

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate,
the Merciful*



Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University

*Journal of Applied Linguistics
and Applied Literature:
Dynamics and Advances*

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Postal Code: 5375171379

URL:

<http://jalda.azaruniv.ac.ir/>

Publication Number:

Volume 8, Issue 2, 2020

Publication Date:

Thursday, January 14, 2021

Price: 50,000 Rials

Circulation: 100 Copies

This Biannual Journal is published with the Registration No. 91/34715

Online ISSN 2383-2460

Print ISSN 2383-591x



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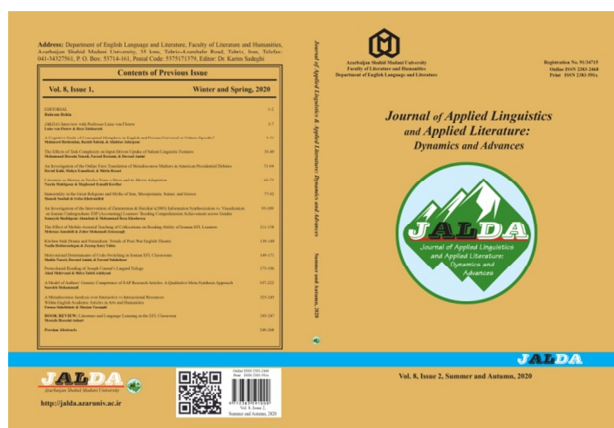
English Editors: Dr. Abolfazl Ramazani & Dr. Roya Monsefi

Production Manager: Mehdi Ramazani

Typesetting: Ayshan Computer

Journal Information About Journal

The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances (JALDA) is an open access, academic, scholarly, and peer-reviewed journal that follows a double-blind policy. *JALDA* is published both electronically and in print by the Department of English Language and Literature, the Faculty of Literature and Humanities of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran. *JALDA* is scheduled for publication biannually in spring and autumn (1st April and 1st October), with its first issue having been launched in the spring 2013.



JALDA at a glance:

- **Country of Publication:** Iran
- **Publisher:** Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran
- **Format:** Print & Online
- **Registration No.** 91/34715
- **DOI:** Yes; 10.22049/JALDA.2021
- **Frequency:** Biannual
- **Publication Dates:** 1st April and 1st October
- **Scope:** Applied Linguistics, Applied Literature, Innovative, Problem-oriented and Applied Studies on the Dynamics between Language and Literary Studies
- **Article Processing Charges:** No (Subject to Change)
- **Type of Journal:** Academic/Scholarly Journal
- **Open Access:** Yes
- **Indexed & Abstracted:** Yes
- **Policy:** Peer-review
- **Review Time:** Eight Weeks Approximately
- **Contact & Submission e-mail in case of a problem with submission:**
ahadmeh@yahoo.com; Alternate e-mail: davoudamini2014@gmail.com
- **Typesetting:** Ayshan Computer
- **Online ISSN:**2383-2460 ; **Print ISSN:**2383-591x

JALDA's Aims and Scope

The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances (JALDA) is an ambitious academic publication which aims to encourage and disseminate cross-disciplinary research targeting real-world problems and real-life concerns where language and/or literature are at the center. Bringing together the now-well-established discipline of *Applied Linguistics* and the thriving subject of *Applied Literature*, *JALDA* stimulates and promotes innovative work within applied studies on language and literature. In the first place, it publishes articles on the two inter-related subjects of *Applied Linguistics* and *Applied Literature*. However, as an essential component of *JALDA*'s long-term goals, a new focus has been added, namely the dynamic relationship between language teaching and literature, a fast-growing and dynamic field that requires special attention. In fact, the long-term prospective ambition is to bring this inter-subject dynamic from background to the foreground in the journal. *JALDA*'s precise outlook on each of the three intended areas is outlined below in the hope of further illumination on its publication policies and planned purview.

1. Applied Linguistics

The most prevailing definition of *Applied Linguistics* so far with a consensus on, conceives the field as “the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue” (Brumfit, 1997, p. 93). Although real-world problems concerning language may involve each of the three questions regarding the nature of language, its use and its learning, historically, the question of efficient learning and teaching of languages has been a predominant concern among real world problems attended to in *Applied Linguistics*. Accordingly, the following subjects are well-seated areas of investigation within mainstream *Applied Linguistics* which are included in *JALDA*'s scope of focus. *JALDA* considers English as a foreign language as the subject of learning:

- Second language vocabulary acquisition
- Grammatical development in L2
- Teaching and learning L2 skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening)
- Technology in language learning and teaching
- Second language curriculum and materials
- Individual differences in second language learning
- Social issues in language learning
- Language teaching methodology
- English for specific purposes
- English as a Lingua Franca
- Language assessment and testing
- English as an international language
- Research methods in applied linguistics
- Language teacher education
- Bilingual education

Although the subject of *Language Learning and Teaching* seems to have already established itself as the mainstream concern in *Applied Linguistics*, the sheer fact that language learning and teaching take place in various ecological conditions, brings forth the warning that ignoring the questions concerning the nature of language and language use might carry with it the risk of blocking our views of the true nature of language learning and teaching as well. *Applied Linguistics* studies need to preserve the flexibility to be inspired by and note the insights from the studies concerning the nature of language and language use, an area which has been labeled as the “*Linguistics Applied*” or “*Applications of Linguistics*” by Davis and Elder (2007). In other words, language pedagogy needs to be examined in its social background in order to be able to reap benefits from the *blessings of the unknown*.

It must be reminded as a word of caution that linguistics is not alone in inspiring *Applied Linguistics Studies*. In fact, attention to the contextual aspects of language learning and teaching highlights the cross-disciplinary nature of *Applied Linguistics*. In this perspective, any research that associates a language-related problem to the core knowledge in psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, neuroscience, economic and political sciences, law, business, etc. counts as *Applied Linguistics*. In this view, *Applied Linguistics* can equally be based in psychology, education, sociology, computer sciences and any other relevant area as it is in linguistics. The intention in these interdisciplinary inquires is to offer reformative, corrective and ameliorative views and suggestions for a language-related real-world problem. In this sense, the discipline of *Applied Linguistics* will be open to the attempts to account for the issues of language learning and teaching alongside its various dimensions as outlined above by giving way to the studies inspired by other language-related studies including the following:

- Discourse studies
- Translation
- Forensic linguistics
- Corpus studies
- Economy and language
- Politics and language
- Neurolinguistics
- Language and culture
- Language and environment
- Multilingualism
- Other related areas

According to *JALDA*'s policy formulated here, a few canonical considerations make *Applied Linguistics* distinctive from *Linguistics Studies*. Also, these key features define the nature of work on *Applied Linguistics* that is expected to be submitted for publication in *JALDA*.

- 1) Problem-orientedness
- 2) Language in its ecology

- 3) Cross-disciplinary nature
- 4) Reformative goals
- 5) Real-life data

2. *Applied Literature*

Applied Literature has emerged recently as an effort to draw literary studies more akin to human beings' everyday needs. A problem-oriented view of literature might be alien to most of the scholars in English Literature, one way or another, since the established tradition in literary studies does not concern itself primarily with real-life problems. However, there is an urgent call upon the experts and academicians of English Literature to further concern themselves with the real world, an appeal that needs to be responded effectively. Literary studies seem to be in an urgency to be taken out from the academic world into the real world. Literature needs to be treated as a real-world art concerning itself with people's lives and not simply an academic art that is analyzed and criticized within academic forums.

Inspired by this urgency, *Applied Literature* is defined here as any systematic research where literature can solve or ameliorate a real-world problem. In this sense, literature acts as a stimulus to reform. *Applied Literature* examines the effect of literature on human beings whereby the literary text is in service of dealing with real-life problems. To be able to account for the various aspects of human life in all its contexts, *Applied Literature* must be interdisciplinary in its nature. Furthermore, to meet the essential requirements of a scientific research, it has to give allegiance to a satisfactory level of methodological rigor. By definition, *Applied Literature* is thus:

- 1) Problem-oriented in terms of objectives
- 2) Effect-driven in its rationale
- 3) Multi-disciplinary in its scope
- 4) Method-conscious in its procedure
- 5) Data-based in terms of its subject
- 6) Reform-oriented in its applications

What Is Not *Applied Literature*?

Articles in *Applied Literature* that are based on the following research orientations, that is they are *Pure Literature*, do not comply with the policies of *JALDA*:

- X 1. The starting point of the research is based on a piece of literary work rather than a problem in the outside world.
- X 2. The rationale and justification of the study is theory-driven rather than effect-driven.
- X 3. The study commits itself exclusively to the tradition of literary studies without any attempt to invoke insights from other disciplines.
- X 4. The study acts upon literary texts as the only data available for analysis and does not attend to the data from the real-world human life.

X 5. The study does not imply any reform, amelioration or solution to a real-world problem in its conclusion.

Areas of Research in Applied Literature

Following are some subjects that can included in *Applied Literature*. The list is not definitive; *JALDA* encourages initiatives and innovations in this regard:

- √ 1) Therapeutic value of literature
- √ 2) Trauma studies in literature
- √ 3) Literature and ethical development
- √ 4) Literature and science
- √ 5) Literature and environment
- √ 6) Literature for professional training
- √ 7) Literary literacy education
- √ 8) Other innovative areas

3. Dynamics between Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature

The most ambitious and prospective goal of *JALDA* is to propagate research on real-life problems where both language and literature are at the core. Here, the intention is to deal with language-related problems where literature acts as a source of solution or amelioration to the problem. *JALDA* considers this interdisciplinary preoccupation as a highly promising area of research concern for the specialist in both *Applied Linguistics* and *Literary Studies*. As part of its long-term policy, *JALDA* team fervently encourage researchers to step in this innovative forum of inquiry. *Novel* as it is, the concept of the research on the *Dynamics* between *AppliedLinguistics* and *Literature* can be illustrated with the few following areas of inquiry. The list is inevitably tentative and open for further promotion. *JALDA* is opening a special forum for discussing the options and potentials available regarding the feasibility of this new research area. We ardently invite scholars and experts of the related fields to share their initiatives with us by submitting their prospects in the form of Review Articles or reporting their interdisciplinary research findings.

- 1) The role of literature in language teaching
- 2) The role of Literature in language teacher education
- 3) The role of Literature in language assessment
- 4)The role of Literature in Language teaching curriculum
- 5)Other innovative areas

Basic Criteria for Publishing with JALDA

A research article published in *JALDA*:

- 1) starts and deals with a real-life problem, where language and/or literature is at the center.
- 2) introduces clear suggestions for tackling problems.
- 3) upholds an iterative relationship between theory and practice.
- 4) involves symptomatic and documented evidence in the form of real-world data.
- 5) may rely on the research data of quantitative, qualitative or combined nature.

6) involves a wide spectrum of research designs ranging from highly qualitative ethnographies or case studies to statistics-based experiments

SUBMIT MANUSCRIPTS

General Guidelines

The articles submitted to *JALDA* should follow the APA 6th style with some adaptations specific to *JALDA*. Contributing authors are advised to read this document carefully and adhere to the instructions given in the Paper Submission Template to *JALDA*. Please consult the **Paper Submission Template to *JALDA*** for submission instructions, guidelines, and contact information of the journal's editors.

Online submission

JALDA offers the possibility of submitting articles online via Submit Manuscript. Manuscripts should be written in English and must be submitted online through our Online Submission Website. Submit Manuscript is an online submission and review system where authors can submit manuscripts and track their progress.

Registration and login are required to submit items online and to check the status of current submissions.

PUBLICATION ETHICS

JALDA is committed to maintaining the highest standards of publication ethics and to supporting ethical research practices. Please read the **Ethics Statement**.

Ethics Statement

Authorship

The authors' central obligation is to present a concise, accurate account of the research performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to public sources of information.

The results of research should be recorded and maintained in a form that allows analysis and review, both by collaborators before publication and by other scholars for a reasonable period after publication.

Fabrication of data is an egregious departure from the expected norms of scholarly conduct, as is the selective reporting of data with the intent to mislead or deceive, as well as the theft of data or research results from others.

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others used in a research project must always be given. Authors should cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, should not be used or reported without explicit permission from the investigator with whom the information originated. Information obtained in the course of confidential services,

such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, cannot be used without permission of the author of the work being used.

Authors must obtain permission for use of any previously published materials from the original publisher. Proof of permission must be provided before manuscripts containing previously published material can be published. Proper credit lines for all previously published material must be included in the manuscript.

Plagiarism constitutes unethical scholarly behavior and is never acceptable.

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the concept, design, execution, or interpretation of the research study. All those who have made significant contributions should be offered the opportunity to be listed as authors. Other individuals who have contributed to the study should be acknowledged, but not identified as authors.

All collaborators share some degree of responsibility for any paper they co-author. Every co-author should have the opportunity to review the manuscript before it is submitted for publication. Any individual unwilling or unable to accept appropriate responsibility for a paper should not be a co-author.

It is unethical for an author to publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal of primary publication. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently is unethical and unacceptable.

When an error is discovered in a published work, it is the obligation of all authors to promptly retract the paper or correct the results.

Author Guidelines

Articles submitted to *The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances (JALDA)* should represent outstanding scholarship and make original contributions to the field. The Editors will assume that an article submitted for their consideration has not previously been published and is not being considered for publication elsewhere, either in the submitted form or in a modified version. The articles must be written in English and not include libelous or defamatory materials. The articles should be between 4,000 and 6,000 words (excluding the abstract, references and appendices). *JALDA* operates a double-blind peer-review process. To facilitate this process, authors are requested to ensure that all submissions, whether first or revised versions, are anonymous. Authors' names and institutional affiliations should appear only on the web-fillable sheet. All authors are asked to submit their authors' biographies and Persian abstracts together with the article. The authors should provide us with the jpg file of their passport photos that will be put beside the authors' biographies. **NEW:** *JALDA* (previously *The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Discourse Analysis*) has been published since 2016 as *The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances*. As part of the Open Access policy, publishing articles in *JALDA* is free of charge for authors. The similarity rate of all submissions to *JALDA* is checked through plagiarism-detecting software before being processed for peer review.

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EDITORIAL

Bahram Behin

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“Ladies and gentlemen, I feel that this award was not made to me as a man, but to my work - a life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before.” (From William Faulkner’s Nobel acceptance speech-1950)

Dear *JALDA* Reader

The job being done by the young and zealous members of the team behind *The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature* can be regarded as a reflection of what happens generally in Iran in relation to English language. With a fire of enthusiasm burning inside young adults in Iran to reach out to the world in its colourful facets for several purposes, it is quite visible how there has been a rush to learn English in different walks of society. The enthusiasm taken to the academic level results in the determination to contribute to the field by any decent means available. Launching a new journal with goals resulting from the context of culture and the context of situation is a demanding endeavour that has proved to be a major means of contribution to the field and its context-oriented causes. Our Journal with the ups and downs it has experienced throughout its rather short life is now in a position that shows its potential to reach excellence, especially with reference to the great number of research articles that it receives both nationally and internationally from scholars in the fields of applied linguistics and applied literature. All this is actually the consequence of the hard work that the young team behind the Journal has already done. It should not be an exaggeration if I dare say that one could see degrees of “the agony and sweat of the human spirit” in my young colleagues working for the Journal; they really deserve a big round of applause, then!

