacher assessment (M = 56.82, SD = 8.37) groups showed almost the same means on the PET.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of PET

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PET	Team-Based Assessment	21	56.20	8.272	1.805
	Learner-Teacher Assessment	21	56.82	8.372	1.827

The results of the independent t-test (t (40) = .24, P > .05, R = .038) represents a weak effect size).Table 3 indicates that there was not any significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the PET. Thus it can be concluded that they enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment.

Table 3

Independent Samples Test for PET Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	.019	.890	.243	40	.809	.625	2.568	-4.565	5.816	
Equal variances not assumed			.243	39.994	.809	.625	2.568	-4.565	5.816	

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's F = .019, P > .05). That is why the first row of Table 3 (i.e. Equal variances assumed) was reported.

4.3. Pretest of Writing

An independent sample t-test was run to compare the two groups' mean scores on the pretest of writing in order to prove that both groups enjoyed the same level of writing ability prior to the treatment. As displayed in Table 4, the team-based assessment (M = 13.50, SD = 4.93) and learner-teacher assessment (M = 13.21, SD = 3.85) groups showed almost the same means on the pretest of writing.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Pretest of Writing

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-WR	Team-Based Assessment	21	13.50	4.937	1.077
	Learner-Teacher Assessment2	21	13.21	3.852	.841

4.4. Pretest of Anxiety

An independent sample t-test was run to compare the two groups' mean scores on the pretest of anxiety in order to prove that both groups enjoyed the same level of anxiety prior to the treatment. As displayed in Table 5, the team-based assessment (M = 71.24, SD = 5.97) and learner-teacher assessment (M = 67.33, SD = 8.55) groups showed almost the same means on the pretest of anxiety.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Pretest of Anxiety

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Anxiety	Team-Based Assessment	21	71.24	5.974	1.304
	Learner-Teacher Assessment	21	67.33	8.552	1.866

In order to answer the first research question addressing whether or not incorporating collaborative assessment has any significant effect on developing EFL Learner's writing ability, a paired-samples t-test was run to compare the team-based assessment group's means on the pretest and posttest of writing. As displayed in Table 6, the team-based assessment group staged a higher mean on the posttest of writing.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest of Writing (Team-Based Group)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Posttet	19.33	21	3.498	.763
	Pretest	13.50	21	4.937	1.077

As indicated in Table7, the results of the paired-samples t-test (t (20) = 9.97, P < .05, R = .91 representing a large effect size) indicated that there was a significant difference between the team-based assessment group's means on the pretest and posttest of writing. Thus, it can be concluded the first null-hypothesis was rejected. The team-based assessment significantly improved the writing ability of the participants in the group.

Table 7

Paired Samples T-Test for Pretest and Posttest of Writing (Team-Based Assessment)

Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	
			Lower	Upper			
5.833	2.680	.585	4.613	7.053	9.974	20	.000

In order to answer the second research question, addressing whether or not there is any significant difference between team-based assessment and learner-teacher assessment in developing EFL learner's writing ability, an independent sample t-test was run to compare the team-based and learner-teacher assessment groups' mean scores on the posttest of writing. As illustrated in Table 8, the team-based assessment group (M = 19.33, SD = 3.49) outperformed the learner-teacher assessment group (M = 16.69, SD = 3.38) on the posttest.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Posttest of Writing

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-WR	Learner-Teacher Assessment	21	16.69	3.382	.738
	Team-Based Assessment	21	19.33	3.498	.763

As shown in Table 9, the results of the independent sample t-test (t (40) = 2.48, P < .05, R = .41 representing an almost large effect size) indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the posttest. Thus, it can be concluded that the second null-hypothesis was rejected.

Table 9

Independent Samples Test for Posttest of Writing

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.000	.987	2.489	40	.017	2.643	1.062	.497	4.789
Equal variances not assumed			2.489	39.955	.017	2.643	1.062	.497	4.789

In order to answer the third research question, addressing whether or not collaborative assessment significantly alleviates writing anxiety, a paired-samples t-test was run to compare the team-based assessment group's means on the pretest and posttest of writing anxiety. As

displayed in Table 10, the team-based assessment group showed a lower mean on the posttest of writing anxiety (M = 56.24, SD = 8.49) than that on the pretest (M = 71.24, SD = 5.97).

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest of Writing Anxiety (Team-Based Assessment)

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Anxiety	71.24	21	5.974	1.304
Post-Anxiety	56.24	21	8.496	1.854

The results (Table 11) of the paired-samples t-test (t (20) = 7.56, P < .05, R = .86 representing a large effect size) indicated that there was a significant difference between the team-based assessment group's means on the pretest and posttest of writing anxiety. Thus, it can be concluded the third null-hypothesis was rejected. The team-based assessment significantly alleviated the writing anxiety of the participants in the group.

Table 11

Paired Samples t-test for Pretest and Posttest of Writing Anxiety (Team-Based Assessment)

Paired Differences							
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
15.000	9.088	1.983	10.863	19.137	7.563	20	.000

In order to answer the fourth research question, addressing whether or not there is any significant difference between team-based assessment and learner-teacher assessment in alleviating EFL learner's writing anxiety, an independent sample t-test was run to compare the team-based and learner-teacher assessment groups' mean scores on the posttest of writing anxiety. As demonstrated in Table 12, the team-based assessment group (M = 56.24, SD = 8.49) staged a lower mean on writing anxiety than the learner-teacher assessment group (M = 59.62, SD = 6.26).

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Posttest of Writing Anxiety

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-Anx	Team-Based Assessment	21	56.24	8.496	1.854
	Learner-Teacher-Assessment	21	59.62	6.281	1.371

The results of the independent t-test (t (40) = 1.46, P > .05, R = .22 representing a weak effect size) in Table 13 indicated that there was not any significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the posttest of writing anxiety. Thus, it can be concluded the null-hypothesis was retained.

Table 13

Independent Samples Test for Posttest of Writing Anxiety

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.895	.176	1.466	40	.150	3.381	2.306	-1.279	8.041
Equal variances not assumed			1.466	36.832	.151	3.381	2.306	-1.291	8.053

5. Discussion

As to the first research question, the results revealed that there was a significant difference between the team-based assessment group's means on the pretest and posttest of writing. Thus, it can be claimed that collaborative assessment is more effective in developing learner's writing ability. This finding, in fact, gives more support to the collaborative assessment claims that cooperation has the potential to improve learning. The findings, furthermore, can be explained based on Chau's (2005) remarks stating that collaboration can lead to better classroom learning and interaction. This can also enhance students' motivation and minimize their anxiety. The

results of the study, additionally, lend some support to MaCconnel's (2002) words, proposing that collaborative assessment has positive effects on learners' learning and move them away from dependence on tutors as the only source of judgment. Possible explanation behind the findings could be the fact that collaborative assessment set the scene for identifying the problems, comparing and contrasting learners' own scores with those of the teacher or their peers and getting more awareness about evaluation and their own performance.

As to the second research question, the results of the study showed that the team-based assessment group (M=19.33, SD=3.49) outperformed the learner-teacher assessment group (M=16.69, SD=3.38) on the posttest of writing and there was a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the posttest of writing. According to the findings of this study, it is assumed that team-based assessment as a kind of assessment can positively help learners develop their writing ability. As a support to this study, Joshi (2013) explored the effect of collaborative assessment on speaking ability of ESL learners. His findings showed that collaboration in assessment increased learners' speaking ability. He also reported an increase in learners' confidence by creating fearless and friendly environment. However, some inconsistencies could be observed between the results of this study and those reported other researchers (e.g., Jones, 1998; MacConnel, 2002; Ragoonaden & Bordeleau, 2000; and Tansley, 2000, all cited in Joshi, 2013). They noted some difficulties in the use of collaborative assessment and engaging learners in the process of learning. A notable problem in their studies was the time limitation and low attention in their learners. The possible reason for outperformance of team-based assessment group can be due to the fact that it let the learners to find strong and weak points of their peers' writings and learn important points from them in a friendly and unthreatening environment.

As to the third research question, the results of the paired samples t-test indicated that there was a significant difference between the team-based assessment group's means on the pretest and posttest of writing anxiety. The study found that team-based collaborative assessment group showed a lower mean on the posttest of writing anxiety test (M = 71.24, SD = 5.97). Thus, it can be argued that the team-based assessment significantly alleviated the writing anxiety of the subjects. This finding is consistent with the study done by Pandey and Kapitanoff (2011) confirming that collaborative assessment decreases learners' test anxiety and enhances their test performance indirectly. Similarly, Joshi (2013) reported an increase in learners' confidence by

creating fearless and friendly environment. Moreover, Chau (2005) signified that collaborative class work allows for the development of learners' motivation and minimizes the anxiety found in assessment process. One possible reason behind the findings could be the fact that collaborative assessment makes assessment more enjoyable by creating relaxed atmosphere. Another explanation behind the superiority of team-based assessment over learner-teacher assessment group probably resides in the fact that team-based assessment involved learners in both self and other learners evaluation whereas learner-teacher assessment deprive the learners of the group assessment. So, team-based assessment group had more opportunity to assess their peers' writing and negotiate with their peers over the points of difference and reach to an agreement in a friendly environment.