The research articles in our Journal are the fruits of the hard work that has prepared the fertile ground for their cultivation. This editorial is another opportunity to call for articles in the related areas from different contexts of culture and contexts of situation contributing to more prosperity in our lives by sharing the fruits of our decent work.

Dr. Bahram Behin

Founding Editor-in-Chief

Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances

15 November, 2021

JALDA's Interview with Professor Wendy Steiner

Javad Khorsandi

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Wendy Steiner is the Richard L. Fisher Professor of English Emerita at the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Steiner earned her B.A. from McGill



University in 1970 and both her M.Phil. and Ph.D. in English from Yale University in 1972 and 1974 respectively. After teaching at Yale (1974-1976) and the University of Michigan (1976-1979), she joined the Penn faculty in 1979. Promoted to associate professor three years later, she was named full professor in 1985. At Penn, she served as Chair of the English Department from 1995-1999, Founding Director of the Penn Humanities Forum from 1998-2010, Master of Modern Languages College House from 1985-1988, and director of the Penn/King's College Program in London from 1989-1990. Professor Steiner's fields are interartistic relations and literature in English of the 20th and 21st

centuries. Among her books on modern literature and visual art are *The Real Real Thing: The Model in the Mirror of Art* (2010); *Venus in Exile: The Rejection of Beauty in Twentieth-Century Art* (2001); and *Pictures of Romance: Form Against Context in Painting and Literature* (1988). Professor Steiner has received awards from the Guggenheim, ACLS, and Mellon Foundations among others, and her cultural reviews have appeared widely in U.S. and British periodicals, including *The New York Times*, *London Review of Books*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Guardian*. Steiner has also created librettos and multi-media productions for two operas, *The Loathly Lady* (2009) and *Biennale* (2013), and co-created a real-time music visualization, *Traces on the Farther Side* (2011). Javad Khorsandi, Ph.D. student of English Language and Literature at Shiraz University has arranged this interview with Professor Steiner.

JK: ---- Thank you, dear Wendy, for accepting my invitation from JALDA to participate in this internet-based interview. It is a great pleasure for me to have an interview with you.

WS: ---- I'm so pleased you thought to ask me.

JK: ---- Could you please introduce yourself to our readers and share with us your literary and professional background/achievements? How about your current interests?

WS: ---- I spent my teaching career at the University of Pennsylvania from 1979 to 2013, where I was named the Richard L. Fisher Professor of English, serving as department chair and director of the Penn Humanities Forum, an interdisciplinary research and outreach center that I founded. My interests have always been interdisciplinary, and my seven authored books and six edited ones have typically focused on relations between literature and visual art. My awards include Guggenheim, ACLS, NEH, and Rockefeller Center Fellowships. Since retiring, I have focused on writing opera libretti, creating multimedia art installations, painting, and photography, and at the moment I am at work on a new scholarly book on beauty, women, and evolution.

JK: ---- I was introduced to your particular take on literature through your innovative thematic anthology entitled *Literature as Meaning* (2005). Actually I was fascinated by the way you presented literature to your readers: selecting a range of seemingly disparate texts and bringing them together to exemplify various subjects in literary themes and techniques. What exactly prompted you to take a different approach to anthology writing in literature?

WS: ---- This anthology probably struck many experts as retrograde, since they had been strictly trained, as had I, to distinguish verbal art from referential language. Formalist, structuralist, and semiotic criticism throughout the 20th and 21st centuries had insisted that it was an error to treat literature as straightforwardly “about the world,” since the function of art was supposedly to induce an aesthetic state of consciousness rather than to convey information about what existed beyond the text. I subscribed to this position for a long time, fascinated by the differences between literary and nonliterary uses of language. But with the rise of identity politics, nonfiction writing, and the internet, the distinction has become untenable. Besides, everyone has always learned about past and present realities from art, though we all understand that fiction is still “fictive.” Given the state of “truth” in political discourse and documentary media these days, it seems wrongheaded *not* to examine meaning in literature. Many novels, poems, and plays have changed fundamentally how people understand the world.

JK: ---- Over the years you have published many books and articles in comparative studies, examining the correspondences between literature and philosophy, literature and music, literature and the arts, etc. For example, in *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance: The Literary Portraiture of Gertrude*

Stein (1978), you discussed the connections between literary and visual portraits. Or in an introduction to *The Sign in Music and Literature* (1981), you compared “the essence of music” and “the essence of literary aesthetics” (Steiner, 9). Now, with your wealth of experience in comparative studies, how do you interpret the current state of the field?

WS: --- I am very happy to see the new interest all over the world in aesthetics and interdisciplinary approaches to the arts. Rather than imposing disciplinary blinkers and attempting to treat texts in isolation from everything else, academics are asking broader questions about the function of the arts in society. This is important, first, because artists themselves have always been concerned with such questions, and second, because humanities departments were making themselves more and more irrelevant to our culture. At least, this is the case in the States.

JK: --- Considering the works of scholars in the field, particularly since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there seems to be a lack of consensus about the state and the function of comparative literature. What do you think the future holds for comparative literature and where do you think it is going?

WS: --- Comparative literature functions very differently from country to country. In the States, where few English speakers are competent in a second or third language, comparative literature is usually a program rather than a department and serves as a home for theory and any research that crosses disciplines. In Canada, Europe, and other multilingual areas, comparative literature still brings together different national and linguistic traditions and may thus address points of intersection among cultures.

JK: --- As you may appreciate, *JALDA* stands for *The Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances*. You may know how a glance at the net on the concept of Applied Linguistics can open up with tens of web pages on this important interdisciplinary field that deals with solving “language-related real-life problems”. Unlike the popularity of Applied Linguistics, the concept of Applied Literature that deals with what Dr. Bahram Behin, the founding editor of *JALDA*, calls “the outcome of a need to put literature to tangible uses in the ‘real’ world” (Behin, 2019, p. 21) still remains unknown and many still do not know much about its significance. My trifold question is related to your definition of the concept of Applied Literature and how you can make a distinction between Applied Literature and pure Literature. I am also wondering how your past literary conduct can mirror aspects of Applied Literature that could help our readers to be aware of the uses of Applied literature.

WS: ---- “Applied Literature” was not a term or field that I encountered during my years as an active professor. For many it will raise the specter of propaganda art, advertising, or totalitarian control over freedom of expression. A crucial question would be: *who* is doing this applying—the author or someone else? But of course, literature has always had practical uses. Children learn language through nursery rhymes and fairy tales; classic novels provide a sense of history and cultural difference; poetry is part of courtship. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* probably did as much to end slavery in the States as the combined efforts of abolitionists.

JK: ---- **What can be the possible contributions of comparative literary studies to the developments in the newly-emerging area of Applied Literature?**

WS: ---- Comparative literary studies are premised on attention to the cultural context as well as the linguistic structure of verbal art. As the first literary approach to focus on the interconnectedness of literary phenomena to each other and to extra-literary phenomena, it provides a direction for Applied Literature.

JK: ---- **As I mentioned earlier, unlike Applied Literature, Applied Linguistics is a rather well-established area of interest in academic circles. There are several distinguished Applied Linguists of international renown, including Merrill Swain, James P. Lantolf, Adrian Holliday, Rod Ellis, and Henry George Widdowson. We had the honor of having Professor Widdowson and his wife Professor Seidlhofer at the *Second National Conference on English Language Studies: Applied Linguistics Perspectives on EFL* in Tabriz, Iran in 2018. The field of Applied Literature, by contrast, is less recognized as an independent subject of study. Where do you think this lack of recognition comes from? And could you please name some scholars whose works, you assume, can be classified as Applied Literature?**

WS: ---- My other responses suggest why few would recognize Applied Literature as an established approach, and more, why many would resist it. However, there are any number of comparative scholars whose work would be relevant. Gerry Prince in Romance Languages and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania immediately comes to mind, or those involved in *Word & Image*. To find more such people, *JALDA* would need to publish a concise statement of its principles and aims.

JK: ---- **And for the last question: How do you think the dynamics between language and literature work today?**

WS: ---- As well as ever!

JK: Thank you ever so much for your contribution to *JALDA*!

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Exploring the Factors Triggering Iranian EFL Teachers' Immunity: A Mixed-Method Inquiry

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Abstract

It is frequently affirmed that EFL teachers face many stressors at work. While they keep experiencing perturbations that may cause fluctuations in their efficacy, immunity acts as a buffer and allows teachers to carry on performing academically in the classroom and emotionally and psychologically over the course of their careers (Thelen, 2005). The present study adapted a mixed-method design to investigate the distribution of the participants across different immunity types and also the destabilizing events which triggers Iranian EFL teachers' immunity. To fulfill this aim, 204 English teachers from two provinces of Iran (Isfahan and Charmahal Bakhtiari) took part in the study. To collect the data, Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (Hiver, 2016), reflective journal, and interview were utilized. The data gathered via questionnaire were subjected to descriptive analysis and cluster analysis while the qualitative data were analyzed through the three-stage coding process of grounded theory. The results of the qualitative analysis led to the identification of three immunity types, namely, productively immunized, maladaptively immunized, and immunocompromised with maladaptively immunized teachers having the highest rate of distribution among the participants. The results of the study further identified 3 categories of educational, organizational, and personal triggers along with 14 subcategories among Iranian EFL teachers. The findings of the study can have implications for teachers, stakeholders, and policy-makers to help teachers foster their immunity against stressors and avoid fatigue and burnout.

Keywords: English teacher immunity, immunity distribution, immunity triggers, Iranian EFL teachers, teacher immunity types

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Friday, February, 12, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27130.1265>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

English teaching is a complicated and delicate task that needs the teacher to have a good command of English and know the details of classroom management the techniques and strategies for teaching language skills. This profession, however, is not without challenges and teachers need to face difficulties both inside and outside the classroom. As Hiver (2016) mentions, the concept of language teacher immunity (LTI) plays an important role in L2 teachers' professional identity and affects how L2 practitioners position themselves in the profession through their associated attitudes. Moreover, the consequences of LTI are represented in the real-life classroom options of L2 practitioners, indicating that language teachers' emotions, teaching motivation, and instructional effectiveness may depend on the results of LTI (Hiver, 2016). In his initial exploratory study, Hiver (2015) approves that language teachers gradually improve an evolving outcome, through the fluctuations they encounter in the classroom environment, which functions as a defense mechanism against the material and emotional pressures as parts of their practice. He refers to this outcome as "language teacher immunity".

The idea of teachers' immunity was developed based on human's biological immunity functioning which protects the organism against harmful and undesirable substances from the environment and defends the system in which it is located. However, biological immunity system also includes a snapshot of those hyperactive immune reactions, which results in counterproductive manifestations of human immunity such as autoimmunity and allergy (Rose & Mackay, 2014). In the same way, Teacher immunity states that the protection outcome is always evolved out of a preliminary defensive response to disorders and disturbances. Similar to its biological counterpart, however, teacher immunity can initiate maladaptive responses and mistakenly jeopardize L2 teachers' functioning by manifesting itself in abnormal and aberrant ways (Hiver & Dornyei, 2017). This immunity appears in different aspects with the possibility to be either positive or negative and has the potential to affect almost everything that teachers do in their professions.

Thus, there should be a pressing concern to investigate different aspects of teacher immunity among Iranian EFL teachers in order to help them persist and endure within the profession for a long period of time. More specifically, identifying the factors that trigger immunity among EFL teachers can be very helpful in developing a productive type of immunity against emotional disturbances, motivational obstacles, and threats to the personality and avoiding fatigue and burnout among EFL teachers.

Literature Review

Empirical Studies

Hiver and Dornyei (2017) introduced the theoretical framework of teacher immunity. They defined teacher immunity as a defense mechanism against the material and emotional demands placed on L2 practitioners. Later, Hiver (2016) found seven components of teachers' immunity: teaching self-efficacy, resilience,

coping, burnout, attitudes toward teaching, openness to change, and classroom affectivity.

The introduction of teacher immunity by Hiver and Dornyei (2017) has opened new ways of inquiry in EFL teachers' psychology. So far, researchers have investigated different aspects of teacher immunity. For example, Saydam (2019) investigated how language teacher immunity develops and functions as well as the distribution of immunity types to reveal the motivational implications and consequences of this new construct in Turkish context. The findings revealed that the main teacher immunity types are productively immunized. Furthermore, the effect of the demographic characteristics on teachers' immunity levels was explored and it was seen that demographic characteristics do not have a major impact on immunity levels. Finally, the study indicated that productively immunized and maladaptively immunized teachers follow different paths of development through the self-organization process.

Furthermore, in recent years, teacher immunity has attracted EFL researchers' attention in Iran. For instance, Maghsoudi (2021) explored the immunity levels of EFL student-teachers at teacher education universities in Iran using a mixed-method design. The results led to the identification of three immunity types, namely, negative (maladaptive), neutral, and positive (productive) types and further indicated that productive immunity type was dominant among the student teachers. In addition, the results of the study also revealed that, unlike gender, the factor of years of education was a significant factor in terms of determining the immunity levels of the student teachers.

In a recent study, Songhori, Ghonsooly, and Afraz (2018) tried to find out what type of language teacher immunity was dominant among Iranian English teachers and how these teachers might have developed their immunity type through a mixed-method approach. The findings of the study revealed that maladaptive immunity was a dominant type of immunity among Iranian English teachers. According to them, Iranian English teachers followed the four stages of self-organization, namely, triggering, coupling, realignment, and stabilization in forming their immunity.

Considering the above-mentioned examples, it seems that most of the studies on teachers' immunity have focused on the developmental path of teachers' immunity or the relationship between immunity and other individual variables such as motivation or demographic characteristics (e.g., Ahmadi, Amiryousefi, & Hesabi, 2020; Ordem, 2017). To the best of our knowledge, quite a few studies (e.g., Pourbahram & Sadeghi, 2020) have concisely mentioned triggering factors of teachers' immunity. A gap then is felt in teacher education to study triggering factors among different immunity types of EFL teachers.

Theoretical Framework

Hiver (2016) has stated that teacher immunity manifests itself in four emergent categories: L2 teachers may be (a) productively immunized (i.e., possessing a robust, beneficial form of teacher immunity), (b) maladaptively immunized (i.e.,

possessing a rigid, counterproductive form of teacher immunity), (c) immunocompromised (i.e., has not developed any coherent form of teacher immunity), or (d) partially immunized (i.e., having developed half-way features of teacher immunity).