Regarding the fourth research question, an independent t-test was also run to compare the team-based and learner-teacher assessment groups' mean scores on the posttest of writing. The results indicated there was not any significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the posttest of writing anxiety. It was clear that a low level of writing anxiety was experienced by both groups. So it is difficult to say that teamwork has more positive or negative effect on writing anxiety than learner-teacher group which warrants further studies. Breedlove et al. (2004, as cited in Ruddick, 2013) reported that test anxiety reduction in collaborative testing was much related to impression and there is no difference between teamwork assessment and individual tests. However, the results depict some inconsistencies with those reported other researchers (e.g., Kapitanof, 2009; Helmericks, 1993). On the other hand, one possible reason for such result may be due to the limitation of the time in this study because writing instruction is so time-consuming in terms of evaluation and revision.

6. Conclusion

It can be argued that engaging learners in the process of assessment can enhance their writing ability and reduce their writing anxiety. One possible explanation could be the fact that collaborative assessment offers more opportunities for learners to argue and identify their problems in a friendly and respectful environment. Although there are some difficulties in collaborative assessment implementation, it seems essential to take into account the needs of students and encourage them to take part in the process of assessment. Examining the students' written data obtained from collaborative assessment proved the effectiveness of team-based

assessment as compared to the data obtained from learner-teacher assessment group. The reason of this outperformance can be attributed to the difference of assessment ways, in which learners themselves take responsibility for their assessment. This study, also, found that the groups which are assessed in teams and through collaboration with each other in the process of assessment experienced alleviation in their writing anxiety. Possible explanation behind this could be the freedom of learners to involve in the evaluation process and interact with their teacher and peers in an enjoyable environment. It was indicated that learners who received the treatment of collaborative assessment had a better writing ability. In fact, collaborative assessment can be introduced as an effective way to be applied in writing classrooms. The resultant statistics are also a support to the literature, though the differences were not statistically significant.

Collaborative assessment can inform EFL and ESL teachers of the benefits of team-based assessment in the process of writing. Teachers should know the sources of EFL and ESL writing anxiety in the writing classes so that classes could be organized in a manner to minimize writing anxiety. The findings of this study can inform teachers to increase their awareness of writing anxiety because it is one of the important affective factors which affects students learning and motivation. Moreover language teachers can instruct learners on how to use collaborative assessment and give more credence to team-based assessment at their classes.

References

Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques*, (2Ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2 Ed). New York: Longman.

Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, p. (2010). *Language assessment principles and classroom practices* (2 Ed). White Plains, NY: Pearson Edition.

Carter, R., & Nunan, D. (2001). *Teaching English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chalmer, B. J. (2001). *Collaborative assessment: An alternative to psychological evaluation*. Retrieved May 15, 2013 from: http://www. Somewareinvt.com/vcca/collab_assess_paper.pdf.

Chau, J. (2005). Effects of collaborative assessment on language development and learning. *Language Learning Journal, 32*(1), 27-37.

Cheng, Y. S. (2004). A measure of second language writing anxiety: Scale development and preliminary validation. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13*(4), 313-335.

Field, A. (2009). Non- parametric tests. *Discovering statistics using SPSS*, 2, 521-570.

Ghoorchaei, B., Tavakoli, M., & Ansari, D. N. (2010). The impact of portfolio assessment on Iranian EFL students' essay writing: A process-oriented approach. *Journal of Language Studies*, *10*(2), 35-51.

Hanjani, A. M., & Li, L. (2014). EFL learners' written reflections on their experience of attending process-based, student-centered essay writing course. *Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *1*(2), 149-166.

Hassan, B. A. (2001). The relationship of writing apprehension and self-esteem to the writing quality and quantity of EFL university students. *Mansoura Faculty of Education Journal,* [on line]   Retrieved   July 16, 2015 from: http:// eric. ed. gov/ PDFS/ ED459671.pdf.

Helmericks, S. G. (1993). Collaborative testing in social statistics: Toward gemeinstat: *Teaching Sociology,* 21, 287-297.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Journal,* 70(2), 125-132.

Huerta-Macias, A. (1995). Alternative assessment: Responses to asked questions. *TESOL Journal*, *5*(1), 8-11.

Joshi, N. (2013). Collaborative assessment techniques to assess English speaking skill of ESL learners. *ELT Voices, 3*(2). Retrieved June 3, 2013 from http://eltvoices.in

Juan, A., Daradoumis, T., Xhafa, F., Caballe, S., & Faulin, J. (2010). *Monitoring and assessment in oneline collaboration environments*. New York: Information Science Reference.

Kapitanof, S. H. (2009). Collaborative testing: cognitive and interpersonal processes related to cognitive and interpersonal processes related to enhanced test performance. *Active Learning in Higher Education,* 10(1): 56-70.

Kormos, J. (2012). The role of individual differences in L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *21*(4), 390-403.

Massa, J. (1997). Alternative assessment of second language writing: A developmental model. In S. Tschudi (Ed.), *Alternatives to grading student writing* (pp.77-89). Urbana: NCTE.

Mousavi, S. A. (2012). *An encyclopedic dictionary of language testing.* Tehran: Rahnama Press.

Nunan, D. (2006). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston: International Thomson Publishing.

Pandey, C., & Kapitanoff, S. (2011). The influence of anxiety and quality of interaction on collaborative test performance. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 12*(3), 163-174.

Richard, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching*: *An anthology of current practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ruddick, M. (2013). Collaborative testing as an intervention to reduce test anxiety: A study from a Japanese University. *Journal of International Studies and Regional Development*, 4, 1-12.

Swan, K. J., Shen, J., & Hiltz, S. R. (2006). Assessment and collaboration in online learning. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 10*(1), 45-62.

Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The Influence of Language Learners, Teachers and Class Environment on Demotivation among Iranian EFL Learners

Touraj Talaee[1]
Islamic Azad University, Borujerd Branch, Iran

Frezia Sheikh.ol. Eslami
Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch, Iran

Biodata

Touraj Talaee received his M.A. in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch. He has published articles in international journals and has been teaching English at several universities and language institutes. His areas of interest include Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, and Phonetics. Email: talai_najafabad@yahoo.com

Frezia Sheikh.ol. Eslami is an M.A. TEFL graduate of Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch. She is currently teaching English at Isfahan Jahad Daneshgahi Education Center and Oil Company at various levels. And, her areas of interest include Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and L2 Methodology. Email: 63sheikh.ol.eslami@gmail.com

Abstract

The present study was conducted to determine the influence of three potential sources of demotivation on the process of language learning among Iranian EFL learners. One hundred forty two participants studying in private language institutes were randomly selected to be investigated. A questionnaire including 20 items was developed and distributed among the participants to elicit their attitudes. The questionnaire was composed of three sets of items. The first section was related to the role of language learners

---

[1] Islamic Azad University, Borujerd Branch, Lorestan, Iran

themselves; the second part of it investigated the influence of teachers, and the last section considered the impact of class environment on learners' demotivation. The analysis of the participants' responses to the questionnaire items indicated that all three factors mentioned above could be regarded as sources of demotivation among Iranian EFL learners. The results of this study can be significant for language teachers and learners since they can identify and remove the factors which cause demotivation in order to enhance the quality of language learning and teaching in formal settings such as language classrooms.

1. Introduction

A significant factor which is frequently mentioned to explain why some language learners are more successful as compared to the others is motivation. There is a long history of investigation into the influence of motivation on language learning. Lots of research results indicate that motivation is regarded as a crucial factor in developing a second or foreign language (e.g. Dörnyei, 1990; Oxford & Shaerin, 1996).

A variety of definitions can be found for this term in the literature. Dörnyei (2001) expresses that although the word motivation is repeatedly used in both everyday and professional contexts, finding an exact definition for it seems to be a demanding task due to the complex and multifaceted nature of this term. Checking the word motivation in a reliable dictionary can clarify its meaning in general. According to Longman dictionary of contemporary English (2007), motivation refers to "eagerness and willingness to do something without needing to be told or force to do it".

The above mentioned definition is regarded as a broad and general definition for this term. Consequently, in order to consider motivation in relation to language learning, other definitions which are more precise and limited to this aspect can be presented. As an instance, Richards and Schmidt (2002) define it as "a combination of the learner's attitude, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second language" (p. 343). Saville-Troike (2006) expresses that motivation determines how much effort learners expend at different stages in the process of their L2 development which is often a key to the final level of language proficiency.

Lack of motivation is usually called demotivation which can have a negative influence on the process of language learning and development. Dörnyei (2001) has defined demotivation as "specific forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action" (p. 143). Demotivation can be seen as the dark side of motivation. A demotivated learner is the one who has lost the required enthusiasm for learning, and this can have its roots in different factors. The negative influence of demotivation on language learners is worth considering since it is closely related to the amount of effort they put into learning a language.

Although the negative impact of demotivation on language learners is so significant, the number of research papers which focus on it are much less than the ones devoted to analyzing its opposite concept namely motivation; this is why the authors of the present study decided to concentrate on demotivation rather than motivation. In practice, the present study was an attempt to delve into the potential sources of demotivation among Iranian EFL learners.

2. Literature Review

Lots of researchers (e.g. Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 2001; Oxford, 1996) have conducted investigations to see how motivation influences students. For instance, there are some important theories including attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), self-worth theory (Covington, 1992), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), self efficiency theory (Bandura, 1993), and goal setting theories (Locke & Latham, 1990) that try to analyze and explain motivation as a complicated concept. Among these researchers, Dörnyei has conducted extensive investigations on practical aspects of motivation like the question of how teachers can help the learners to enhance the level of their motivation in classrooms.

Cook (2000) claims that there are three significant factors which influence the process of second language acquisition; these factors are the learners' age, personality and motivation. He also believes that among the above mentioned ones, motivation is the most important item. Gardner and Lambert (1972) express that there are two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation leads to learning a language in order to participate in the culture of its native speakers. On the other hand, instrumental motivation results in learning a language for the purpose of getting an occupation or further motives. Cook (2000) also claims

that these two types of motivation suggested by Gardner and Lambert are significant in learning a second language.

As it was previously mentioned, many studies have been conducted to explore the positive influence of motivation on language learning while considering the negative influence of demotivation in separate studies also seems to be worth considering. Dörnyei (2001) introduced the major demotivating factors in an unpublished investigation (Dörnyei, 1998, as cited in Dörnyei, 2001) in which the participants were 50 secondary school students in Budapest, Hungary learning German or English as a foreign language. These students were selected for this study because they were identified by their teachers or other students to be demotivated. Each of the participants was interviewed for about 10 to 30 minutes and the consequence was that nine significant factors were recognized to be the reason of demotivation for language learning among them. These factors based on their frequency in the study include 1) teachers' personality, knowledge and teaching methods, 2) lack of school facilities, 3) lack of self-confidence as a result of failure or lack of success in language learning, 4) negative attitude toward the foreign language being studied, 5) mandatory nature of foreign language study, 6) interference of another foreign language being studied at the same time, 7) negative attitude toward the community to which the foreign language belonged, 8) attitudes of group members, and 9) the materials and course books used in language class.

In an explanatory study done by Arai (2004), she asked 33 university students, most of whom were proficient in English, to report whether or not they had demotivating experiences in the process of learning English in classrooms. The participants were also asked to describe the experiences. Among these 33 students, two claimed that they did not have such experiences. According to the remaining 31 students' explanations, Arai could collect 105 comments which she categorized into four major areas including (a) Teachers, (b) Classes, (c) Class Atmosphere, and (d) Others. The students showed that the first category, Teachers, was the most significant factor and accounted for 46% of the total reports followed by the Classes (36.2%) as the next category. The third factor, Class Atmosphere, was the last significant category (13.3%).

In order to identify the roots of demotivation, Hasegawa (2004) designed a questionnaire with open-ended questions and gave it to 223 students including 125 junior high school students and 98 senior high school students. She analyzed the responses qualitatively and reported that

teachers were the most significant student-reported focus. Consequently, she claimed that inappropriate behaviors of teachers may have the strongest influence on students' demotivation as compared to the other factors (p. 135). The advantage of Hasegawa's research was that in spite of the previous studies in which the university students were asked to explain about their past experiences of foreign language learning in high school, she interviewed junior and senior high school students directly.

Falout and Maruyama (2004) decided to examine if demotivating factors among lower proficiency and higher proficiency learners of English differ before entering college. They administered a questionnaire including 49 items, which were mainly based on the categories presented in Dörnyei (2001), to 164 university students. The levels of the participants' proficiency were determined through an in-house institutional test. The results of the investigation showed that self confidence was the only significant area of demotivation for the higher proficiency group, while in the lower proficiency group besides self confidence, as the most important factor, attitudes toward the L2 itself, teachers, and attitudes of group members (in descending order) were also the focus of attention.

Tabatabaei and Molavi (2012) conducted a study to identify the demotivating factors affecting EFL learning among a group of Iranian students. They gave a questionnaire of 22 items to 50 language learners as the participants of their investigation. The participants were supposed to select 5 items of the 22 ones in the questionnaire which best represented the reason they felt demotivated in learning English as a foreign language. The results of their study indicated that the first five more frequently mentioned factors reported by the participants were 1) the high frequency of English classes in a week (54%), 2) the existence of more important subjects for the students to study (52%), 3) not using English in students' daily life (50%), 4) lack of self-confidence (48%), 5) difficulties in understanding what the students listen in English (42%).

A review of the existing literature on demotivation in language learning shows although many investigations including Dörnyei (2001) and Gardner (1985) have been conducted to explore the influence of motivation on the process of language learning, the negative aspect of motivation, namely, demotivation has received less attention among researchers. The literature also shows that the number of studies conducted in Iranian EFL contexts is so small, and not all details of this phenomenon have been considered in those studies; this is why in the current research paper,

some new aspects such as the impact of physical appearance of language classrooms which almost seemed to be ignored in the previous studies were surveyed. In effect, the present study considered the influence of three potential sources of demotivation including learners, teachers and class environment on Iranian learners of English through gathering data from the responses given by them to a list of items in a questionnaire. The research questions are as follows:

1. Can language learners have a negative influence on their own and their peers' motivation in the process of language learning?

2. Can teachers have a negative influence on language learners' motivation?

3. Can class environment lead to language learners' demotivation?

The following null hypotheses are raised for each research question:

1. Language learners cannot have a negative influence on their own and their peers' motivation in the process of language learning.

2. Teachers cannot have a negative influence on language learners' motivation.

3. Class environment cannot lead to language learners' demotivation.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The investigation was done with 142 Iranian EFL learners (including both male and female students) aged between 15 and 25 years old who were given a questionnaire to answer. Since some of the participants forgot to specify their gender in the questionnaire, the exact number of male and female participants could not be recognized by the researchers, but according to the available information, it is clear that a little more than half of the participants were females and the others were males. These participants were randomly selected from the learners, studying English in 7 language institutes in Isfahan and Borujerd, Iran. Two of these language institutes were located in Borujerd and the others were in Isfahan. The participants were the students at intermediate and upper intermediate level in these institutes.

3.2. Instruments

A questionnaire of 20 items about three probable sources of demotivation for second language learning in the environment of a formal classroom was given to each participant in the study. The questionnaire was composed of three sets of questions. Each item in this questionnaire was measured on a 5-point Likert Scale. Items 1-6 were devoted to the role of students and their peers in fostering demotivation in language classes. Items 7-14 considered the role of teachers in causing demotivation among the students, and items 15-20 were the ones which investigated the demotivational influence of class environment on language learners.

The idea of developing this type of questionnaire originated from the existing questionnaires used by other researchers in this field. But since there should be some forms of innovation in every new research, some subcategories were specified for each of the 3 factors which were the focus of the current study so that the analysis of the data can be done through considering the details of each factor.

Before giving this questionnaire to the participants of the present study, it was piloted with 15 students of a language institute. The reliability index of the questionnaire was calculated through Cronbach formula (.91). It was also presented to two Ph.D. holders in language teaching for the sake of approving its construct validity. In the upper part of the questionnaire, there was an allocated section for the participants to specify their sex and age.

3.3. Procedures

The present study employed a quantitative research method for the purpose of data collection. The data was gathered through a questionnaire designed by the researchers of the study and included 20 items about three probable sources of demotivation for learning English as a foreign language in the environment of a classroom.

In the first step, 142 participants were randomly selected from among the students studying English in 7 language institutes in Isfahan and Borujerd. All the items of the questionnaire were translated into Persian in order to prevent any probable misunderstanding which could lead to making mistakes in choosing the intended alternatives.

This questionnaire was distributed among the participants during the time of their English class in language institutes. It was told to the participants that the time allocated to fill the

questionnaire was 15 minutes. The teacher of each class also explained about the alternatives which were designed based on 5-point Likert scale. The papers were gathered by the teachers and delivered to the researchers.

4. Results

The first research question aimed to examine whether language learners can have a negative influence on their own and their peers' motivation in the process of language learning. In order to give an answer to this question, the descriptive statistics of the participants' responses to items 1-6 of the questionnaire were calculated and shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Learners' Role in Their Demotivation

Items	Mean	SD
1. Obtaining low scores	3.52	1.11
2. Feeling that no progress is made during the learning process	3.90	1.18
3. The learners' lower or higher level, compared to other students	3.67	1.02
4. Peers' use of cell phones in class	2.87	1.17
5. The absence of classmates	2.49	0.96
6. Feeling shy to participate in class activities	3.47	1.28

As Table 1 shows, the average response for the first questionnaire item was 3.52, which is greater than 3. This means that the learners agreed with the proposition that obtaining low scores was a reason for their being demotivated. A more crucial factor contributing to the learners' demotivation was the feeling that no progress was made during the learning process ($M = 3.90$). The learner's higher/lower level, compared to other students, also received a mean score above the average ($M = 3.67$). The average score for item 4, however, turned out to be 2.87, indicating that the use of cell phones by peers in the classroom did not lead to learners' demotivation. So was the condition in item 5, which was about the classmates' being absent. Finally, from among the factors related to learners' role in their demotivation, being too shy to participate in class activities turned out to be a determining factor ($M = 3.47$).

The second research question asked if teachers can influence language learners' demotivation. To find an answer to this question, the participants' responses to items 7-14 of the questionnaire were analyzed and shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Role in Learners' Demotivation

Items	Mean	SD
7. Teachers' late arrival in class	3.04	1.14
8. Immobility of teachers in class	3.61	1.25
9. Teachers' lack of enough knowledge	3.89	1.30
10. Lack of variety in teaching	3.83	1.26
11. Not using supplementary materials in class	3.42	1.18
12. Teachers' disheveled appearance	3.25	1.13
13. Preferential treatment of the students	3.75	1.15
14. Not using educational films	3.47	1.08

In Table 2, the mean scores for all teacher-related items (i.e. 7 – 14) were above 3, indicating that the learners believed all the statements referred to in these items could result in their demotivation. From among these items, item 9 had the largest mean score ($M = 3.89$), which means that the learners believed they were demotivated since their teachers were not knowledgeable enough. On the other hand, item 7 had the lowest mean score ($M = 3.04$). This means that although teacher's late arrival also demotivated the learners, it had less negative effects than did the other factors related to teachers. The items in between could be ordered as follows: item 10, concerned with lack of variety in teaching ($M = 3.83$); item 13, relating to preferential treatment of the students ($M = 3.75$); item 8, which refers to immobility of teachers in classes ($M = 3.61$); item 14, which was about teachers' not using educational films ($M = 3.47$); item 11, relating to not using supplementary materials in class ($M = 3.42$); and finally item 12, referring to teachers' disheveled appearance ($M = 3.25$).