Moreover, Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) claimed that teachers follow a self-organized sequence of four stages as a developmental process toward immunity as follows:

1. **Triggering:** a perturbation causes a system disturbance. Because disturbances are essential to destabilize a dynamic system, the process of self-organization can only proceed if there is a trigger such as perturbation (Kiel & Elliot, 1996, p. 53).

2. **Linking:** the reformulation of the system's components to cope with the disturbances. Positive feedback reinforces the local perturbations until they impact the entire system while negative feedback reins in unsustainable or run-away growth (O'Sullivan, 2009, p. 241).

3. **Realignment:** the system's returning to equilibrium through the symbiotic relationship developed between the disturbances and explicit response options (Hiver, 2017). This return to stability takes place in the realignment stage through the emergence of new higher-order patterns (Kiel & Elliot, 1996, p. 68)

4. **Stabilization:** the transformation of the system into a new meta-component that buffers the system from future disturbances (Hiver, 2015, p. 217).

Additionally, Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) believe that LTI emerges from the experience that a language teacher has gained from coping with stresses, problems, and difficulties that they have faced while they move through the developmental path of four stages. They add that these experiences allow language teachers to cope with the daily problems they have during their classroom teaching. However, there are few indications on the factors that trigger EFL teachers' immunity. Knowledge of these factors that exert an impact on LTI will certainly help create an environment in which teachers engage in teaching practices with fewer problems and consequently move toward a productive form of immunity. Given the significance of the issue of LTI, the current study aims to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the distribution of Iranian EFL teachers across the main teacher immunity types?

RQ2: What are the factors triggering LTI among Iranian EFL teachers?

Method

Participants

The participants of the study were a total of 204 EFL teachers (102 women and 97 men) working in English schools in Isfahan and Chaharmahal Bakhtiari provinces. They were selected through convenience sampling method due to their accessibility and proximity to the researcher. Their age ranged from 25 to 48 with different years of experience from 3 to 25. They had BA (69.1 %), MA (26.9 %), or PhD degrees

(3.9 %) in either English translation or teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). They had the experience of teaching English in secondary school (n = 79), or high school (n = 103), or both (n = 22). Their first language was Persian, and none of them had studied English abroad. While being selected, the participants were provided with the necessary information about the aim and design of the study.

Finally, 15 of the participants (5 participants from each immunity types) were selected through Maximal Variation Sampling to take part in the qualitative phase (Table 1 displays the demographic information of the participants). Maximal variation sampling is a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait (Creswell, 2012). Immunity types of the participants were identified by questionnaire cluster analysis (see the results).

Table 1

Demographic Features of Participating Teachers

Participants	Sex	Years of Experience	Educational Background	Immunity Type
A	M	> 5	BA	PIT ^a
B	M	5-10	MA	PIT
C	F	11-15	PhD	PIT
D	F	16-20	BA	PIT
E	F	< 20	MA	PIT
F	M	> 5	BA	MIT ^b
G	M	5-10	MA	MIT
H	M	11-15	MA	MIT
I	F	16-20	BA	MIT
J	F	< 20	BA	MIT
K	M	> 5	BA	ICT ^c
L	M	5-10	BA	ICT
M	F	11-15	MA	ICT
N	F	16-20	BA	ICT
O	F	< 20	BA	ICT

^a PIT stands for productively immunized teacher type

^b MIT stands for maladaptively immunized teacher type

^c ICT stands for immunocompromised teacher type

Instruments

For the present study, several instruments were used which are as follows:

Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire

The Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (Appendix A), developed by Hiver (2016), consisted of 39 items across 7 subscales, each with a 6-point response scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was reported to have high reliability and validity (Hiver, 2017). In this study, the reliability of the test was found to be relatively high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .894$). Factor analyses also provided support for the construct validity of the questionnaire. In this sample, confirmatory factor analysis provided evidence for the seven factors underlying language Teachers Immunity Questionnaire, that are Teaching Self-Efficacy, Burnout, Resilience, Attitudes Toward Teaching, Openness to Change, Classroom Affectivity, and Coping.

Reflective Journals

The participants were asked to keep reflective journals in English or Persian during the academic year 2018-2019. A reflective journal can be used to document the participants' ideas, personal thoughts, and experiences, as well as reflections and insights. According to Daloglu (2001), reflective journals connect the teachers' prior knowledge to the new knowledge and help them to know their weaknesses and strengths. The framework of the journals in the current study was adopted from Jasper (2013). Jaspers' (2013) stages are experience, reflection, and action. Firstly, the participants were asked to describe their experiences of stressors and disturbances. In the reflection stage, they thought through the experiences and recorded their feelings and thoughts. In the final stage, they recorded their reactions to these destabilizing events. The length of the journals varied between one to two pages.

Semi-Structured Interview

The interview protocol was developed based on the theoretical framework of the study. It elicited the language teachers' viewpoints regarding the main factors influencing language teachers' immunity. It was developed based on five verbs *think, believe, feel, do, and want*, taken from Hiver (2017).

To check the adequacy of the interview protocol, a pilot study was done. The adequacy of the initial questions was discussed with 5 English language educators who had PhD in TEFL and the questions were modified when needed. The interview protocol was then used to interview 2 EFL teachers who were similar to the participants of the study. The appropriateness of the questions was examined and some of the questions were revised.

Procedure

The present study was conducted in language classrooms of public schools in Isfahan and Chahar Mahal va Bakhtiari province. The data collection process was

performed in several stages. After attending the schools and obtaining the necessary permissions, the researchers sent the LTI questionnaires to the language teachers via E-mail. The teachers were asked to answer the questions and return the questionnaires to the researcher. From the 217 questionnaires distributed, 13 of them were not completely or properly answered and were discarded from the final analysis.

In the qualitative phase, at first, the concept of teacher immunity, its stages, and components were explained to the participants. In addition, the purposes and objectives of the study (factors relevant to teacher immunity and coping strategies) were discussed in detail. Secondly, they were asked to write their reflective journals based on Jaspers' (2013) framework especially concentrating on the problems they faced in the school.

In the next stage, the participants were interviewed to confirm the results and gain further understanding of the trigger factors leading to teacher immunity. The interview sessions were held in the classrooms or a place convenient to the participants. The teachers could choose the language of their interviews between English or Persian. The interviews were done in a semi-structured way. The whole sessions were tape-recorded with the consent of the interviewees and transcribed verbatim for further analysis. Each interview took about 50 minutes.

Data Analysis

The mixed-methods design was used to strengthen the validity of the results (Creswell, 2005). In this design, qualitative and quantitative data on an issue were collected and analyzed separately; then, the results were converged during interpretation. The questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS 22. The data were subjected to cluster analysis to assign the participants to their immunity classifications (types). Furthermore, to analyze the data elicited from interviews and journals, principles of grounded theory proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) were used. The analysis included three stages starting from open coding, moving to axial coding, and finally to selective coding. In the process of open coding, the interview transcripts and reflective journals were read several times by the researcher, looking for recurring patterns. In the axial coding, the parts related to the same topic were merged into one category. In selective coding, sub-categories were united to form core categories. The core categories were later subjected to frequency analysis.

Results

Results of the LTI Questionnaire: Addressing Research Question One

In this section, the quantitative data gathered from LTI questionnaire were analyzed to classify the participants into their immunity type. The results were also used to find out the distribution of different immunity types among the participants

Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics of seven subscales of LTI questionnaire.

Table 2

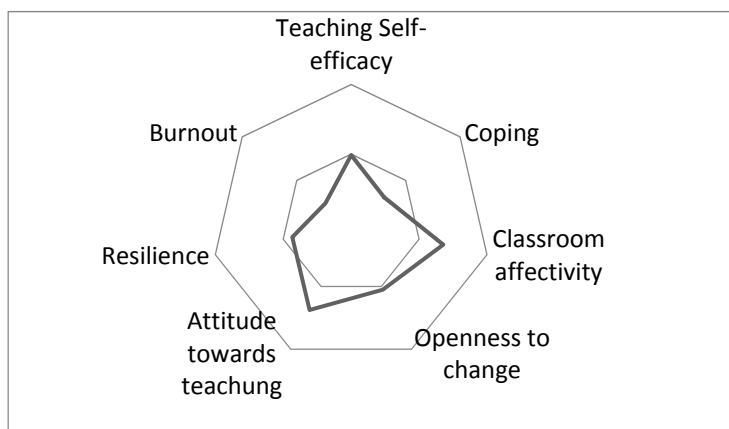
Descriptive Analysis of LTI Questionnaire

Questionnaire Scales	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Teaching Self-Efficacy	4.7929	.71859	.516	.007	-.907
Burnout	3.4367	.92681	.859	.039	-.653
Resilience	3.9333	.90435	.818	-.036	-.831
Attitude Towards Teaching	4.8867	.75945	.577	-.807	.340
Openness to Change	4.3250	.70965	.504	-.579	-.235
Classroom Affectivity	4.6778	.70033	.490	-.081	-.266
Coping	3.5033	.94993	.902	-.241	-.384

Taking a quick look at Table 2 reveals that skewness and kurtosis values for all the seven subparts are between -1.5 to +1.5, which indicates normality of variance (Bachman & Kunnan, 2005). As for measures of central tendency, the mean value in the distribution was found to be above 4.00 for all the items of the scales, as shown in the following radar chart. The highest mean is for the "teaching self-efficacy" and the lowest is for the "burnout".

Figure 1

Radar Chart Comparison of Mean Variables



Furthermore, a two-step cluster analysis was run to classify the participants into different immunity types and specify the most dominant type among Iranian EFL teachers. To choose criterion variables, firstly, a cluster analysis was run with all the variables. Burnout and coping were selected as criterion variables for clustering analysis. Schwarz's Bayesian Information Criterion and the log-likelihood distance proximity measure were used to determine the number of clusters. The analysis resulted in 3 clusters. The mean values of the five clusters are presented in Table 3. The validity of this final five-cluster solution was checked by conducting the univariate main effects (Table 3).

The univariate main effects for cluster membership were also calculated for criterion variables the results of which appear in Table 4. Additionally, to evaluate the predictive importance of criterion variables on cluster membership, a multinomial logistic regression was conducted, the results of which indicated a good fit ($-2 \log\text{-likelihood} = 98.033$, $\chi^2 = 261.6$, $df = 51$, $p = .001$). Based on the validation measures, a final five-cluster solution was a strong way to categorize the participants.

Table 3

Profiles of Validated Clusters

	Cluster 1 N = 71	Cluster 2 N = 48	Cluster 3 N = 85	F-Value	η^2
Teaching Self-Efficacy	5.65	2.36	2.77	215.8	.61
Resilience	4.91	3.53	1.83	133.1	.64
Openness	5.12	4.15	2.61	158.3	.80
Classroom Affectivity	4.47	3.34	2.74	179.2	.56
Attitudes to Teaching	5.79	2.94	2.26	98.5	.69

Table 4

Criterion Variable Profiles for Validated Clusters

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	F-value	η^2
Burn out	2.43	3.41	4.93	178.1	.88
Coping	4.57	4.12	1.71	225.9	.72

The composition of clusters based on gender, degree, and age of experience appears in Table 5.

Table 5
Composition of the Clusters

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Sum
	n	n	n	N
Gender				
Male	27	28	55	110
Female	44	20	30	94
Degree				
BA	24	24	78	126
MA	42	22	6	70
PhD	5	2	1	8
Age of Experience				
< 1 Year	5	3	6	14
1-3 Years	9	3	7	19
4-6 Years	15	2	9	26
7-10 Years	24	6	10	40
11-15 Years	8	22	17	47
16-20 Years	9	8	20	37
20-25 Years	1	4	16	21

Drawing on Hivers' (2015, 2017) classification of immunity types, it can be said that the teachers in cluster 1 developed a positive immunity (distribution = 31.8 %). Their self-efficacy, resilience, and openness to change are considerably high. They had a very optimistic view of their career and showed positive effects in their classroom. They also showed low levels of burnout and were willing to use novel and appropriate coping strategies while confronting the problems. Table 5 represents that they were mostly female teachers who had a degree higher than BA and years of experience between 7 to 10 years.

Contrary to cluster 1, cluster 3 (distribution = 41.6%) represented a group of maladaptively immunized teachers. They indicated medium to low levels of efficacy and resilience. They developed a negative attitude toward their career and low classroom affectivity. They were unenthusiastic to change as their levels of openness and coping were trivial. The teachers in this group suffered moderate to high degrees of burnout. This cluster was mainly formed by the experienced teachers (more than 15 years of experience). They were mostly men holding a BA degree.

Clusters 2 can be called immunocompromised teachers (distribution = 23.5%), based on the classification of immunity type introduced by Hiver (2017) because they did not develop any special types of immunity. Their burnout level and coping were moderate to high and they indicated an average level of efficacy. This cluster, however, could be distinguished by exhibiting significant levels of openness to change and resilience. On the other hand, they were typified taking a very pessimistic attitude toward their careers. Their effectiveness level was very low. They were mostly male teachers who had BA or MA degree and whose experience was mostly between 7 to 20 years.

For practical reasons, we preferred to form 3 basic types. The majority of participating teachers were not positively immunized and they faced obstacles in their way to be positively immunized. This fact urged us to investigate the factors triggering teacher immunity. These problems will be discussed in the next part.

Qualitative Phase: Addressing Research Question Two

Hiver (2017) introduced four stages for teachers' immunity: triggering, linking, realignment, and stabilization. In the present study, our focus is on stage one that was related to our research question (triggering factors).

The triggering stage is the stage in which teachers experience triggering events (or destabilizing events) that provide the initial impetus for systems to self-organize along their respective trajectories to teacher immunity archetypes (Hiver, 2017). To find triggering factors, 5 participants were selected from each immunity types (productively immunized, maladaptively immunized, immunocompromised). They were subjected to both interview and journal writing. The analysis of the results boiled down to 3 categories and 14 subcategories of the destabilizing triggers. Table 6 shows the analysis of destabilizing triggers.

Table 6
Results of the Analysis of Triggering Events

Categories	Sub-Categories	Frequencies		
		PIT	MIT	IMT
Educational	Textbook issues	4	3	3
	Students' issues	3	7	4
	Issues in teaching methods	4	6	7
	Assessment issues	2	3	2
	Curriculum issues	1	2	0
		9	21	16
Organizational	Inadequate payment and reward	3	4	3
	Lack of equipment and facilities	2	3	4
	Teachers' lack of autonomy	3	3	3
	Inadequate teacher training	4	3	2
	Lack of social support	1	4	2
		13	17	14
Personal	Demographic characteristics	2	2	3
	Teachers' negative attitudes toward their job	0	5	4
	Teachers' lack of knowledge	2	2	5
	Negative personality traits	1	3	5

Educational Triggering Events

Educational upheavals were among the most frequent destabilizing events that almost all the teachers pointed to and all three types of teachers were excessively impressed by them. Maladaptively immunized teachers, however, mentioned

educational triggers more than the other two immunity types. Five sub-categories were diagnosed for this category: textbook issues, student issues, issues in teaching methods, assessment issues, and curriculum issues.

Most of the comments concerning educational triggers are related to textbooks. Teacher H, a maladaptively immunized one, complained about them as follows:

The books are very boring in terms of appearance and pictures. The focus of the books is on grammatical points and reading skills. Oral skills are limited to the conversations at the beginning of the lessons, which also seem very unauthentic. The exercises bother me because I spend a lot of time working on them and students are not able to do them if they are even a bit changed. They are completely form-focused. Teaching these books makes me feel drained of energy.

The second sub-category that appeared after marking the pieces of data was student issues. Comments about students' inappropriate behaviors were common in the data.

The new generation is very hard to understand. My students are constantly nagging about everything. They are disappointed and spreading their disappointment around the class including me. When I have them do a task, they seem bored and demotivated. They always make excuses for not doing homework. They don't take any responsibility for their learning and it puts too much burden on my shoulders.

Some other teachers thought the students' problems frustrated them. As an example, teacher L, as an immunocompromised teacher, perceived this factor as a disruption:

This year I work in a school in a suburban area. The population mostly faces social and financial problems. The students are mostly from less-fortunate families. Some of their parents are divorced or in jail. Being a teacher to these students is very demanding. They are demotivated and inattentive. I can't console them or help them solve their problems and it hurts me.

Moreover, some of the interviewees were concerned with the heterogeneity of their students' English proficiency:

Some of the students have their first encounter with English in school, although some have been attending private institutes for a long time. It is very exhausting for me to teach English to such students with varying levels of oral and written proficiency. English classes are always heterogeneous in terms of students' previous proficiency.

The third sub-category of educational triggers related to teaching methods. Many teachers complained that they were often forced to use out-of-date or impractical teaching methods and techniques. A, a productively immunized teacher commented on this issue:

The content of the textbooks and final exams forced me to focus mostly on grammatical points and reading skills. Therefore, unfortunately, I have to stick to

some old-fashioned methods like audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods. Furthermore, in the context of high school, students get used to teacher-centered classes. I am the one who always speaks and students just listen and do nothing. I feel so bored of using these tedious methods but I have no other choices.

Assessment issues formed the next sub-category. Some teachers considered washback effects of final exams and university entrance exams as a factor that negatively affects the quality of their teaching and, as a result, wears them out. Teacher D clarified this issue:

Students' grades are very important to my superiors. I am repeatedly told to help students pass the final exams. No matter what the qualities of teaching and learning are, the teachers' efficacy is just judged by students' final results and passing rate.

Teacher M, a 12th-grade teacher (the final grade at High School), more specifically referred to washback effects of university entrance exams (Konkor):

Success in Konkor is on top of everything at high school. As a 12th grade teacher, I have to allocate too much time on Konkor tests besides teaching textbooks, which puts too much pressure on me. The efficacy of your teaching is determined by the rate of students' admission in Konkor. Their parents and my superiors expect me to do a miracle and turn the students into proficient language learners in a year, no matter what their beginning English levels are!

Curriculum issues were recognized as the last sub-category that the participants perceived. G, a maladaptively immunized teacher, complained about the time allocated to grade one high school:

I have been teaching English in grade one for 5 years. I think the time allocated to cover the book is very limited because the book has four lessons with a lot of new subjects. I also have to devote a great deal of time to check their homework and work on final exam sample tests during the semester. I have to work harder and harder to make up for the time shortage.

Organizational Triggering Events

The second frequent category was organizational destabilizing events which were sorted into five subcategories: inadequate payment and reward, lack of equipment and facilities, teachers' lack of autonomy, inadequate teacher training, and lack of social support. Almost all three types of teachers, especially the maladaptively immunized ones, pointed to organizational triggers.

A lot of interviewees, mostly the ones with male teachers, concentrated on teachers' payment and rewarding system. Therefore, it was considered as the first sub-category. One of the teachers said:

I feel demotivated at work because my salary is very low and I am always engaged with financial problems. I cannot act as a fresh teacher as long as I have a light wallet! I cannot do my job efficiently because I feel I am not paid fairly. What is discouraging is that you are not gratified or rewarded for being a better teacher or for your job accomplishments.

Another theme that was recurrently mentioned by the participants was the lack of equipment and facilities. Especially the teachers who work in rural and suburban areas found this issue very frustrating:

I have been working in a small village for three years. The school building is very old and unsafe. The classes are overcrowded and do not have the necessary air conditioning. In winter, they lack appropriate and safe heating devices. There is no language laboratory or even audio equipment in the school. Teaching at this school for three years made me feel used up. I am not a joyful teacher as I used to be.

The third sub-category of organizational triggers was the teachers' lack of autonomy. E, a maladaptively immunized teacher, explained the issue as:

I am not a decision-maker in my class. Everything is already determined by the superiors and administrators. They decide about the material, method, location, my school, grades, and everything. They force me to do whatever they want and threaten me if I object to them. I cannot be an effective teacher because I am not a decision-maker.

English teachers usually become acquainted with theories of teaching methodology at universities. The students, however, receive only two to three credits EFL methodology, which is insufficient for long-term results (Sadeghi & Khezrlou, 2016). Their knowledge about teaching methodology is not updated by any effective in-service program. Teacher A highlighted this issue:

When I was a B.A. student, I completed some courses about teaching methodology. But these courses did not make me qualified for practical teaching. Now after ten years of teaching, I feel even more incompetent and out-of-date. There are some meetings and contests which are held by the English Educational Department of the Ministry of Education from time to time, yet they are neither enough nor helpful to me. I think there should be some systematic in-service teacher training programs to freshen the teachers and update their knowledge.

The last subcategory of organizational triggers was a lack of social support. N, an immunocompromised teacher, considered unfriendly and negative behavior of superiors and colleagues as a factor resulting in exhaustion and frustration.

This year, I feel intimidated and uncomfortable in the school because the schoolmaster's behavior is so bossy and aggressive. She is always yelling at the personnel. She is biased and doesn't put everybody on the same page. Her behavior makes me emotionally exhausted and sensitive.

Personal Triggering Events

According to Hiver (2015), no matter to which immunity type a teacher belongs, destabilizing problems are unavoidable in teachers' real lives. During the qualitative phase, the participants constantly talked about the destabilizing problems that had their roots in their personal life. All three types of teachers mentioned personal destabilizing problems although immunocompromised teachers pointed to them more frequently. The category of personal destabilizing events had four

subcategories: demographic characteristics, teachers' negative attitudes toward their job, teachers' insufficient knowledge, and negative personality traits.

The participants frequently alluded to demographic characteristics, namely age, degree, years of experience, second jobs, and academic activities as factors that could influence their immunity. Such expressions as "as I get older", "as I become more experienced", "as I was an MA student," indicated the effect of demographic characteristics that appeared frequently in the qualitative data. As an example, K considered increasing years of experience as a factor that threatened his immunity.

As I became more experienced, I became a less effective teacher. Teaching the same textbooks again and again changed me into a very uncreative teacher and my job into a boring routine.

The second sub-category of personal destabilizing events was the teachers' negative attitude toward their job. Some of the participants had a cynical preoccupation with their job and some others gradually grew a gloomy outlook of their job resulting in lack of immunity. As an example, L, an immunocompromised teacher commented on the issue as follows:

I was among the top 500 rankings in the foreign-language section of Konkoor and I was very enthusiastic to become a good English teacher. I tried hard to make myself ready in every way imaginable for my future job. You can't imagine what happened! I have been teaching the English alphabet to seventh-grade students (first year of secondary school) in a small village for 6 years. It's not meaningful or satisfactory for me. I feel suppressed and began to develop a pessimistic view of my job. Sometimes I've even been thought about quitting the job.

Teachers' insufficient knowledge was the third sub-category. Some of the participants viewed the insufficiency of their English proficiency as a source of fatigue and exhaustion resulting in decreasing immunity. One of them considered his weakness of speaking English as a source of inefficiency:

I'm not proficient in speaking English. A lot of my students who have learned English in private institutes are far better than me in speaking skills. Sometimes they laugh at me when I try to speak. It's embarrassing!

Some other teachers pointed to their lack of pedagogical knowledge such as teaching methodologies or methods of assessment and how they negatively affected their career and their sense of immunity. O, an immunocompromised teacher, considered his incompetency to work with technological devices as a source of disappointment:

I wasn't able to work with computers or other technical devices. When I had to play an audio file or project slides on a projector in the classroom, I got confused and embarrassed. My technological illiteracy lowered my self-confidence to a great extent and I think it was a threat to my feeling of immunity.

Throughout the qualitative data, there were some statements about negative personality traits that were regarded as destabilizing events. As examples, two teachers called themselves "extreme introvert" and "severely anxious" and explained

how these personality traits had hurt their career. In an extreme form, one of the participants mentioned her chronic depression. He regarded his psychological disorders as the source of inefficiency. Therefore, negative personality traits were regarded as the last sub-category.

Discussion

This mixed-method study made a contribution to the rather scarce literature on EFL teachers' immunity in the context of Iran. Previous studies have mainly focused on finding the most dominant immunity types and immunity formation of teachers through their developmental path (Hiver, 2017; Ordem, 2017; Saydem, 2019; Songhory et al., 2018). The present study, however, went further and explored the destabilizing disturbances that Iranian EFL teachers confront at work. Destabilizing events are important to investigate because they trigger the formation of teacher immunity (Hiver & Dornyei, 2017).

The results indicated that destabilizing triggers of teachers' immunity are of three types: educational, organizational, and personal. Educational triggers are the most common type. The results also revealed the subdivisions for the three types of destabilizing events. Hiver and Dornyei (2017) have pointed to some examples of educational and organizational triggers such as managing destructive student behavior and delinquency, or punitive evaluations and accountability measures that determine a teacher's continued employment, which is in line with the findings of the present study. Moreover, Pourbahram and Sadeghi (2020) alluded to some of the EFL teachers' stressors such as their personality traits and students' problems. However, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have systematically focused on this issue in Iranian context.

Previous studies have investigated educational stressors and their negative effects on teachers' professional characteristics such as on burnout, resilience, attitudes to teaching, efficacy, and coping strategies which are all the components of teacher immunity (Akbari & Eghtesadi, 2017; Roohani & Dayeri, 2019; Shirazizade et al., 2019; Esmae'li & Afzali, 2020). Contrary to their findings, results of the present study showed that stressors do not necessarily have negative effects on teachers' immunity. There are many teachers among the participants who have developed a high sense of productive immunity despite a lot of stressors. They have a very good sense of efficiency and a positive attitude toward their job. They try to keep themselves updated in terms of teaching and assessment methods and they do not feel frustrated and exhausted even after many years of working. The logic behind this idea is the fact that protection outcomes are always evolved out of defensive responses to disorders and disturbances (Hiver, 2017).

The findings revealed that productively immunized teachers mentioned destabilizing triggers less than other types of immunity in all three categories. The reason can be the fact that they do not consider many stressors even as stressors. Qualitative and quantitative results of the study showed high levels of coping and resilience among the productively immunized teachers. They reacted to the majority of problems by finding appropriate solutions. Among three categories of triggering events, they commented on organizational problems more than two other categories.

The reason behind this finding may be the fact that organizational policies of education are determined at macro level and teachers are not generally involved to decide about them (Kaseorg, 2017; Rabiei et al., 2019). Therefore, they are harder to deal with compared to the other two groups.

Maladaptively immunized teachers referred to the triggering events more than two other groups. They also had the highest frequency of mentioning stressors in both educational and organizational categories. The reason behind this finding is that these types of teachers showed the lowest level of coping and resilience among the participants. Confronting the stressors, they usually grew enraged and treated the students in a cynical and cold fashion. They had a pessimistic view toward their job and did not have a good relationship with other colleagues. Results of the study about maladaptively immunized teachers are in line with some previous studies which investigated the features of teachers with high levels of burnout (Akbari & Eghtesadi, 2017; Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh, 2020; Jabbarpour, 2016).

Immunocompromised teachers who have not developed any forms of immunity, whether negative or positive, alluded to personal stressors more than the other two groups. As can be seen in the results of the study, while this group of teachers reached high levels of coping and openness to change, they indicated medium to low levels of self-efficiency and resilience. They were pessimistic toward their job, and they treated their students in an emotionless and mechanical fashion. Confronting the destabilizing triggers, they mostly blamed themselves and excessively asked other people including their colleagues and friends for help. That seems to be the reason why they pointed to the personal triggers more than the other two groups as they developed a negative viewpoint toward their own level of knowledge, personality traits and, demographic features.

Furthermore, the findings in the quantitative part of the study indicated the highest distribution of maladaptively immunized teachers among the participants. This is in line with Songhori, Ghonsooly, & Afraz (2018) who found maladaptive immunity as a dominant type of immunity among Iranian EFL teachers.

In this regard, Maghsoudi (2021) explored the immunity levels of the student-teachers at teacher education universities in Iran in a recent study. The results indicated that positive or productive immunity type was dominant among the participants. The transition on the immunity continuum from dominantly productive to dominantly maladaptive while transferring from university to public schools among Iranian EFL teachers highlights the importance of work-related disturbances and perturbations and their effects on their immunity development.

Conclusion and Implication

The EFL teachers in Iran face stressors and undesirable conditions that may generate fatigue and cynicism and propel them toward a maladaptive form of immunity. This study was an attempt to find the factors that influence teachers' immunity and interpret the results in light of the features of EFL teachers' immunity types.

The results of the study focusing on teacher immunity are important to consider because teachers are the ones who should create a condition that inspire the learners with excitement and motivation to learn. Learner vision cannot flourish without teacher vision and, for this reason, teacher emotions, goals, enthusiasm, and hope can all be contagious and generate real cognitive counterparts in students (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The results of the study are justifiable because productively immunized teachers are more likely to build an environment conducive to learning and propel the learners toward more enthusiastic and motivated ones.

It is indispensable that these findings be taken into accounts by the Ministry of Education and decision-makers at macro-level to prevent maladaptive immunity formation among EFL teachers by dealing with some organizational and educational problems such as inadequate payment and reward, lack of equipment and facilities in the school especially in suburban areas, teachers' lack of autonomy, and inadequate teacher training. They can also hold training courses for the teachers in a systematic way to update their knowledge about English teaching and testing methods. The findings also have implications for public schools' staff and English teachers because having knowledge of the stressors and the notion of immunity can increase teachers' awareness about their own work-related problems and immunity level. It encourages them to reflect on their job status and deal with their personal destabilizing events. In sum, we hope that the results of the present study help the Iranian community of EFL to move toward higher levels of immunity.