The last research question inquired whether or not language class environment can lead to learners' demotivation. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants' responses to items 15-20 of the questionnaire in order to answer the above mentioned question.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for the Role of Environment in Learners' Demotivation

Items	Mean	SD
15. Old school building	3.22	1.15
16. Dirty and untidy school	3.45	1.20
17. Failure of the air conditioning system	3.55	1.19
18. Class wall color	3.30	1.06
19. Scarcity of instructional aids	3.74	1.21
20. Cramped classes	3.47	1.19

Like the factors related to teachers, all the factors related to environment were rated above 3. This means that the students believed their lack of motivation could boil down to all these factors. Scarcity of instructional aids was the most critical factor here ($M = 3.74$), followed by failure of the air conditioning system ($M = 3.55$), cramped classes ($M = 3.47$), dirty and untidy school ($M = 3.45$), class wall color ($M = 3.30$), and old school building ($M = 3.22$).

The questionnaire was also analyzed through calculating the frequency and percentage of the participants' responses to each item. The following table indicates the results.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Different Choices for Each Questionnaire Item

Items	Scale	1	2	3	4	**5**
1. Obtaining low scores	Frequency	9	20	24	66	23
	Percentage	6.3	14.1	16.9	46.5	16.2
2. Feeling that no progress is made during the learning process	Frequency	9	14	11	56	52
	Percentage	6.3	9.9	7.7	39.4	36.6
3. The learners' lower or higher level, compared to other students	Frequency	5	15	30	63	29
	Percentage	3.5	10.6	21.1	44.4	20.4
4. Peers' use of cell phones in class	Frequency	19	36	45	28	14
	Percentage	13.4	25.4	31.7	19.7	9.9
5. The absence of classmates	Frequency	24	44	58	12	4
	Percentage	16.9	31	40.8	8.5	2.8
6. Feeling shy to participate in class activities	Frequency	15	21	20	54	32
	Percentage	10.6	14.8	14.1	38	22.5
	Frequency	14	35	37	43	13

7. Teachers' late arrival in class	Percentage	9.9	24.6	26.1	30.3	9.2
	Frequency	13	16	23	51	39
8. Immobility of teachers	Percentage	9.2	11.3	16.2	35.9	27.5
	Frequency	15	9	11	48	59
9. Teachers' lack of enough knowledge	Percentage	10.6	6.3	7.7	33.8	41.5
	Frequency	13	9	22	43	55
10. Lack of variety in teaching	Percentage	9.2	6.3	15.5	30.3	38.7
	Frequency	10	22	37	43	30
11. Not using supplementary materials in class	Percentage	7	15.5	26.1	30.3	21.1
	Frequency	11	25	43	43	20
12. Teachers' disheveled appearance	Percentage	7.7	17.6	30.3	30.3	14.1
	Frequency	10	12	20	61	39
13. Preferential treatment of the students	Percentage	7	8.5	14.1	43	27.5
	Frequency	7	22	33	57	23
14. Not using educational films	Percentage	4.9	15.5	23.2	40.1	16.2
	Frequency	11	27	45	37	22
15. Old school building	Percentage	7.7	19	31.7	26.1	15.5
	Frequency	13	16	37	46	30
16. Dirty and untidy school	Percentage	9.2	11.3	26.1	32.4	21.1
	Frequency	13	14	26	59	30
17. Failure of the air conditioning system	Percentage	9.2	9.9	18.3	41.5	21.1
	Frequency	9	19	53	42	19
18. Class wall color	Percentage	6.3	13.4	37.3	29.6	13.4
	Frequency	11	14	18	56	43
19. Scarcity of instructional aids	Percentage	7.7	9.9	12.7	39.4	30.3
	Frequency	11	18	37	44	32
20. Cramped classes	Percentage	7.7	12.7	26.1	31	22.5

More than 46 percent of the participants selected choice 4 (i.e. agree) for the first questionnaire item. It could then be argued that nearly half of the participants agreed that obtaining low scores demotivated them. Around 40 percent agreed that a factor which could lead to their demotivation was the feeling that they made no progress during the learning process. For the third item in the questionnaire, which was about the lower/higher level of learners compared to their peers, 44.4 percent selected choice 4 (i.e. agree). Concerning item 4, the largest portion of the students (31.7%) was undecided as to whether using cell phones in class demotivated them. Likewise, many of them (40.8%) were undecided about the effect of other students' being absent. Thirty-eight percent agreed that feeling too shy to participate in class activities was a factor leading to demotivation. A bit more than 30% agreed that teachers' tardiness in coming to class could be a reason for their demotivation. Fifty-one participants (35.9%) agreed that immobility of teachers in class caused their motivation to diminish. Fifty-nine students (41.5%)

strongly agreed that insufficient knowledge of teachers could be a reason for the downturn in their motivation. Lack of variety in teaching was the item for which 55 students (38.7%) selected choice 5 (i.e. strongly agree). For the eleventh item in the questionnaire, which focused on not using supplementary materials in class, 43 participants (30.3) selected choice 4(i.e. agree). Around 30 percent agreed that teachers' disheveled appearance brought about degrees of demotivation in learners. 43% percent agreed and 27.5% strongly agreed that preferential treatment of the students by teachers was a crucial factor leading to demotivation. Not using educational films accounted for 40.1% of the responses, which choice 4 received. About 32% of the students were undecided when asked about the effect of old school buildings on their demotivation. However, 32.4% agreed that dirty and untidy schools demotivated them. Moreover, 59 students (41.5%) agreed that failure of the air conditioning system was a determining factor contributing to their lack of motivation. Choice 3 (i.e. undecided) attracted 37.3% of the responses to item 18, which was about class wall color, and choice 4 received 29.6% of the responses. Around 40 percent agreed (and about 30% strongly agreed) that scarcity of instructional aids could be considered as a factor which caused demotivation. Finally, 44 students (31%) expressed their agreement with the statement positing that cramped space of the class could demotivate the students.

5. Discussion

The focus of the first research question in the current paper was to investigate if language learners could have a negative influence on their own and their peers' motivation in the process of language learning. According to the gathered data, it was concluded that this factor can be quite influential. It is axiomatic that until the learners themselves do not want to learn a language because of their demotivation, even highly efficient teaching methods and equipment cannot be of any assistance. Consequently the role of the learners and the amount of their motivation in learning a language is of paramount importance and cannot be neglected.

The second research question in the present investigation inquired if teachers could have a negative impact on language learners' motivation. Based on the responses given by the participants of the study, all the items in the questionnaire related to the role of teacher in creating the atmosphere of demotivation received a mean score above the average, and this fact reveals how significant this factor is in their opinion. Therefore, it seems that teachers play a

significant role in creating motivation or demotivation among their students. This phenomenon can be more salient in teacher-centered classrooms since in such cases the teachers are the main source of knowledge for the learners and are also the focus of attention.

The last research question of the study focused on the influence of class environment on language learners' demotivation. According to the obtained results of the current paper, it was recognized that this factor considerably attracted the participants' attention, since all questionnaire items related to this aspect received a mean score above the average. These days, it is observed that the language institutes which are equipped with better facilities including modern air conditioning systems, video projectors, televisions, elevators, etc. attract a larger number of students regardless of whether or not the teachers in such institutes are qualified enough; and this can be a reason for why the participants of the present study paid so much attention to this factor.

The results of the current study are in line with the results of the investigations conducted by other researchers in this field. As an instance, in a study done by Dörnyei (1998), he identified 9 major reasons for language learners' demotivation. The most significant factor among these items was identified to be the teachers' personality, knowledge and teaching method. The knowledge of language teachers has also been approved by the participants of the current research paper as a crucial factor which can influence language learners' demotivation.

Obtaining low scores in language classes is another factor which was proved to be a source of demotivation based on the results in the present paper. This finding is also in line with the investigation done by Hirvonen (2010) who attempted to find out the demotivating factors among the immigrant students of a school in Finland. Based on the results of Hirvonen's study, experience of failure was recognized as a major source of demotivation in learning a language.

Shyness which can lead to the lack of self-confidence as a factor influencing language learners' demotivation is another point in the current research paper which has been confirmed in other studies as a significant item. According to the investigation done by Kikuchi (2009), lack of self-confidence could contribute to the appearance of demotivation among Japanese high school students. Also based on the participants' responses to item 6 of the questionnaire in the present research paper, being too shy to participate in class activities was recognized as a salient factor causing demotivation in the process of learning a language in a classroom.

6. Conclusion

What we can conclude from the reports presented in this study is that demotivation plays a significant role in hindering the process of language learning in the environment of a language classroom. Demotivation is a salient phenomenon to which every classroom practitioner should pay attention. It is also a complicated issue and the present study has not covered all aspects of it. There are many other factors which can affect students' demotivation, and through conducting more investigations in this field these factors can be discovered.

Reviewing the available literature about the relationship between language learning and demotivation proves that the results of previous studies have discovered many facts regarding the true nature of demotivation and the strategies which can be exerted to reduce it. The current study aimed at discovering whether or not students, teachers, and the environment of language classrooms can be regarded as the sources of demotivation in learning a language. The results suggest that all the factors mentioned above can cause demotivation. Consequently, according to the gathered data, the 3 null hypotheses of the study were rejected. It seems that language teachers and policy makers should try to employ the strategies which can motivate students and eradicate demotivating factors in order to enhance the quality of language teaching and learning in formal settings such as language classrooms.