Several limitations need to be considered. First, the interviews were conducted in participants' native language, based on their preferences, to better reflect their feelings and thoughts. Further research is needed to apply other techniques for collecting data, such as observation (this technique was not applied in this study because of the COVID-19 pandemic). Also, the participants of the study were selected from just two provinces of Iran because of ease of accessibility. It is advisable to expand the population under study to other provinces.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire

We would like you to answer how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by choosing a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Please do not leave out any items.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

	1	2	3	4	5	6
<p>Teaching Self-Efficacy</p> <p>1. If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.</p> <p>2. When all factors are considered, I am a powerful influence on my students' success in the classroom.</p> <p>3. I do not have confidence in my professional ability to help students learn.</p> <p>4. I have enough training and experience to deal with almost any learning problem in the classroom.</p> <p>5. I am not certain that I am making a difference in the lives of my students.</p> <p>6. I can deal effectively with the problems of my students.</p> <p>7. I feel I am positively influencing my students' lives through my teaching.</p>						
<p>Burnout</p> <p>8. At school I feel burned out from my work.</p> <p>9. I feel that teaching is hardening me emotionally.</p> <p>10. There are days at school when I feel vulnerable.</p>						

11. I am emotionally drained by teaching.						
12. There are days when I feel insecure at school.						
Resilience						
13. I can get through difficult times because I've experienced difficulty before.						
14. Failures double my motivation to succeed as a teacher.						
15. I have a hard time making it through stressful events.						
16. I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.						
17. It is hard for me to recover when something bad happens.						
Attitudes Toward Teaching						
18. I enjoy working as a teacher because it brings me pleasure.						
19. Teaching is my life and I can't imagine giving it up.						
20. Teaching brings me very little satisfaction.						
21. If I could choose an occupation today, I would not choose to be a teacher.						
22. I am tempted to leave the teaching profession.						
Openness to Change						
23. As a teacher, I prefer the familiar to the unknown.						
24. I do not get impatient when there are no clear answers or solutions to my problems as a teacher.						
25. I get frustrated when my work is unfamiliar and outside my comfort zone as a teacher.						
26. In my teaching, I find it hard to give up on something that has worked for me in the						

<p>past, even if it is no longer very successful.</p> <p>27. The “tried and true” ways of teaching are the best.</p> <p>28. As a teacher, I like it when things are uncertain or unpredictable.</p>						
<p><i>Classroom Affectivity</i></p> <p>29. At school or in the classroom I often feel upset.</p> <p>30. While teaching I regularly feel depressed.</p> <p>31. I regularly feel inspired at school or in the classroom.</p> <p>32. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me in the classroom than bad.</p> <p>33. It’s hard to imagine anyone getting excited about teaching.</p> <p>34. In my teaching I always look on the bright side of things.</p>						
<p><i>Coping</i></p> <p>35. When problems arise at work, I accept what has happened and learn to live with it.</p> <p>36. When I am under a lot of stress, I just avoid thinking or doing anything about the situation.</p> <p>37. When things get really stressful, I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.</p> <p>38. When I encounter a bad situation at school, I look for something good in what is happening.</p> <p>39. I don’t feel that I can cope with problems that come my way.</p>						

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Please answer the following question about your job as an Iranian EFL teacher and explain if your answers have been changed during your professional life (from start up to now)

1. What do you *think*? (e.g., your philosophy about teaching and your reasons for being a teacher)?
2. How do you *feel*? (e.g., the emotions you experience and show others as a teacher)?
3. What do you *believe* (e.g., how you see yourselves and others, and your attitude to the world around you)?
4. What do you *do* and why (e.g., what are the conflict and challenges in your professional life and how you act when you experience)?
5. What do you *want* (e.g., what are your motives or desires as an English teacher)?

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Identity and its Ramifications Among Advanced Adult Iranian Learners of English

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Abstract

This study intended to investigate the effect of identity types on learners' involvement, perceptions, and achievement scores using the validated L2 Quadripolar Questionnaire (Taylor, 2010), in the EFL context of Iran amongst the adult advanced learners of English in private institutions. Therefore, 170 participants, 69 females and 101 males were selected through convenience sampling. The data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance. The analysis of the relationship between the four main sub-constructs of the model and the two sub-constructs of involvement and perception showed significant mediation between the factors and achievement score of the language learners. Moreover, the finding of the study revealed that learners with strong public and imposed selves have a weak private self. Also, the other sub-constructs were determined to be affected by age and years of studying English. Females' identity was dominantly reported to have higher ties with the sub-constructs of the L2 Quadripolar Model.

Keywords: identity, language learning, involvement, L2 Quadripolar Model, EFL

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Monday, March, 29, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27193.1288>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

From a social constructivist viewpoint, identity is not a given or static features such as age, job, gender, skin color, native language, etc., but is perceived as a recurring procedure of emerging and becoming, a procedure that reveals what an individual is going to be and becomes through current actions and communications with other human beings. In the linguistic practices of the routine classroom activities, students' identities are endlessly assigned and made over the social collaboration with teachers, tutors, and peers.

As an example of such theories, the socio-cultural theory of identity is based on the insights of Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky inferred that human beings use physical and symbolic tools in their actions and he emphasized the powerful role of language amid these tools. So, they gain more control over the cultural tools that they gain in order to pursue their interpersonal (social interaction) and intrapersonal (thought) goals (Lantolf, 2000). Norton and Toohey (2011) observed that effect as a more general process that includes political, historical, social, and cultural factors that affect identity formation. Learners, as long as exposed to similar situations, shall continue experiencing new and different political, cultural, and social identities (Huizhu, 2012).

But the missing point, as Ellis (2008) proposed, was that the previous studies had focused mostly on learning language and developing identity in the majority context in which English is spoken as the native language. EFL and the identity developed by learners in this context have been kept on the bench (Ushioda, 2009) and only recently individual-centered approaches have been utilized (Gao, Jia & Zhou, 2015).

L2 Motivational Self System (Dornyei, 2009) argued that individuals were enthusiastic when it came to learning as a foreign language. The two former theories of self-discrepancy (Higgins, 1987) and possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) are the cornerstones of the design which consists of the following factors: L2 learning involvement, the ought-to L2 self, and the ideal L2 self. Dornyei (2009) underscored the essentiality of decreasing this incongruity between ideal and actual selves as L2 self, which was the sturdiest factor in the model. However, the model was unclear about how an educator aids a learner to decrease the difference between their real self and their ideal self.

Taylor (2010) offered a new theoretical framework which was built upon numerous pedagogical psychology models especially the following: self-presentation and impression management (Leary, 1995), the private / public self-dichotomy (Baumeister, 1986), relational contexts in adolescence (Harter, 2012), and self-discrepancy (Higgins, 1987).

Ergo, the framework that was utilized in this study is Taylor's (2010) Quadripolar Model. Theories such as self and identity, possible selves and self-discrepancy, and self-presentation and internalization were the psychological techniques that Taylor (2010) integrated to investigate the starring part that identity plays in the adolescent foreign language learning process. To offer a better

appreciation of EFL learning, she put forward a new theoretical framework. The Quadripolar Model of Identity assumes that there are four self-components (private, public, ideal, and imposed), intersections between whom can initiate four types of self-system namely, submissive, duplicitous, rebellious, and harmonious which are posited to show different coordination throughout different contexts such as family, friend, school, and others.

Taylor (2008) similarly discovered that self-determination had a positive association with learner's involvement in class, acquiring directions, and the educator's approach and prospects, therefore, playing a critical part in identifying the learners' participation or evasion in class. Language students with a more vigorous L2 imposed self may not possess the autonomy to grow in their selected method.

Language achievement of Iranian students is considered to be below average despite the immense efforts that are made by many organizations and institutions to ameliorate this condition (Atai & Mazlum, 2013). Many studies in different foreign language learning contexts have established and confirmed the relationship between second language learning and identity (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1991; Hymes, 1972; Weedon, 1987), although, there is a solemn scarcity of research investigating the influences of student identities in the EFL context (Norton Peirce, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). This scarcity is critically tangible in EFL context of Iran.

As the significance of this new framework was highlighted, this model has not been administered among adult learners of English as foreign language. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore the L2 Quadripolar Model of Identity and its sub-constructs, determine contributing factors to the identity and investigate the perception of identity among advanced adult Iranian EFL learners, and investigate the interplay between these sub-constructs and identity types. Therefore, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Do the identity types affect the adult EFL learners' involvement, perceptions, and achievement scores?
2. Is there any significant relationship between the four main sub-constructs of the L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire and adult EFL learners' age and years of studying English?
3. Is there any significant difference between male and female adult EFL learners with respect to the four main sub-constructs of the L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire, involvement, and perception?

Review of the Literature

Identity and Discourse

Mead (1934) adhered that the process of self-growth enjoys momentum from language and acts as a vessel to carry out the tool for enabling social emergence of mind and self. According to Saussure (as cited in Hall, 1997), we must think of language as a cradle of signs. Semiology which is the study of signs was established

by him and his followers in order to state that linguistic representations offer intellectual and ideological messages. Representation is employed both by Foucault (1972) and Hall (1996) but in rather different manners; the former conceptualized representation as a tool for making knowledge through discourse and the latter conceptualization is rather pertinent to identity construction through discourse.

Gee (2001) introduced four identity perspectives that enable us to embrace the complexity of the matter more widely. The first one is N-Identity in which N stands for nature. As can be construed from the name, it is not socially-oriented and nature has basic control over that. The second is I-identity that Gee defines as an institutional perspective that involves laws, rules, norms, and traditions. This kind is associated with an individual's position for example teacher identity is an I-identity. The next perspective is D-identity that stands for discursive identity and it emanates from the manner in which an individual is treated in the society; if one is treated like a charismatic person, they will become one and so on. This idea is not without a disclaimer that states that there is a need for hard evidence and justification for a person to be affected but a specific discourse. The last perspective is A-identity and refers to affinity perspective in which the source of power is affinity to a certain social group and sharing their practices to which an individual has mutual access.

Identity and Language

How post-structuralist theory of language has shaped the assumptions about the relationship between language and identity is influenced by works that have withstood the test of time over the years of scholarly practice. These include Bakhtin (1981) with literary studies, Bourdieu (1977), Hymes (1972) and Giddens (1991) with the ethnography of communication, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) with sociolinguistics, and Weedon (1987) with critical theory and so many others.

Norton (2012) argued that an individual's identity is subject to the variations of social context. For example, from one relational context to another, an individual's identity is shown to be different and, in this variation, the language of a specific community can be significant. Language can act as a unifying factor or a dissipating one. She also believed that whenever language learners interact in their second language, either spoken or written form, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation. There are other factors such as social relationships, race, gender, class, nationality, and others that can act as modifying factors but they do not ultimately define identity as much as language since individuals mostly tend to be proud of where they emerge.

Identity in SLA

At this time, it is essential to study how the concepts of personality and identity are preserved in SLA theory. As said by Ellis (1997), teachers consider the learners' personality as one of the main issues of either effective or ineffective second language learning. Griffiths (1991) presented survey data from England, Japan, and Oman and indicated that personality traits, such as extroversion and introversion, mainly affect the process of L2 learning. Precisely, consistent with this survey,

extroverts are more probable to prosper in oral language practices, but introverts get superior outcomes for instance in receptive skills, reading. Simultaneously, Ellis (1997) proposed that despite the consciousness of how personality associated variables were significant in SLA, the study in the ground wanted more conclusive data on such effect. Several reasons for that include:

1. Personality variables connect to very dissimilar dimensions of theorizing (various constructs are taken from well-established theories, while others are unclearly shaped, for example, risk-taking).
2. They connect so inversely to each other that evaluating any association is too difficult, for instance between self-esteem and inhibition.
3. Selected tools to study the goal variables are uncertain which makes questions about study validity and reliability, as frequently they are founded on quite subjective insights. Consequently, to know how correctly they measure what they are thought to measure becomes challenging.

The Quadripolar Model of Identity

Individuals assume their identity when they have accumulated enough self-belief. It can be public or private and is probably different from one relational situation to another setting and will be applied for referring to an assumed collective state where one works with other individuals in a particular social ability, reacting to specific social needs. Language is the principal tool to express the self (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008), and a different language is at times used to acquire an alternative identity (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

This fresh model that creates the theoretical framework assumed in the present study, considers identity as a compound idea described by two self-dimensions (possible / actual and internal / external) causing four constituents of the self-system: Private self that has two dimensions of actual and internal and is defined as an individual's close demonstration of their current characteristics, which can or cannot emerge generally. A Public self includes two dimensions of actual and external and refers to several social performances that an individual might show based on the audience and context. The next is the Ideal self which has two aspects of possible and internal and is basically, a particular demonstration of what a person is inclined to be prospectively, regardless of other requirements and anticipations of the society. The last is Imposed self that has two facets of possible and external, and means showing other individual's aspirations, interests, and prospects that a person must reach (Taylor, 2010).

Taylor (2010) also came to the understanding that the following configurations appear to form based on how the self-components assemble in different settings. The first of these configurations is Submissive who is in fact a person whose imposed self is vigorously acting against his ideal self, for instance, an individual who abides by what they are told while they have different goals. The second configuration is Duplicitous referring to an individual whose ideal self and imposed self are different however produce similar outcomes for example, a learner who pretends to be interested in English while they follow their interest in Art.

Rebellious is the third configuration which refers to one whose ideal self produces robust opposite responses against their imposed self, such as the case of a member of a certain group who follows a dream that is not acceptable by their peers. The last possible configuration is Harmonious; it refers to a person whose ideal and imposed self match like a student who loves journalism and is also motivated by their family to pursue this dream.

The existence of a strategic identity display was observed by Taylor (2010) as a result of having found that imposed selves significantly associated with the public selves but private selves and public selves did not correlate at all. Furthermore, learners who imagined that they cannot show their private selves to their teachers and were forced into strategic identity display were proved to have a feebler ideal, private, and public selves than the learners who felt respected as independent persons and were stimulated to improve beside their preferred prospective goals. This means that those learners who did not deem themselves to be respected as persons by the teacher felt less motivated and less competent in jobs associated with the English language, and even less motivated to live up to the anticipations of the classroom than learners who felt respected as independent persons. This gave way to the significant pedagogical implication that educators' appreciation of the learner's identity in the classroom in the process of language learning is so much reliant on an affirmed sense of accomplishment and competence.

Though preceding works about the identity of foreign language learners had added valuable perceptions into the subject, up to the present time, the published investigations had scarcely presented empirical evaluations of language-specific influences on the following subjects: the connection between perception of the teachers about identity and their acknowledgment of learners' identities, and the identity of the students about different relational contexts.

Local Studies on Identity

When we delve into the Iranian studies on language and identity, we realize that identity has not been investigated much. However, few studies have tried to tackle the issue of identity and particularly, they have mostly focused on national identity. The relationship between education and national identity was examined by and based its significance on discourse (Hosseini Fatemi, Pishghadam, Hashemi & Adel, 2013). While Talebi (2000) found some clues as to how the study stages relate to the sense of belonging to national identity Razmjoo (2010) failed to find any significant relationship between the aspects of identity and language achievement.

Generally, few studies have promoted frameworks to formulate foreign language identity such as Kramersch (2004) and more importantly, Dornyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System. According to Taylor (2010), these studies lack actual self-components which, in turn, damage the ideal self and this deprives the learners of an immense motivational drive (Taylor & Busse, 2016). Therefore, The Quadripolar Model of Identity was proposed but merely validated among adolescents. In this study, this model was used for EFL adult learners.

Methodology

Participants

The intended participants of this study were advanced (holders of IELTS certificate with band scores of 7.0 and above), adult (above 18 years of age) learners of English in private institutes in Mashhad, Iran. In this study, non-probability sampling was used. The samples were chosen in the spirit of the convenience sampling method (Dornyei, 2007). Numerous sets of questionnaires were administered and also sent to learners via email, from which those that returned were finally chosen as participants and due to some practical considerations, such as deletion of extreme scores or ineligibility of some others, a number of the questionnaires were eliminated from the analytical process. This was done to carry out the quantitative part of the study and get results as the cornerstone of the qualitative section. The final number of the participants for the study, stood at 170 from whom 69 were females and 101 were males. All of them were adults (above 18 years of age) and advanced English language learners.

Instruments

L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire

The L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire which was developed by Taylor (2010) consisted of 154 items organized into seven main 6-point Likert scales, one vignette section, bio-data, and background information (Taylor, 2010, p. 127). Four primary scales were indicating the four self-categories described before (private self, ideal self, public selves, imposed selves) and two secondary scales evaluating supporting information (involvement and perception). According to Taylor and Marsden (2014) the reliability index of the instrument for five continuous scales is as follows: “private self (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$), public selves ($\alpha = .90, .91$ and $.88$ in the three relational contexts, respectively), ideal self ($\alpha = .76$), imposed selves ($\alpha = .86, .90$ and $.79$ in the three relational contexts, respectively) and perceived appreciation in class ($\alpha = .82$)”. The questionnaire was translated into Farsi and back-translated into English in order to assure its validity.

Procedures

To examine the effect of identity types on adult learners’ involvement, perceptions, and achievement scores, the validated L2 Quadripolar Questionnaire (Taylor, 2010) was used. For that matter, 170 advanced adult EFL learners (69 were females and 101) of private institutes in Mashhad in Iran participated in this study and answered this questionnaire through email and social networks. Before conducting the main analyses, the researchers also performed a confirmatory factor analysis to examine the construct validity of the questionnaire. It is generally accepted in the social sciences that self-reported data can be regarded as continuous (interval) and used in parametric statistics.

The collected data were analyzed using the Amos 24 statistical package to explore the effect of identity types on students’ involvement perceptions and

achievement scores. Furthermore, the SPSS software was used to run the appropriate statistical tests including correlations, independent-sample t-tests, Pearson Chi-squared test (χ^2), Path Analysis, and MANOVA.

Results

The normality of the data distributions was checked by using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests and skewness and kurtosis values which is illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 1

K-S Tests of Normality for Adult Learners

	Normality		p-value	Skewness		Kurtosis		Mean	SD
	Value	df		Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error		
Private Self	.06	170	.07	.087	.186	-1.666	.370	89.24	9.53
Ideal Self	.07	170	.06	-.166	.186	-.837	.370	19.62	3.20
Public Selves	.06	170	.11	.197	.186	-1.218	.370	86.97	23.45
Imposed Selves	.05	170	.18	.019	.186	-1.193	.370	88.41	6.78
Involvement	.04	170	.06	-.131	.186	-1.375	.370	24.62	3.59
Perceptions of the English class	.05	170	.17	-.029	.186	-1.217	.370	45.24	8.41

As can be seen in Table 1, the obtained p-value for all variables is higher than .05. Therefore, it can safely be concluded that the data is normally distributed across all the variables. Values of kurtosis and skewness exceeding ± 2.0 indicate non-normal distribution.

Table 2

Results of Kurtosis and Skewness

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Private Self	.087	.186	-1.666	.370
Ideal Self	-.166	.186	-.837	.370
Public Selves	.197	.186	-1.218	.370
Imposed Selves	.019	.186	-1.193	.370
Involvement	-.131	.186	-1.375	.370
Perceptions of the English class	-.029	.186	-1.217	.370
Success Dimension	.064	.186	-1.414	.370
Failure Dimension	.087	.186	-1.666	.370

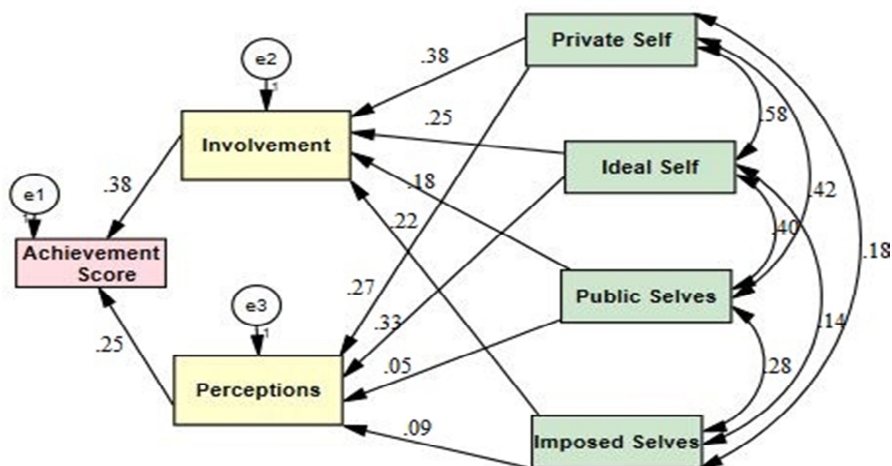
As can be seen in Table 2, skewness and kurtosis of the variables is between -2 and +2, so, it has a normal distribution. Therefore, parametric tests can be utilized. Table 2 also displays the descriptive statistics for the variables in the study.

Results of Research Question 1

As the first research question suggests, the researcher attempts to investigate the effect of identity types on students' involvement perceptions and achievement scores. To examine the relations, the proposed model was tested using the Amos 24 statistical package. Several fit indices were examined to evaluate the model fit. Figure 4.1 shows the model of the interrelationship among variables.

Figure 1

The Model of Interrelationship Among Variables



As the model illustrates, there are three endogenous variables (involvement, perception, and achievement score) and six exogenous variables (L2 private, public, ideal, and imposed selves). Because some measurement models did not show adequacy to the data for the proposed model, the researcher made some modifications to the model. These modifications included the removal of two paths (1) public selves to perceptions ($B = .05$, $p < .05$), and 2) imposed selves to perceptions ($B = .09$, $p < .05$) due to low loadings.

As indicated in Figure 1, involvement is predicted by all four sub-constructs of the L2 Quadripolar Identity: private self ($B = .38$, $p < .05$), ideal self ($B = .25$, $p < .05$), public selves ($B = .18$, $p < .05$), and imposed selves ($B = .22$, $p < .05$). Besides, Perceptions of the English class is predicted by private ($B = .27$, $p < .05$) and ideal ($B = .33$, $p < .05$) selves. Finally, both involvement ($B = .38$, $p < .05$) and perceptions ($B = .25$, $p < .05$) are positive significant predictors of students' achievement.

Table 3

Path Coefficients and P Values

	B	P. Value
Private Self to Involvement	.38	.00
Ideal Self to Involvement	.25	.00
Public Selves to Involvement	.18	.01
Imposed Selves to Involvement	.22	.00
Private Self to Perceptions	.27	.00
Ideal Self to Perceptions	.33	.00
Public Selves to Perceptions	.05	.12
Imposed Selves to Perceptions	.09	.08
Involvement to Achievement	.38	.00
Perceptions to Achievement	.25	.00

Goodness of fit indices before and after modification can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Goodness of Fit Indices

	X2 / df	GFI	CFI	TLI	IFI	RMSEA
Acceptable Fit	< 3	> .90	> .90	> .90	> .90	< .08
Model	3.01	.89	.89	.90	.88	.08
Revised Model	2.88	.91	.91	.93	.90	.08

As Table 4 shows, all the goodness of fit indices are within the acceptable range. Therefore, the model enjoyed perfect validity after modification.

Results of Research Question 2

The second research question tries to investigate the relationship between four main sub-constructs of L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire, involvement, perception, and students’ age and years of studying English. To answer the second research question, the Pearson correlation was used. Table 5 shows the results of Pearson correlation between six sub-constructs of L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire and age.

Table 5

Results of Pearson Correlation Between Six Sub-Constructs of L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire and Age

	Private Self	Ideal Self	Public Selves	Imposed Selves	Involvement	Perceptions
Age	.21**	.33**	.08	.05	.19**	.20**
Years of Studying English	.29**	.25**	.02	-.04	.26**	.22**

**Correlation is significant at the level of 0.01

As can be seen in Table 5, there are positive significant relationships between four sub-constructs of the questionnaire and age. Among these sub-constructs, the ideal

self had the highest positive relationship ($r = .33, p < .05$) with age. However, there is no significant relationship between public selves ($r = .08, p > .05$) and imposed selves relationship ($r = .05, p > .05$) and age.

Also, there are positive significant relationships between the four sub-constructs of the questionnaire and years of studying English. Among these sub-constructs, the private had the highest positive relationship ($r = .29, p < .05$) with years of studying English. However, there is no significant relationship between public selves ($r = .02, p > .05$) and imposed selves relationship ($r = -.04, p > .05$) and years of studying English.

Results of Research Question 3

In the third research question, the researchers try to ascertain whether there is any significant difference between male and female students concerning the four sub-constructs of the L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire, involvement, and perception. To answer this research question, a MANOVA test was performed. Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics of male and female students in different variables.

Table 6

The Descriptive Statistics of Male and Female Students in Six Sub-Constructs of L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Private Self	Female	69	95.07	3.37
	Male	101	85.25	3.44
Ideal Self	Female	69	22.53	2.33
	Male	101	17.68	1.00
Public Selves	Female	69	92.07	1.96
	Male	101	83.48	2.06
Imposed Selves	Female	69	91.00	3.74
	Male	101	86.64	3.40
Involvement	Female	69	26.27	2.75
	Male	101	23.49	2.48
Perceptions	Female	69	49.92	2.29
	Male	101	42.04	1.32
Public Teacher	Female	69	25.05	3.50
	Male	101	22.62	3.05
Public Classmate	Female	69	20.73	3.83
	Male	101	19.00	2.21
Public Friend	Female	69	20.53	3.76
	Male	101	18.98	3.30
Public family	Female	69	25.73	3.80
	Male	101	22.87	2.09
Imposed Teacher	Female	69	27.18	6.31
	Male	101	25.36	6.47
Imposed Classmate	Female	69	18.28	5.53
	Male	101	17.51	5.75
Imposed Friend	Female	69	18.86	6.16
	Male	101	18.81	7.11
Imposed Family	Female	69	26.65	5.96
	Male	101	24.95	5.94

As Table 6 shows, the mean score of female students was higher than male students in all sub-constructs of the questionnaire. To find that these differences are significant, MANOVA was run. Table 7 shows the results of the Multivariate Tests table where the actual result of the one-way MANOVA is reported. We need to look at the second Effect, labeled “gender”, and the Wilks’ Lambda row. To determine whether the one-way MANOVA was statistically significant we should look at the “Sig.” column.

Table 7

Results of the Multivariate Tests

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis			Partial Eta Squared
			df	Error df	Sig.	
Gender Wilks' Lambda	.697	11.832 ^b	6.000	163.000	.000	.303
Wilks' Lambda	.833	8.281 ^b	4.000	165.000	.000	.167
Wilks' Lambda	.856	6.926 ^b	4.000	165.000	.000	.144

b. Exact statistic

As can be seen from Table 7, there is gender difference among these variables ($p < .001$).

Table 8

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	Private Self	18713.233	1	18713.233	22.643	.000	.119
	Ideal Self	1926.937	1	1926.937	70.720	.000	.296
	Public Teacher	784.745	1	784.745	15.003	.000	.082
	Imposed Teacher	680.942	1	680.942	17.990	.000	.097
	Involvement	1525.697	1	1525.697	28.203	.000	.144
	Perceptions	7439.189	1	7439.189	40.821	.000	.195
	Public Teacher	784.745	1	784.745	15.003	.000	.082
	Public Classmate	469.259	1	469.259	16.803	.000	.091
	Public Friend	371.306	1	371.306	12.993	.000	.072
	Public Family	1181.147	1	1181.147	22.380	.000	.118
	Imposed Teacher	680.942	1	680.942	17.990	.000	.097
	Imposed Classmate	187.785	1	187.785	6.023	.015	.035
	Imposed Friend	315.757	1	315.757	7.231	.008	.041
	Imposed Family	442.595	1	442.595	13.211	.000	.073

As indicated in Table 8, there are significant differences in all sub-constructs between male and female students ($p < .001$). Figure 2 shows the differences in the six sub-constructs between male and female students.

Figure 2

The Differences in the Six Sub-Constructs Between Male and Female Learners

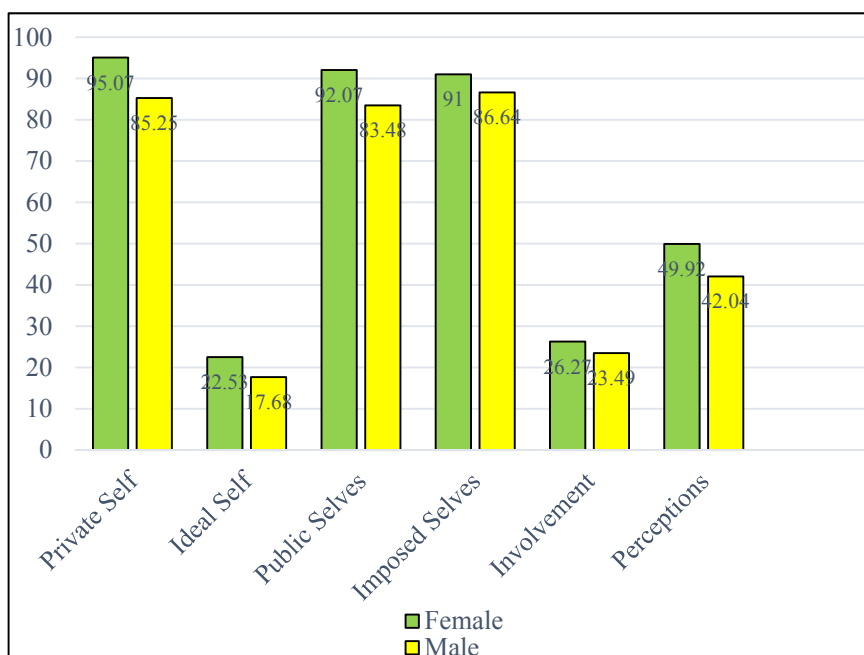


Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of male and female students in four sub-constructs of public selves.