References

Arai, K. (2004). What 'demotivates' language learners?: Qualitative study on demotivational factors and learners' reactions. *Bulletin of Toyo Gakuen University,* 12, 39-47.

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28, 117-148.

Cook, V. (2000). *Linguistics and second language acquisition*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

Covington, M. (1992). *Making the grade: A self-worth perspective on motivation and school reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crookes, G., & Schmidt, R. W. (1991). Motivation: Reopening the research agenda. *Language Learning,* 41, 469-512.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.

Dörnyei, Z. (1990). Conceptualizing motivation in foreign-language learning. *Language Learning*, 40, 45-78.

Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Motivation in second and foreign language learning. *Language Teaching,* 31, 117-135.

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow: Longman.

Falout, J., & Maruyama, M. (2004). A comparative study of proficiency and learner demotivation. *Language Teacher,* 28, 3-9.

Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning.* Newbury House: Rowley, MA.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitude and motivation*. London, England: Edward Arnold.

Hasegawa, A. (2004). Student demotivation in the foreign language classroom. *Takushoku Language Studies,* 107, 119-136.

Hirvonen, M. (2010). *Demotivation in learning English among immigrant pupils in the ninth grade of comprehensive school* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/handle/123456789/22990 on 08/09/2012.

Kikuchi, K. (2009). Listening to our learners' voices: What demotivates Japanese high school students? *Language Teaching Research*, *13*(4), 453-471.

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). *A theory or goal setting and task performance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Longman dictionary of contemporary English. (2007). Tenth edition, Pearson Education Limited, Edinburgh Gate.

Oxford, R., & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal*, *1*(78), 12-28.

Oxford, R. (1996) (Ed.). *Language learning motivation: Pathways to the new century*. Honolulu: Second Language Teaching Curriculum Center, University of Hawai'i.

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (2002*). Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. Pearson Education.

Saville-Troike, M. (2006). *Introducing second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tabatabaei, O., & Molavi, A. (2012) . Demotivating factors affecting EFL learning of Iranian seminary students. *International Education Studies,* 5, 181-190.

Weiner, B. (1992). *Human motivation: Metaphors, theories and research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

The Effect of Pictorial Strategy on EFL Vocabulary Learning and Retention

Zivar Dinarvand[1] and Shahin Sheikh

Payam-e-Noor University, Rasht, Iran

Biodata

Zivar Dinarvand has an M.A. in TEFL from English Department, Payam-e-Noor University of Rasht, Iran. The present paper is based on her M.A. thesis. Email: zdinarvand63@yahoo.com

Shahin Sheikh is an assistant professor of Payam-e-Noor University of Gilan and holds Ph.D. in linguistics. She is interested in language teaching and phonetics. Email: ssheikh226@yahoo.com

Abstract

Vocabulary knowledge has an important and distinctive role in learning a second/foreign language. Regarding this importance and that using effective strategy can facilitate vocabulary learning, it is necessary for English learners to use appropriate strategies to improve their vocabulary knowledge. The major aim of the present study was to investigate the effectiveness of pictorial strategy on EFL vocabulary learning and retention as compared to wordlist strategy. To achieve this objective, the researcher conducted a quasi-experimental research in which 40 Iranian female learners at an intermediate level of proficiency took part. Their level of proficiency was determined on the basis of their scores on Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Then, they were randomly divided into two groups of experimental and control. Prior to the treatment,

---

1 English Department, Payam-e-Noor University of Rasht, Rasht, Iran

the two groups took a vocabulary test as the pre-test to select 40 unfamiliar words as the treatment. Afterwards, the experimental group was taught to learn the new words by pictorial strategy while the control group was taught to learn by word list learning technique. The data were collected using immediate and delayed post-tests and a questionnaire given only to the experimental group. The results of the study revealed that pictorial strategy was more effective both in learning and long-term retention of EFL vocabularies. Furthermore, the findings from the analysis of the questionnaire showed the participants' positive attitudes toward using pictorial strategy.

Keywords: Pictorial strategy**,** Vocabulary learning and retention, Vocabulary learning strategies, Wordlist strategy

1. Introduction

Vocabulary is the fundamental element of any language. Nevertheless, in the past, this aspect of language received a little attention and was neglected most of the time. Recently, however, interest to vocabulary acquisition has grown among teachers and researchers. It is important for learners to have good lexical skills in order to produce sentences and to understand them correctly (Gass & Selinker, 2001). It was stated earlier that a second language learner is still comprehensible with an incorrect grammar but not with incorrect lexical items (Wilkins, 1972). For comprehension of a new language, learners face noticeable problems if they do not have enough word knowledge both for understanding and production. Therefore, lack of enough vocabulary knowledge prevents learners from comprehension and production of a language. In order to overcome this problem, it is necessary for them to expand their vocabulary knowledge, and for teachers to know how they can teach vocabulary to be effective in learning and retention. EFL learners face numerous difficulties concerned with learning and retention of L2 vocabularies. Either they cannot learn the meaning of the new words or they cannot recall them in their long-term memory. One of the major causes of their problem is that they cannot make appropriate choice regarding what type of vocabulary learning strategy they should adopt. Once, it was supposed that learners could learn vocabularies by themselves without the help of their teachers, and learning is their own responsibility. But nowadays, the role of language teachers is changing. They have a remarkable role in expanding learners' vocabulary knowledge both by

teaching vocabulary learning strategies and teaching words through different techniques regarding their learners' needs. Therefore, over the passage of time, a need was felt for vocabulary teaching methods regarding the learners' needs. As a result, numerous types of approaches and strategies have been introduced into the field to teach vocabulary. Researchers pay more attention to vocabulary learning strategies (e.g., Hatch & Brown, 1995; Kuo & Ho, 2012; Meara, 1995; Nation, 2001; Nyikos, 1987; Oxford, 1990; Weatherford, 1990).

So far, major studies have focused on the effects of vocabulary learning strategy instruction. Researchers have tried to provide techniques that are useful in both learning and retention of lexical items. Likewise, the present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of pictorial strategy in learning and retention of EFL vocabularies as compared to wordlist strategy to examine which one is more effective in an Iranian EFL setting. Using empirical studies such as this, EFL teachers and learners do not have to spend their time on trial and error of different methods; instead, they can make use of tested techniques to facilitate the process of learning lexical items.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teaching vocabulary

Vocabulary teaching is one of the most crucial aspects of teaching any language which has often been neglected. It is not easy to provide teachers with the main concepts of vocabulary teaching and also to immediately equip them with the pedagogical techniques. A number of questions arose from the vocabulary teaching such as how teachers can help learners to retain a large amount of new vocabulary. As far as vocabulary teaching is concerned, some valuable recommendations are offered by researchers (e.g., Campillo, 2002; Hunt & Beglar 2000, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002; Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Seal (1991) examined the effects of vocabulary activities and distinguished "planned vocabulary teaching" from "unplanned vocabulary teaching". He suggested that in unplanned teaching, when teachers are questioned by learners searching for unknown words, they use dissimilar strategies such as body language, synonyms/antonyms, pictures, etc. In planned teaching, teachers use pre-selected vocabularies and make a choice how to teach them in a systematic way.

Teaching has a strong effect on vocabulary learning. Teachers should help students build and use a mental lexicon in such a way that they will be capable of storing, keeping and retention of words when needed. Oxford and Scarcella (1994) divide techniques of presentation of vocabularies into three groups regarding the amount of context :decontextualizing techniques, partially contextualizing techniques, and fully contextualizing techniques. The first group refers to presenting lexical items in isolation removed from the context and free from any communicative values. Wordlists and flashcards are known as decontextualizing techniques. The second group is known as planned or intentional vocabulary techniques. It includes some techniques such as physical response, word association, word elaboration, and imagery. The final group of techniques includes those in which learners practice authentic communication through reading stories, magazines, games, or any other real activities. Beyond threshold, teachers are encouraged to consider a mixture of different techniques corresponding to the teaching situation and their learners' level and needs.

2.2. Word List Learning of Vocabulary

Vocabulary acquisition from lists is a traditional practice used by learners. Learning vocabulary from lists entails words presented decontextually in an order along with their L1 translation or definition. Here, learners repeat them more and more until the words will be memorized. Apart from the fact that wordlist technique is a well-known and frequently used technique, because of presentation of new deeper strategies, hardly anybody recommends using it. The feeling seems to be that words in context are far more effective than learning isolated items (Meara, 1995).

As it is known, some empirical evidences from recent studies strongly advocate the negative assumption about the role of rote learning (Liu, 2001). But despite those negative beliefs, researchers in advocate of list learning are large in number (Gu, 2003; Meara, 1995; Nation, 1995). Thornbury (2002) points out that the value of list learning may have been underestimated. Similarly, Gu (2003, p. 6) states that "empirical research on vocabulary rehearsal has produced relatively convincing results that serve to underscore one important message: it is necessary and legitimate to employ various repetition strategies at the initial stages of vocabulary learning".

2.3. Pictorial Strategy

Imagery and pictures are other strategies which have been especially valuable in helping students learn second language vocabulary. Pictures are held as a material in the foreign language class. They are not only for the acquisition of words but also for different kinds of activities, mainly to practice the language skills, grammar, and pronunciation. Studies have shown that pictures are one source of information that engages deeper level of processing. The researchers have pointed out that when word and pictorial information are contrasted in an explicit verbal recall task usually retention, favors pictures as if it was stated earlier (McBirde & Dosher, 2002). Pictures are very helpful tools in teaching and acquiring new vocabularies since they draw learners' attention to the meaning of the words. Furthermore, they provide a sense of context of language and give a specific reference point or stimulus (Wright, 1990). Pictures often make activities more enjoyable, and this is exactly what teachers need in order to raise their students' interest in the presented new language. So, teachers and learners use different types of pictures, for example, graphics drawings in their books, newspapers, photographs, wall pictures, and so on to facilitate learning. Of course, not all words can be taught using pictures.

Many theorists emphasized superiority of pictures over words. According to Paivio's dual-coding theory (Paivio, 1986; 1991; Clark & Paivio, 1991), verbal codes along with imagery are better than a verbal code alone. Based on this theory, images produce better recall than repeating target words. Pictures have an advantage over words because they are processed through two separate channels (i.e. image & verbal code) while words are processed only by a verbal pathway. That is, when processing a picture, people consider the picture and verbalize it internally. This leads to more positive effects on retention of the words. The second theory of picture superiority effect is sensory-semantic model suggested by Nelson (1979). This model claims that pictures have two advantages over words. The first one is that pictures are more memorable because they contain a greater variety of unique and distinctive visual features than do words. The second advantage is that pictures access meaning more directly than words.

Superiority of pictures suggests that pictures have advantages over words to the extent that there is a popular term in public saying *"a picture is worth a thousand words"*. Supporting this view, some studies have shown that the picture superiority effect is eliminated when there is high visual similarity among the pictures (Nelson, Reed, & Walling, 1976).

This suggested the same issue which means pictures contain more information than texts and that this information can be more easily processed and understood by the learners. In a study, Pešková (2008) suggested some general advantages for pictures in the classroom. Four major advantages among them include

1. *Interest:* Favorable pictures better increase learners' interest.
2. *Availability*: Pictures are inexpensive and easy to get.
3. *Wide usage*: Pictures can be used for various focuses on the language and from various aspects.
4. *Diversity*: There is a wide spectrum of pictures (different types, formats, and the subject matter).

Also, Pešková (2008) has offered a few disadvantages. For example, If pictures are demanding or do not correspond with the learners' level, they may lose their interest. The second disadvantage is that preparation of pictures is time-consuming. In the same vein, McCarthy (1992) pointed out that pictures have their limitations. For example, in teaching vocabulary, pictures are not sufficient for demonstrating the meaning of all words (Thornbury, 2002; McCarthy, 1992). It is hard to illustrate the meaning of some words. So, in some cases, pictures might be supported by other instruments. Also, it can be time-consuming to teach every specific type of activity with a right picture. Nevertheless, when the collection of pictures is once made, it can serve for a long time.

Pictorial strategy was the basis of a large number of studies and articles regarding vocabulary learning. In a study, Chun and Plass (1996) examined the effects of different types of annotations on vocabulary acquisition from a reading passage. They utilized a written production test and a recognition test. In the recognition test in which providing an English equivalent was needed, they asked the learners to indicate the appropriate English equivalent without accompanying pictures or video clips. Moreover, they presented either a picture or a video clip and asked them to choose the German word (from a list of six) that corresponded to the picture/video or definition. Their results showed that across the three studies, annotations including printed text with still imagery were remembered better than annotations including printed text with video.

Another study by Yoshii and Flaitz (2002) looked at the effects of three annotation types of text-only, picture-only, and a combination of the two in L2 incidental vocabulary retention in a

multimedia reading setting. The study focused on a group of ESL learners at beginning and intermediate language proficiency levels. Their results showed superiority effect for the group that studied vocabulary with a combination of text and picture annotations type.

Jones (2004) described two studies that examined the effects of pictorial and written annotations on L2 vocabulary learning from a multimedia environment. In the control group, the learners could only listen to the pronunciation of words; the pictorial group could view pictorial representations; the written annotation group could view English translations; the combination group could see the English translations and pictures. The results showed that the learners in the three treatment groups recognized words better than those in the control group.

Furthermore, Stenberg (2006) conducted a study through three experiments to assess the strength of perceptual and conceptual contributions to the picture superiority effect in explicit memory. Pictures and words were tested for recognition in both the original formats and translated into their L2. This study used a method where pictures and Swedish words were studied, and recognition tests took place in English word format as well as in the original formats. The results of this study also were in line with picture superiority effect.

In another study, Abdolmanafi Rokni and Karimi (2013) examined the effects of pictorial method as compared with translation method. After taking the post-tests, learners' performances were compared to see whether there was any significant difference between the two techniques. The results of the study were congruent with dual coding theory and this view that pictures have an important role in facilitating vocabulary learning. This study showed that use of pictures make learners more motivated to spend time for learning new words.

Also, Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2013) investigated the vocabulary learning gains of beginner EFL learners using visual aids and the traditional technique of definition. Regarding the effect of visual aids, the experimental group in which pictures was used as a means of clarifying the meaning of the words had a better performance. So, the researchers concluded that presenting words with the help of visual aids and pictures is more effective, and leads to long retention of vocabulary knowledge.

The role of effective use of vocabulary learning strategies is significant in the world knowledge. For this reason, nowadays, it has gained a prominent place among the researchers. Most learners apply many strategies but they do not make a systematic use of them. Therefore, it

is necessary to familiarize them with new useful strategies in order for them to expand their vocabulary knowledge.

Wordlist strategy is one of the old-fashioned techniques among language teachers and learners in which the main emphasis is on memorization and repetition of words. In pictorial strategy, learners study new words along with their pictures. In this study, the aim was to apply these two strategies of teaching vocabulary items in an Iranian EFL context, and to compare their results in order to make clear the degree of effectiveness of each one in EFL situations. The questions which the study aimed to address are as follows:

1. Does pictorial strategy affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning?

2. Does pictorial strategy affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary retention after a long time?

3. What are the Iranian EFL learner's perceptions about pictorial vocabulary instruction method?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The sample for this study included 40 female learners who were studying English in an institute in Lorestan, Iran. Their age ranged between 18 and 24 years old with the average of 21.5. For the groups to be homogenous, the researcher gave Oxford Placement Test by Edwards (2007) to 60 learners among whom 40 learners were selected who were found to be at the same level of language knowledge, i.e. intermediate. Then, they were randomly assigned to two groups, one control group and one experimental group, each consisting of 20 students.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Oxford Placement Test

In order to homogenize the learners and to ensure that they are at the same level of language knowledge, Oxford Placement Test (Edwards, 2007) was administered to 60 EFL learners .This test included three parts: Vocabulary, Grammar, and Reading comprehension sections with a maximum score of 60 points. After correcting the papers and scoring them, 40 students whose

scores fell within the range of ±1SD from the mean, were selected as the main sample. The reliability of the test was calculated by means of Cronbach's Alpha. The result was .871, which was more than 0.70.

3.2.2. Vocabulary Test

To make sure of the students' unfamiliarity with the target words, a vocabulary test which was in the multiple-choice format was used prior to the treatment. This was a test with 80 items; each item questioned the meaning of one of the target vocabulary items. From these words the researcher selected 40 words for the study which had the least correct answers and most unknown to the participants. Dealing with the content validity, two expert professors studied the test and checked its structure. Also, the reliability of the test was calculated by SPSS 20, Cronbach's Alpha. The result, as Table 1 shows, was .725. So, it was considered as reliable test. This test was used for two post-tests. Two days after the treatment, an immediate post-test was administered for the two groups of learners in the multiple choice format to measure the short-term memory and learning of the words. The test comprised all the 40 words which were taught during the treatment. The participants were asked to select the alternative of a given word from four choices and to identify the one which best conveyed the meaning. Also, to ensure the validity of both immediate and delayed post-tests, two expert professors in the field examined them thoroughly.

Also, two weeks after the treatment, the same test was administered as the delayed post-test to test the retention of the learned words in long-term memory of the two groups. However, there were some changes in the order of the items and the alternatives to prevent learners from answering the questions just by guessing or remembering them without understanding their meaning. For scoring, one point was given for each correct answer, and zero for each incorrect one. Before using all the tests in this study, they were piloted with 15 participants who were representative of the main sample. The estimated values of Cronbach alpha for the reliability of all the tests were presented in Table 1,which were all higher than the minimum index required (i.e. .70). Therefore, they were assumed to be reliable.

Table1

Reliability of the Instruments

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	N of sample

122

OPT Test	.871	60	15
Pre-test	.725	80	15
Post-test	.792	40	15
Questionnaire	.767	6	15

3.2.3. Questionnaire

At the end of the final session of the treatment and in order to explore the perceptions of the learners in the experimental group toward using pictures in the treatment, they were asked to fill out the questionnaire. This questionnaire had 6 items. It included 5 choices per item: strongly agree to strongly disagree. Also the meaning of each item and their translation were given to the participants to be sure of their understanding. Before applying this questionnaire in the class, it was piloted and its reliability was calculated by SPSS 20 (Table 1).

3.3. Treatment

The treatment lasted for 4 days of instruction, one session every weak which lasted for 45 minutes. Every session was divided into two parts: presentation of the new vocabularies, and doing exercises. For the treatment, 40 unknown words were selected from "Oxford Word Skills" (the Intermediate level) by Gaims and Redman (2008) and "Word by word Picture Dictionary " by Molinsky and Bliss (2005). The target words for the two groups were the same.