Table 9

The Descriptive Statistics of Male and Female Students in Four Sub-Constructs of Public Selves

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Public Teacher	Female	69	25.05	3.50
	Male	101	22.62	3.05
Public Classmate	Female	69	20.73	3.83
	Male	101	19.00	2.21
Public Friend	Female	69	20.53	3.76
	Male	101	18.98	3.30
Public Family	Female	69	25.73	3.80
	Male	101	22.87	2.09

As Table 9 shows, the mean score of female students was higher than male students in all sub-constructs of public selves. To find that these differences are significant, MANOVA was run. Table 10 shows the results of Multivariate Tests.

Table 10

Results of Multivariate Tests

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender Wilks' Lambda	.833	8.281 ^b	4.000	165.000	.000	.167

a. Design: Intercept + Gender

b. Exact statistics

As illustrated in Table 10, there is a gender difference among these variables ($p < .001$): To determine how the dependent variables differ for the independent variable, the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects table was reported.

Table 11

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	Public	784.745	1	784.745	15.003	.000	.082
	Teacher						
	Public	469.259	1	469.259	16.803	.000	.091
	Classmate						
	Public	371.306	1	371.306	12.993	.000	.072
	Friend						
	Public	1181.147	1	1181.147	22.380	.000	.118
	Family						

a. R Squared = .082 (Adjusted R Squared = .077)

b. R Squared = .091 (Adjusted R Squared = .086)

c. R Squared = .072 (Adjusted R Squared = .066)

d. R Squared = .0118 (Adjusted R Squared = .112)

As indicated in Table 11, there are significant differences in all sub-constructs between male and female students ($p < .001$).

Figure 3 shows the differences in the four sub-constructs between male and female students.

Figure 3

The Differences in the Four Sub-Constructs of Public Selves Between Male & Female Learners

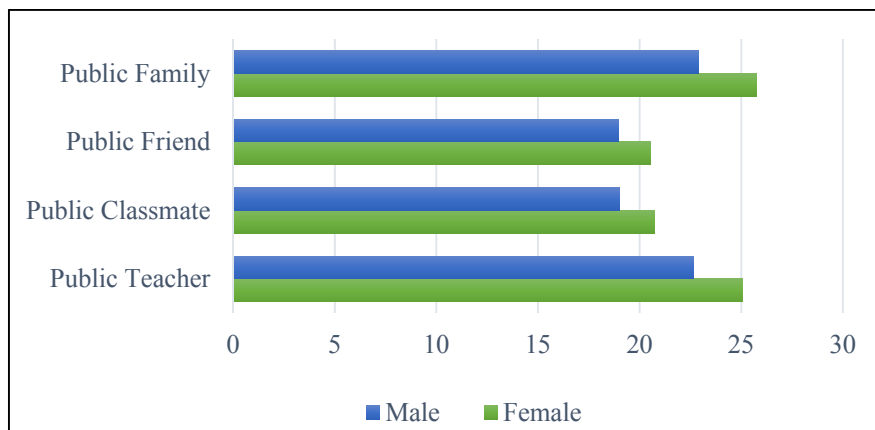


Table 12 shows the descriptive statistics of male and female students in four sub-constructs of imposed selves.

Table 12

The Descriptive Statistics of Male and Female Learners in Four Sub-Constructs of Imposed Selves

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Imposed Teacher	Female	69	27.18	6.31	.76
	Male	101	25.36	6.47	.64
Imposed Classmate	Female	69	18.28	5.53	.66
	Male	101	17.51	5.75	.57
Imposed Friend	Female	69	18.86	6.16	.74
	Male	101	18.81	7.11	.70
Imposed Family	Female	69	26.65	5.96	.71
	Male	101	24.95	5.94	.59

As Table 12 shows, the mean score of female students was higher than male students in all sub-constructs of the questionnaire. To find that these differences are significant MANOVA was run. Table 13 shows the results of Multivariate Tests.

Table 13

Results of Multivariate Tests

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Gender	Wilks' Lambda	.856	6.926 ^b	4.000	165.000	.000	.144

a. Design: Intercept + Gender

b. Exact statistic

As can be seen from Table 13, there is a gender difference among these variables ($p < .001$). To determine how the dependent variables differ for the independent variable the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects table was reported.

Table 14

Tests of Between-Subject Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	Imposed Teacher	680.942	1	680.942	17.990	.000	.097
	Imposed Classmate	187.785	1	187.785	6.023	.015	.035
	Imposed Friend	315.757	1	315.757	7.231	.008	.041
	Imposed Family	442.595	1	442.595	13.211	.000	.073

a. R squared = .097 (Adjusted R Squared = .091)

b. R squared = .035 (Adjusted R Squared = .029)

c. R squared = .041 (Adjusted R Squared = .036)

d. R squared = .073 (Adjusted R Squared = .067)

As indicated in Table 14, there are significant differences in all sub-constructs between male and female students ($p < .001$).

Figure 4 Shows the differences in the four sub-constructs between male and female students.

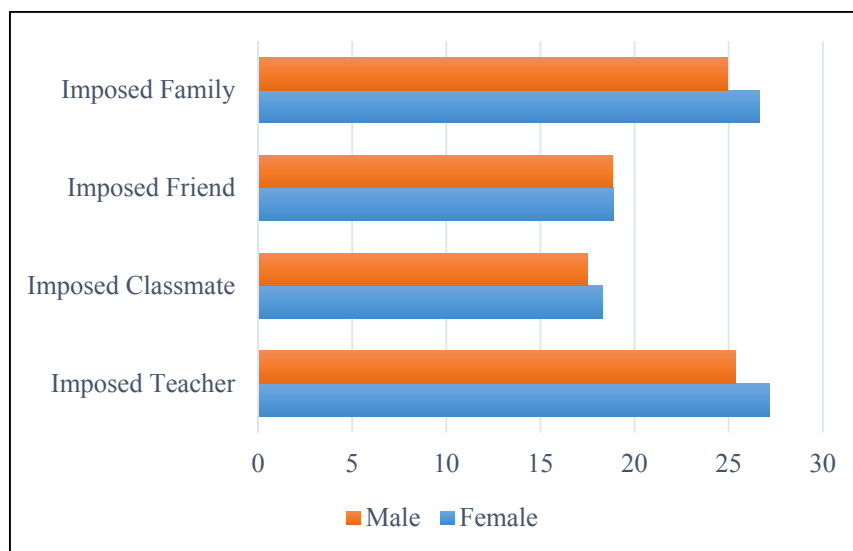


Figure 4

The Differences in the Four Sub-Constructs of Imposed Selves

Discussion

The analysis of the relationship between the four main sub-constructs of the model and the two sub-constructs of involvement and perception show significant mediation between the factors and achievement score of the language learners. Apart from public and imposed selves, the other sub-constructs were determined to be affected by age and years of studying English. Females' identity is dominantly reported to have higher ties with the subconstructs of the L2 Qudripolar Model. These relationships were detailed in the result section of this study but there still are some implications that have been derived in the course of this study.

Students have a feeling that they cannot really show their true characters in the class and this affected their achievement (Kessler, 2000). Those who felt that they were not valued as individuals did not feel obliged to show what they would have called their true self. The mutual appreciation between learners and teachers was the key determining factor in creating the need for making an effort in valuing individuals. This was close-knit with their achievement.

Corroborating the hypothesis suggested in Taylor and Busse (2016), teachers have an important role in predicting learners' self-system and how they project it in class. Those with strong public and imposed selves tend to have a weak private self. Public selves are in direct relationship with their respective imposed selves. And the four relational contexts influence identity as a whole. Public selves get internalised if they are personally relevant and sub-consciously turn into private selves. The identity they displayed seem to be professional inside the confines of the class and true outside the class.

A good student is the one that delivers assignments, appears motivated, seems in accordance with the teacher and the class, and tries not to be controlling with his or her personal interests. Learners with a high level of being harmonious with their teachers and family, tend to have an interest in pursuing a career in English and those who lack this harmony only with their parents tend to have a high perceived competence which puts them in a rebellious position to their family as they probably want them to pursue more lucrative careers. One thing is certain and that is the fact that harmonious learners tend to feel less pressurised and more hardworking.

Good marks are necessary for passing but they are not indicative of actual competence let alone performance which in turn is generally achieved outside the class through self-regulation. Marks do not lead to motivation and genuine engagement. Students who were marked down tend to show their true selves more explicitly in the class. There was also a meaningful relationship between how autonomous learners are and the teachers' practice as the teachers' endeavors can directly lead to learners' autonomy and interest in the matter through efficient communication.

Gender differences (Aguillon et al., 2020) were the place for finding gripping information about identity. Male learners tended to show more powerful private selves than female ones. There could have been some reasons involved such as the fact that males use language for more real-life purposes than females. Due to the general tendency of third world societies, males communicated more confidently than females. And the responses that males and females received from the teachers were differently predisposed.

Teachers mostly tended to instill traditional gender stereotypes about language (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013) and the content of the class material. This created a situation in which females tended to perceive more pressure to act more efficiently than males although their perceived competence was shown to be lower than males. Finally, those who were privately tutored, were marked up in class.

Apart from these insights, there was also some unforeseen information that sounded too significant to be overlooked. The majority of the learners showed to be more duplicitous rather than rebellious as was expected before. Submissive learners tended to have the utmost respect for the sources of their imposed selves rather than just thriving on authority in developing their educational prowess. On the other hand, harmonious learners had no idea about the concept of social expectation showing a complete internalization of the imposed selves. Also, peer pressure seemed to have acted vice versa, meaning that, it encouraged disengagement rather than competition.

Conclusion

These results can further be combined with qualitative measures to illuminate the path for further identity research. The L2 Quadripolar Identity Questionnaire rendered some promising insights into the identity of the learners from a more up-

close perspective rather than its predecessors and there is still much more room to explore in this matter. The models that were offered by Taylor were scrutinized through multiple procedures of Path analysis and the revised models were presented (Figure 1). In these revised models some of the relationships underwent some drastic changes.

The implications for educators and stakeholders can be amusingly effective. In case the educators understand the identity type of the learners and how to exploit it to render the best out of the learners and actualise all their potential, the education takes a stronger position in dealing with adults and to further the result, in raising our children and allowing them to blossom to the fullest of their aptitude. Teachers must be aware that harmonious learners are not necessarily successful ones and if they are not given enough attention, they shall convert into meek members of the society with no voice. The rebellious ones do not always have to be turned into harmonious ones either, since they exude creativity and this must not be neglected on the part of the teachers. Finally, teachers must strike a happy medium between different identity types.

Suggestions for Further Research

First, the present researcher recommends that further research be conducted with younger, but with a sample varying by ethnicity, first language and / or socioeconomic status - a maximum variation sample as opposed to the homogeneous sample of this study. Second, it would also be beneficial to conduct a second, identical study with another group of adult EFL learners in the same area to substantiate the findings of this study.

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Iranian EFL In-Service Teachers' Conceptions About Critical Thinking and Its Role in Foreign Language Teaching

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Abstract

Adopting a qualitative design, the present study investigated Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward critical thinking as well as its role in language teaching. To meet these objectives, 36 EFL teachers were selected through purposeful sampling as the participants of the study. For the purpose of the data collection, in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, and teachers' narratives were utilized. To assure the trustworthiness of the data, several measures have been taken. The lead author conducted the in-depth as well as focus group interviews and elicited teachers' narratives. The interviews were conducted in Persian language and the whole procedures were audiotaped. The data were transcribed verbatim and after member checking the data with the participants, they were translated into English. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To assure inter coder reliability, coding the data was done by the second and third authors independently. The third and fourth authors were involved in finding the potential themes and sub-themes. Finally, five themes of *efficiency*, *intelligence*, *change*, *success* and *initiation* were generated as a result of the data analysis. The present study revealed that the participants emphasized some fundamental building blocks of critical thinking. The participant teachers also advocated critical thinking - focused programs in teacher education as well as its application in language teaching. The study has a number of implications for language pedagogy, teacher education and policy makers.

Key Words: critical thinking, in-service teachers, teacher education, language teaching

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Sunday, April, 25, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 25, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 25, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27228.1303>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

Undoubtedly, professional development is crucial for any teacher coming to the teaching profession. It also aims at training highly qualified and effective teachers. One way to lead teachers to professional development is through enhancing or making changes through their attitudes and beliefs. Teachers' beliefs are usually defined as teachers' personal notions that can provide understandings, judgments, and evaluations of their practices (Ertmer, 2005). A number of scholars believe that teachers' *beliefs* have often been a deterrent in teachers' behaviors, such as planning lessons, decision making, and classroom practice (Borg, 2003). Empirical evidence suggests that teachers' belief is a strong element of teachers' behaviors (Vermunt & Endedijk, 2011). The present study focused on investigating teachers' beliefs about critical thinking and its role in language learning and teaching. The problem that arises here is the sharp contrast of traditional materials employed in language teaching with those of today's modern educational agenda. For instance, Alagozlu (2007) argued that since the traditional instructional procedures persuade the students to passively receive ready-made information without questioning the materials. Additionally, students are not fortified to think critically, which can be transferred into ELT classes. In contrast, a number of scholars asserted that learners should be capable of using creative and critical thinking while using the language (Kabilan, Adlina & Embi, 2011).

One of the most essential skills for everyday life is critical thinking. In today's educational circles, no one has reservations about its significance. Critical thinking (CT) is urged to be a necessary skill and a key to one's success in the twenty-first century (Luk & Lin 2015). The notion has been defined in a variety of ways. Because of its comprehensiveness, we adopt Halpern (1999) in this study. Critical thinking refers to employing the cognitive skills or strategies that enhance the probability of a desirable outcome. Critical thinking is assumed to be purposeful, reasoned, and goal-directed. It is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, drawing inferences, calculating probabilities, and decision making (Halpern, 1999). Halpern (1999) rightly enumerates the qualities of the critical thinkers in the succinct manner; critical thinkers utilize these skills appropriately, without any type of prompting, and usually with mindful intent, in a variety of settings. That is, they are predisposed to think critically. When we think critically, we are evaluating the outcomes of our thought processes—how good a decision is or how well a problem is solved (Halpern, 1999). In the similar vein, Fairclough (1999) believes that critical thinking pedagogies are reinforced by the theory of critical language awareness. This theory explains the role of the learners' cognitive as well as metacognitive domains in developing his / her awareness of the new language and the world around him/ her. CT is constituted by six main cognitive strands (i.e., skills) – ‘interpretation’, ‘analysis’, ‘evaluation’, ‘inference’, ‘explanation’ and ‘self-regulation’ (Facione, 1990, pp. 16–22) – and also by seven main attitudinal strands (i.e., dispositions) – ‘truth-seeking’, ‘open-mindedness’, ‘analyticity’, ‘systematicity’, ‘self-confidence’, ‘inquisitiveness’ and ‘cognitive maturity’ (Facione, Sánchez, Facione, & Gainen, 1995, pp. 4–6).