In the experimental group, pictorial strategy was introduced. At the first session of the class, the learners received a brief oral introduction to the pictorial strategy. The new words were taught by using pictures, flashcards, etc. Also, the researcher tried to attract the learners' attention to the picture and increase their motivation, and engage them in the interaction by asking some questions related to the target word in order to make them well aware of its meaning. When the awareness happened and the learners found the area of meaning of the vocabulary, the researcher gave the exact meaning/definition of the word. In the end of the class, the students answered some exercises such as matching and replacement questions, and the researcher helped them if necessary. On the other hand, in the control group, new words were taught to be memorized just by list learning and their repetition. For each word, the researcher

provided a short definition, pronunciation, part of speech, and the sentence examples. Finally, at the end of the final session, the participants in the experimental group were asked to fill out a questionnaire probing their perceptions about the pictorial technique. Also, two days after the treatment an immediate post-test was applied to both the control and the experimental groups. After that and two weeks after the treatment, a delayed post-test was used for the two groups of the learners.

3.4. Data Analysis

This study primarily used experimental comparison-group pretest/posttest design to gain broader perspectives on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning strategies. For the analysis of the data, quantitative analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20). For the research questions, independent samples t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the two groups. Average test scores from all the learners in each group were compared for 4 days of instruction. In addition, the findings of the questionnaire completed by the experimental group were analyzed to see what their perceptions are toward the pictorial method in leaning and retention of vocabularies.

4. Results

To select the main sample for the treatment and to make certain that the participants were approximately at same level of general English language proficiency at the beginning of the study, Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was given to 60 EFL learners who were studying English as a foreign language in a language institute in Lorestan. 40 students whose score fell $\pm$ 1SD from the mean score were selected as the main sample for the present study. The results of the OPT test were presented in the following table.

Table 2

Statistics for the OPT Test

N	Valid	60
	Missing	0
Mean		39.65
Median		39.00

Mode	38.00[a]
Std. Deviation	4.140
Variance	17.147
Skewness	.373
Std. Error of Skewness	.309
Kurtosis	-.649
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.608
Range	18.00
Minimum	32.00
Maximum	50.00
Sum	2379.00

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

After selecting the homogenous samples and dividing them into two groups (control and experimental), a vocabulary test was administered to determine the possible initial differences between the two groups regarding their vocabulary knowledge before introducing the treatment. As Table 3 shows, the mean scores for the control and experimental groups were 18.250 and 18.100 respectively.

Table 3

Pretest for the Control and Experimental Groups

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	Control	20	18.25	1.381	.308
	Experimental	20	18.10	1.736	.388

Based on Table 4, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in the pretest of vocabulary test (p>0.05). This shows that the control and experimental groups were almost at the same level of vocabulary knowledge.

Table 4

Independent Samples T- Test for the Pretest

| | Levene's test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | F | Sig. | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.18	.28	.30	38	**.76**	.150	.496	-.854	1.154
Equal variances not assumed			.30	36.16	.76	.150	.496	-.856	1.156

In order to answer the first research question that was concerned with the effectiveness of pictorial strategy training on EFL vocabulary learning, an independent samples t-test was run. Table 5 revealed the values of means and standard deviation along with standard error of mean for the two groups on immediate posttest of vocabulary. The mean score of the experimental group (mean $_{experimental\ group}$= 32.95) is 4.15 points higher than that of the control group (mean $_{control\ group}$= 28.80). In fact, learners' performance in the experimental group (Mean =32.95) far outweighed that of the control group (Mean =28.80) in the immediate posttest of vocabulary test.

Table 5

Immediate Posttest for the Control and Experimental Groups

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Immediate Posttest	control	20	28.80	2.166	.484
	experimental	20	32.95	2.211	.494

As Table 6 shows that the significance index of the statistic was .77. Since this rating was greater than.05, it could be inferred that the groups had equal variances. The results revealed that pictorial instruction significantly affected the vocabulary learning of the Experimental group differently (t=5.99, 0.00 <.05). The comparison between the mean scores of the two groups indicate that both groups had some progress in learning EFL vocabularies but the experimental

group significantly performed better than the control group in the immediate post-test of vocabulary. These results were evidence of the fact that pictorial strategy had been effective in improving the learners' vocabulary in the experimental group.

Table 6

Independent Samples T-Test for Immediate Posttest

| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std.Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.08	**.77**	-5.9	38	**.00**	-4.15	.692	-5.55	-2.74
Equal variances not assumed			-5.9	37.9	.00	-4.15	.692	-5.55	-2.74

The second research question dealt with the inquiry whether pictorial strategy is effective in retention of words for a long time. The descriptive statistics in Table 7 shows that learners' performance in the experimental group (Mean =33.35) weighed more than that of the control group (Mean =27.65) in delayed post-test of vocabulary.

Table 7

Delayed Posttest for the Control and Experimental Groups

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Delayed Posttest	control	20	27.65	1.598	.357
	experimental	20	33.35	1.871	.418

Table 8 depicting the results of the independent samples t-test indicates that the difference between the mean scores of the two groups in the delayed posttests was significant (t=10.3, 0.00 <.05).

Table 8

Independent Samples Test for Delayed Posttest

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.07	.306	-10.3	38	.00	-5.70	.550	-6.81	-4.58
Equal variances not assumed			-10.3	37.09	.00	-5.70	.550	-6.81	-4.58

Since the participants were homogenous at the beginning of the study and had been randomly assigned into two groups, therefore, the difference found in their post- test was not due to chance and it could be related to the specific treatment of pictorial strategy instruction employed for the experimental group. So, the results and the comparison between the control and experimental group's performance on delayed vocabulary test revealed that pictorial strategy was more beneficial than the word list in improving long-term retention of acquired lexical items. In other words, there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of their long-term retention of acquired lexical items and the experimental group's mean score was 5.70 points higher than that of the control group. These results were evidence of the fact that pictorial strategy was superior to the wordlist learning in a longer time.

The third research question was to investigate the learners' perceptions towards pictorial strategy instruction in the experimental group. A questionnaire including six items was administered. Table 9 shows the findings.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire

Item statistics for the questionnaire items		Strongly agree	agree	no opinion	disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.Pictorial strategy is very helpful in learning vocabulary	frequency	12	7	1	0	**4.55**	**.60**	20
	percentage	60	35	50	0			
2. I enjoyed pictorial technique more than other techniques of vocabulary acquisition	frequency	8	7	2	3	**4.00**	**1.07**	20
	percentage	40	35	10	15			
3. Using pictures caused a positive motivation in me for learning vocabulary	frequency	10	8	0	2	4.30	.92	20
	percentage	50	40	0	10			
4. Using pictures simplify and clarify the meaning of the words.	frequency	10	6	2	2	4.20	1.00	20
	percentage	50	30	10	10			
5. Using pictures, words stayed longer and better in my memory.	frequency	12	7	1	0	**4.55**	**.60**	20
	percentage	60	35	5	0			
6. I like to use pictures frequently to learn English vocabulary	frequency	11	6	1	2	4.30	.97	20
	percentage	55	30	5	10			

Items (1) and (5) had the highest mean rank (X= 4.55). The first item evaluated the participants' attitudes towards helpfulness of pictorial strategy in learning vocabulary. Twelve participants disclosed that they strongly agree with it. This was equal to 60% of the total participants who took part in the questionnaire. Nobody disagreed with the helpful role of pictorial strategy in vocabulary learning. Besides, the fifth item examined the participants' view towards the effect of using pictures in better retention of the vocabulary items. Twelve participants (60%) expressed that they strongly agreed with it. Simply one of them (5%) had no opinion about this item.

The results from the questionnaire indicated that the majority of the learners in the pictorial group enjoyed and preferred using pictures for learning words. Nobody disagreed with the helpful role of pictorial strategy in vocabulary learning. In general, the participants expressed positive attitudes towards using pictorial strategy for learning of lexical items.

5. Discussion

Regarding the importance of vocabulary learning strategies, learners must be aware of them in order to have good vocabulary knowledge. Pictorial strategy is one of them which can elicit words and help the learners enlarge their lexicon. Using pictorial technique, learners remember words better along with association of pictures because they activate the image-to-word referential connections (Milton, 2009). This study aimed to investigate the impact of two methods of vocabulary instruction (i.e. list learning method and pictorial method) on learning and retrieval of vocabulary items in an Iranian EFL setting.

As the findings of the study showed after the treatment, and as the results of the immediate post-test indicated, both of the two groups learned many new vocabularies but the learners in the experimental had more progress in their learning. In fact, this revealed that applying pictorial technique has a noticeable impact on leaning new vocabularies. Based on the pre-test results, at the beginning of the research both groups of learners were at the same level of vocabulary knowledge but there was a noticeable difference between the participants' performances in the two groups in the permanent recalling of the words, and the experimental group outperformed the control group. This progress certainly was due to use of pictorial strategy.

The above results can be an explanation for this fact that pictorial method was better not only in learning new words but also in remembering them in long term. This was confirmed especially when the learners themselves showed positive perceptions towards using pictures in the class. As noted before, dual-coding theory (Paivio, 1991) can be a powerful proof for the finding of the present study, and for the positive effects of pictorial strategy in that based on this theory, words along with visual aids are memorable because they involve both verbal and visual channels. Also, the results confirmed Nelson's sensory-semantic model (1979) by which he assumed advantages for pictures over words. So, this theory can provide good explanations for picture superiority effect.

In confirmation of the results obtained by Jones (2004) and Stenberg (2006), the group of the learners who received pictorial technique had better performance at the end of the study. In similar studies, they examined learning of EFL vocabularies using pictorial strategy as compared to the written forms, and their results revealed picture superiority effect.

The results of this study are in line with the results of the studies conducted by Abdolmanafi Rokni and Karimi (2013) and Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2013). They examined the effect of visual

aids as compared to the traditional strategies. Based on their findings, the pictorial technique was more effective in retention of words for a long time, and this research showed the same results. In addition, the findings of this study were similar to those of Yoshii and Flaitz (2002) who examined the effects of different types of annotations on vocabulary retention. The findings were that the combination of text and picture annotation was better in efficacy than that of the other groups.

In line with what Chun and Plass (1996, as cited in Al-Seghayer, 2001) obtained, this research can be in support of their claim that "since pictures can be viewed for as long as the learner wishes, they allow the development of a mental model of the information." (p. 14). Besides, as Milton(2009) claimed, pictures in this study provided image referential connections to the words, and these advantages led to more retention of the new words. This study showed the same results for retention of words.

However, the results obtained in this study were to some extent inconsistent with some other studies (e.g., Al-Saghayer, 2001; Lotto & de Groot, 1998; Tavakoli & Gerami, 2013). They failed to detect superiority for pictures over the strategies such as video clip and keyword method. Nevertheless, in the same studies, pictures were still superior to texts.

There are several reasons that could be attributed to the success of the learners in the experimental group both for learning and recalling of the words. Firstly, their better performance could be a confirmative proof for dual-coding theory (Paivio, 1991) and sensory-semantic model (Nelson, 1979). According to the dual-coding theory, since by pictorial strategy, the words are processed through two distinct channels (verbal and non-verbal), it leads to more retention of words than the list learning technique with verbal system alone. This is also in line with Nelson (1979) who claimed in his sensory-semantic model that pictures access meaning more directly than words. So, it leads to more deep understanding of the meaning. Another reason is that meaningful information is retained longer (Anderson, 1980) and it is getting easier to deploy images in a meaningful way. This kind of storage is more stable in the memory than verbal storage. This helps meaningful storage and leads to more retaining of the words when they are needed. Thirdly, in the current study, the researcher showed one or more pictures per word and made some interactions with the learners before introducing the main word. This kind of presentation helped them acquire the words and keep them in long-term memory. In general learners acquire information better when they view an advance organizer (e.g. pictures) before

being exposed to the main or target written information (Amelsvoort, 2001). Finally by taking part in the class activities and in learning new lexical items, working with pictures for the learners was enjoyable.

On the other hand, the reason for the low performance of the control group especially in long-term memory retention might be the kind of strategy they used. Rote memorization is a passive strategy which is generally understood as mechanical technique in which memorization takes place without necessarily understanding. Moreover, it is a kind of misguided strategy without the guidance of visuals and the others (i.e. teacher, classmates, etc.). So, the learners alone and the verbal channels in their brains are responsible for all the learning vocabularies. This made them face with a harder work than the participants in the other group.

In this study, the learners in the experimental group were asked to complete a questionnaire about their perceptions on using pictures as the main focus of learning. Generally, nobody disagree with the effect of this technique. The reason may be that using pictures made them more motivated for learning. Also they enjoyed from it because it clarified the meaning of the words. So, they learnt them better.

6. Conclusions and Implications

The major aim of the researcher in this study was to examine and to compare the two strategies for learning and recalling EFL vocabularies (Wordlist vs. pictorial), and also to use empirical information to show the degree of effectiveness of each one. After the data analysis and based on the results, it can be concluded that pictorial strategy is an effective technique in improving EFL vocabulary knowledge both in short-term and long-term recalling. In other words, the findings supported the assumption that the use of pictures proved to be effective in learning lexical items. Taking the results of the present study into account, a number of pedagogical implications are suggested. First, using pictures in teaching language in general and vocabulary in specific, seemed not only possible but also logical. So, it is highly recommended that teachers use pictorial strategy as an appropriate tool in their instructions instead of the traditional methods. The result will be valuable especially for those teachers who are frequently asked by the students about the effective vocabulary learning strategies. Second, using pictures is also worthwhile as a supportive aid in combination with other various techniques for developing vocabulary knowledge in and out of the class. Furthermore, textbook writers and syllabus designers can benefit from the findings in that they should pay more attention to the issue of

vocabulary and use such new devices and technology in the preparation of materials, syllabi, and curricula. Finally, in order for language teachers as one of their responsibilities to support learners in improving vocabulary knowledge, they can help them by creation, careful selection, and employing of pictures.

References

Abdolmanafi Rokni, S. J., & Karimi, N. (2013). A comparative study of the effects of pictorial method and translation method on EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, *1*(4), 39-47.

Al-Seghayer, K. (2001). The effect of multimedia annotation modes on L2 vocabulary acquisition: A comparative study. *Language Learning & Technology, 5*(1), 202-232.

Amelsvoort, M. V. (2001). A pre-departure program for students who study abroad. *The Internet TESL journal*, *5*(9). Retrieved from http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Amelsvoort-PreDeparture.html

Anderson, J. R. (1980). *Cognitive psychology and its implications*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman.

Campillo, R. M. L. (2002). Teaching and learning vocabulary: An introduction for English students. *Ensayos: Revista de la Facultad de Educación de Albacete*, 10, 35-50.

Chun, D. M., & Plass, J. L. (1996). Effects of multimedia annotations on vocabulary acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal*, *8*(2), 183-198.

Clark, j. M., & Paivio, A. (1991). Dual coding theory and education. *Education Psychology Review*, 3, 149-210.

Edwards, L. (2007). *Placement test for Oxford: Solutions booklet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gaims, R., & Redman, S. (2008). *Oxford word skills, intermediate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (2001). *Second language acquisition*. Manhwah: Lawrence Elbaum associate.

Gu, P. Y. (2003). Vocabulary learning in a second language: Person, task, context, and strategies. *TESL-ET*, *7*(2), 1-2.

Hatch, E., & Brown, C. (1995). *Vocabulary, semantics, and language education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hunt, A., & Beglar, D. (2000). Current research and practice in teaching vocabulary. Retrieved December 2013 from http://lang.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/pub/tlt/98/jan/hunt.html

Jones, L. (2004). Testing L2 vocabulary recognition and recall using pictorial and written test items. *Language Learning and Technology*, *8*(3), 122-143.

Kuo, Y., & Ho, H. Y. (2012). Effects of word card strategy vs. wordlist strategy on Taiwanese EFL Junior High school students' vocabulary retention. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 9*(1), 26-45.

Liu, Y. T. (2001). Use of mnemonics in learning novel foreign vocabulary: help or hindrance? *TESOL & Applied Linguistics*, *1*(1). Retrieved from http://www.tc.columbia.edu/academic/tesol/webjournal/archives21.html.

Lotto, L., & de Groot, A. M. B. (1998). Effects of learning method and word type on acquiring vocabulary in an unfamiliar language. *Language Learning*, 48, 31-69.

McBirde, D. M., & Dosher, B. A. (2002). A comparison of conscious and automatic memory processes for picture and word stimuli: A process dissociation analysis. *Consciousness and Cognition*, *11*(3), 423-460.

McCarthy, M. (1992). *Vocabulary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meara, P. (1995). The importance of early emphasis on L2 vocabulary. *The Language Teacher*, *19*(2), 8-11.

Milton, J. (2009). *Measuring second language vocabulary acquisition*. Bristol, Canada: multilingual Matters.

Molinsky, S. J., & Bliss, B. (2005). *Word by word picture dictionary, 2nd ed*. Pearson Longman Press.

Nation, P. (1995).The word on words: An interview with Paul Nation. Interviewed by N. Schmitt. *The Language teacher*, 19(2), 5-7.

Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nelson, D. L. (1979). Remembering pictures and words: Appearance, significance, and name. In L. S. Cermark & F. I. M. Craik (Eds.), *Levels of processing in human memory* (pp.45-76). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Nelson, D. L., Reed, V. S., & Walling, J. R. (1976). Pictorial superiority effect. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory*, *2*(5), 523-528.

Nyikos, M. (1987). *The effect of color and imagery as mnemonic strategies on learning and retention of lexical items in German* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Purdue University, U.S.

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle.

Oxford, R. L., & Scarcella, R. C. (1994). Second language learning among adults: State of the art in vocabulary instruction. *System*, *22*(2), 231-243.

Paivio, A. (1986). *Mental representation: A dual-coding approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Paivio, A. (1991). Dual coding theory: Retrospect and current states. *Canadian Journal of Psychology Outstanding Contributions Series*, *45*(3), 255-287.

Pešková, K. (2008). *Teaching about English speaking countries through pictures* (Diploma thesis), Masaryk University, Brno.

Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sadeghi, K., & Farzizadeh, B. (2013). The effect of visually supported vocabulary instruction on beginner EFL learners' vocabulary Gain. *Mextesol Journal*, 37(1), 1-12.

Seal, B. (1991). Vocabulary learning and teaching. In M. Celce-Murica (Ed.) *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 296-311). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle publishers.

Stenberg, G. (2006). Conceptual and perceptual factors in the picture superiority effect. *European Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, 35, 1-28.

Tavakoli, M., & Gerami, E. (2013). The effect of keyword and pictorial methods on EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention. *Porta linguarum*, 19, 299-316.

Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to teach vocabulary*. Harlow: Longman.

Weatherford, H. J. (1990). *Techniques for learning vocabulary*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wilkins, D. A. (1972). *Linguistic and language teaching*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wright, A. (1990). *Pictures for language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yoshii, M., & Flaitz, J. (2002). Second language incidental vocabulary retention: The effect of text and picture annotation types. *CALICO Journal*, *20*(1), 33-58.