Literature Review

One of the most essential skills for everyday life is critical thinking. In today's educational circles, no one has reservations about its significance. Recently, an ongoing tension exists regarding the nature of CT, namely whether it should be mainly understood as a generic or as a domain-specific skill (Davies, 2013). There are two competing perspectives regarding the nature of the critical thinking. The traditional generalist view that conceives of critical thinking as a broad ability to interpret information and approach problems correctly that can be applied across a wide range of domains (Pascarella, 1989). Recently, critical thinking has been conceptualized as a combination of three dimensions (Davies & Barnett, 2015; Santos Meneses, 2020): first a cognitive dimension centered on rigorous, logical reasoning skills, second a metacognitive dimension focusing on self-reflection, self-critique, and higher order thinking skills, and third an ethical dimension concerning morality, ethics and human values. Yet, another definition comes from other scholars in the following way: as one's competence in conducting systematic analysis, making inferences using inductive or deductive reasoning, developing appropriate judgment or evaluation, and making effective decisions as an individual interacts with the social and physical environment (Lai, 2011; Scriven & Paul, 1987). Finally, Abrami et al. (2008) defined critical thinking as "the ability to engage in purposeful, self-regulatory judgment" (p. 1102).

Critical thinking is an important aim of education (Davies & Barnett, 2015). The notion has gained momentum as a crucial component of general education (Arum & Roksa, 2011). Educators, policymakers, and employers have demonstrated a sustained interest in teaching critical thinking, as both an important life skill and an asset to the future workforce (Koenig et al., 2011). Teachers need to engage students in complex learning tasks that require them to use critical thinking skills (Helsdingen, van Gog, & van Merriënboer, 2011). Moreover, teachers need to develop students' critical analytical, reasoning, and decision-making capacity by involving them in observing, predicting, explaining, and making decisions about social and natural phenomena and assessing their influences critically (Lee & Thathong, 2017).

Investigating critical thinking has been the target of much research interest in education (Alnofaie, 2013; Shirkhani & Fahim, 2011; Thomas & Lock, 2015; Zhang, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). Likewise, the role of critical thinking in language learning has been widely investigated in the literature (Shirkhani & Fahim, 2011; Thomas & Lok, 2015). In an empirical study, Shirkhani and Fahim (2011) showed that language learners with CT skills are able to understand foreign language better with enhanced cognizance of their learning progress and higher degree of language learning autonomy. In another study, Thomas and Lok (2015) put forward a perspective of CT which involves three dimensions - knowledge, skills and disposition. According to the study, CT is impossible without knowledge, including general information and basic facts, specific content-based knowledge, and knowledge from life and work experience. This sort of knowledge can be viewed as a precondition for CT and its enhancement. CT also encompasses various cognitive

skills, such as reasoning, evaluation and reflection on the part of the learners. CT needs to be internalized as a disposition, i.e., a willingness to do something given certain conditions (Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996).

In an empirical study, Zhang (2019) examined 117 English language teachers' attitudes toward fostering students' critical thinking in their English subject-matter courses. The results indicated that the teachers were of the belief that CT should be incorporated as an indispensable part of subject-matter courses. In another study, Choy and Cheah (2009) studied the cognitions of 30 university lecturers from different disciplines about CT and its effect on higher education. The results indicated that though teachers believed that they were integrating CT with their subject teaching, in practice they were merely focusing on the comprehension of the subject matter. One of the possible limitations of these types of studies is that little research has examined university language teachers' attitudes and instructional practices about CT teaching. Recently, Zhang, Yuan and He (2020) investigated Chinese university EFL teachers' perspectives about critical thinking (CT) and its teaching via a questionnaire and follow-up interviews. The results suggested that Chinese EFL teachers strongly agreed that CT should be an indispensable part of the EFL curriculum and classroom teaching. The study also revealed that the participants lacked professional knowledge of CT and how to implement it in their classes.

The promotion of critical thinking into the FLT classrooms is of high significance for several reasons. Firstly, if language learners can take charge of their own thinking, they can monitor and evaluate their own ways of learning more successfully. Second, critical thinking expands the learning experience of the learners and makes the language more meaningful for them. Thirdly, critical thinking has a high degree of correlation with the learners' achievements (Rafi, 2009).

Although research suggests a close relationship between language and thinking, the integration of critical thinking into second language acquisition is under-investigated (Liang & Fung, 2021). Considering the significance of the role of CT in language learning and taking the fact that few studies in Iranian EFL context conducted to investigate language teachers' perspectives about CT and its role in language learning adopting discipline-specific perspective of CT.. the present qualitative study aimed to address the following two research questions:

1. What are the Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs about critical thinking?
2. What are the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions about the role of critical thinking in language teaching and learning?

Methodology

Design

The design of the present study was explorative qualitative study (Cresswell, 2013). We used multiple data collection methods, including interviews, focus group

interviews, and participants' narratives on the issue under investigation. Each of these "makes the world visible in a different way" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4), so a fuller, richer picture of the participants' perspective can be explored and represented. Adopting this design, we wanted to carefully use the participants' own words to augment the researcher's vivid description and clear interpretation (Heigham & Croker, 2009). In so doing, we believe that it will give readers a sense of entering the participants' worlds and sharing the experience of being there with them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

We adopted qualitative design because one of the advantages of this design is that the researcher is the primary instrument that means that they can be responsive and adaptive to the participants and research setting and can quickly begin to explore unanticipated avenues of research (Heigham & Croker, 2009).

Data Collection

To triangulate the data, focus group interviews, in-depth interviews were conducted and teachers' stories were sought. Stake (2010) noted that using multiple sources of data helps qualitative researchers to answer research questions more completely and deepens the meaning of the findings. As far as in-depth interviews are concerned, the participants took part in one-on-one condition with the first author. As Dornyei (2007) maintains, interviews are among the most suitable tools of data collection. The first author conducted the interviews and each interview lasted approximately 35 min. The participants were asked to answer five open-ended questions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed word by word into Persian and then they were translated into English again. To gain the inter-coder reliability, the translations were checked by the third author and a number of slight issues and problems were settled via negotiation with the first author.

To enhance the validity, the transcribed data were member checked with the participants via e-mail. The questions of interview should be followed up with new questions to help interviewees to illuminate themselves and give them autonomy to add what they thought is related to questions (Wood & Rosser, 2010). Accordingly, the first author posed follow-up questions where needs required. Another source of the data came from focus group interviews. To conduct focus group interviews, the participants were divided into six groups of six participants by the first author. The first author posed some ambiguous points about the interview questions and encouraged the participants to negotiate the questions in the groups they had been assigned. The logic behind using focus group interview was that it can facilitate discussion among the participants (Packer, 2011). The third source of the data was the participants' stories on teaching critical thinking and issues associated with the notion. The authors elicited participating teachers' narrative at the end of the in-depth interviews. Some of the participants narrated their own stories. however, few of them did not tell their stories concerning the issue under investigation.

Setting and Participants

The present study was conducted in Bonab, Iran. For the purpose of the data collection, 36 Iranian EFL English teachers participated in the present study. They were selected through purposeful sampling method from different public schools across the city. All of the participants held B.A in TEFL and their age ranged between 32 and 49. The sample size was based on the suggestion made by Morse (2015) that the sample size in a qualitative investigation should be roughly 30 to 50 participants, based on the subject and span of the examination. As far as focus groups were concerned, they were divided into six groups of six participants. All the participants

volunteered for the present study and they were free to withdraw from the reach at any phase of the study they wanted. However, none of them did so. All the participants were native speaker of the Azarbaijani Turkish language and 20 of them were male and the remaining were female teachers.

Ethical Considerations

Principled reflections were approved in the completion of the research. Teacher participants were informed about the objectives of the present study, and they were guaranteed that the results would be kept confidential. Additionally, to guard their anonymity, research rules were given to each participant to symbolize their individuality, and no personal information was in print. Also, permissions were required to perform audio-recorded interviews.

Data Analysis

The first thing we have done with the data was coding. Coding is a process of early sense making of all the data. Coding is a process of annotating and disentangling a mass of data (Flick, 2009). Morse et al., (2002) pointed out that without some kind of ongoing methodological rigor and verification of the work - both the process and the findings - all research (including qualitative) may be undependable or useless. We also followed Cohen and Crabtree (2008) in that all research should attend to the following criteria in general: ethical conduct, choosing important research that advances knowledge, good writing, appropriate and rigorous methods, managing researcher bias, establishment of reliability (verification), and validity (credibility). We also utilized specific techniques such as making constant comparisons, being especially alert to negative instances, developing rival explanations, and continually posing questions about our data and to ourselves as we proceed analytically (Yin, 2011).

Additionally, we followed the guidelines suggested by Yin (2011). First, in compiling stage, we sorted the transcriptions of teachers' stories, in-depth interviews as well as focus group interviews. Following Yin (2011), in the second phase, we broke down the amassed data into pieces, which may be considered a *disassembling* procedure. In this procedure, we assigned new labels, or "codes," to the different pieces of the collected data. In the *reassembling* phase, to facilitate the

rearrangements, we depicted the data by arraying them in lists and other tabular forms. To ensure the accuracy of the data analysis, we also employed thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initially, the first two authors read the entire data in order to get an overall picture and then re-read the data several times, searching for possible patterns. During this phase, all the data were transcribed and we proceeded with the creation of free codes. As we assured our familiarization with the data, we came up with the initial codes. Afterwards, we engaged in the organization of initial codes into potential themes. As the key themes emerged, the codes underpinning each of them were revised and further reorganized into sub-themes. Finally, we reviewed the emerged themes comparing themes and sub-themes.

To achieve data analysis triangulation, we also employed thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006). We went through the following stages one by one: first, familiarizing with data was done by the first author via transcribing the data and reading it three times. Second, generating initial codes was done by both first and third authors independently. Third, searching for themes was done by the first author. Afterwards, reviewing themes was performed by the two authors jointly. Finally, first and third authors named and defined the themes and prepared the final report of the study. It should be mentioned that the two data analyses yielded the similar results.

Results

Out of the analyzed data five themes were generated: *efficiency, intelligence, change, success, and initiation*. Each theme was supported by a number of different codes, and categories.

Table 1.

The Emerged Themes and Codes

Efficiency	Reaching goals sooner/easily, the most efficient trend, less cost, solving problems easily
Intelligence	Cognition, tact, thoughtfulness, critical evaluation, perception, thinking, supreme thought, active thinking,
Change	Decision-making differently, opposing traditions, avoiding imitation, challenging conventions, variations
Success	Achieving desired goals, escaping dangers, avoiding bankruptcy, enhancing abilities, progress, prosperous, having necessary skills for life,
Initiation	Production, new ideas, creation, invention, finding new solutions, novelty, creating new ways

Efficiency

The theme *efficiency* was supported by the following codes: *less cost, reaching goals easily, solving problems easily* and *reaching goals sooner*. Abbas, 45, responded to our question in the following way:

Critical thinking is about weighing ideas against each other. It is a prompt and informed decision – making in a specific situation. The decision that imposes the least cost and lead to the most efficient way. The decision that has no repercussions whatsoever. Without critical thinking, no one can attain success. As far as language teaching is concerned, it relates to using the most effective approaches for language teaching and for classroom management.

For Abbas, critical thinking is mainly tantamount to decision making in a logical manner that leads to utmost effectiveness to shareholders concerned and the less waste of time and energy. He largely views CT in teaching in terms of employing the most effective techniques in language instruction and every effort the teachers make in the classroom to put their students in peace.

Bahman, 43, answered our questions as follows:

As human being, we need critical thinking to attain our desired goals sooner and easily. It is a way of thinking sharply. Common people do not possess it to a large extent. Having critical thinking means not being an ordinary guy. Having CT means you are a singular person. In language teaching the notion will help teachers to assess which method is better than the other. CT will help teachers to spend less time and energy and achieve their educational objectives in a logical time.

For Bahman, CT is to do with saving time and resources. It is thinking sharply and it helps human beings to achieve their desired objectives sooner and with ease. Bahman has a product-oriented view of CT. He does not think of the processes and procedures governing mental tasks of critical thinkers. In addition, he relates thinking critically to thinking logically.

Intelligence

In the similar fashion, the theme *intelligence* was supported by the codes of; *smart in finding ways; sharp in deciding, thoughtful, perception, and supreme thought*.

Taher, 38, had his voice in the following manner;

Critical thinking is best associated with intelligence. It drives us to be sharp and to do sharply in specific circumstances. Through critical thinking, one will become quick in uptake. He/she will have profound perceptions. As far as language teaching is concerned, the notion will let you to make informed decisions in language teaching. You will do sharply in finding appropriate techniques to teach language

and you will employ appropriate and rational ways to deal with critical incidents in the classroom.

Taher establishes association between CT and intelligence in a logical manner. To him, CT drives people to act logically under unpredictable situations and handle them fruitfully. Taher relates possessing CT to effective language teaching and classroom management.

Parvin, 35, had her response in the following fashion;

One of the key and vital skills in normal life and in language teaching in particular is making decisions. You make decisions day in day out and these decisions will determine your course of life. CT will provide you with tools to decide in a rational way. It is a safeguard for people to avoid unwanted and negative repercussions of hasty decisions. In language teaching, you will capitalize on your critical thinking to choose most effective methods out of less effective ones. To act based on thoughtful perceptions.

Parvin considers CT as a vital and indispensable skill of life and education. In a sense, she tacitly believes what works for life, it will work for education too. She recognizes the significance of the decisions made by human beings in their own lives. She believes that CT will aid teachers in opting for the most effective ways of teaching language skills.

Sara, 34, pointed out that:

To me CT is like a superb thought. It is a different way of thinking both in terms of process and product. In terms of process, it is a profound and prolonged pondering on phenomena. With regards to product, CT, will attain you otherwise you cannot get there. CT is like an illumination of the brain and our mental ability. In language teaching, teachers can benefit from it in a variety of ways; in teaching the grammar, the lexical items, etc. You can educate your students to grow in critical thinking.

Parvin considers CT as a vital and indispensable skill of life and education. In a sense, she tacitly believes what works for life, it will work for education too. She recognizes the significance of the decisions made by human beings in their own lives. She believes that CT will aid teachers in opting for the most effective ways of teaching language skills.

Change

The codes collaborating the themes were: *opposing conventions, avoiding imitations, challenging traditions, and finding novel solutions in language teaching.*

Ahmad, 37, pointed out that;

Critical thinking will let people use their own thought and mental resources. It means finding logical solutions out of alternative solutions. It means finding novel strategies to approach problems. It is about challenging conventions and traditions. With respect to language teaching, I think CT is of help solely in defining instructional objectives in a sensible manner. In other words, it relates to the theoretical facet of foreign language teaching. To sum up, when you plan your lessons.

Ahmad would like to put conventions and traditions into acid test against logical thinking. Thought thinking critically, one can make changes in his/her environment. Critical thinking is what Ahmad believes that will lead to making difference in the world.

Zeinab, 36, answered;

CT means evading habits and conventions imposed by the society on people. It means making difference in the world. To me, it is challenging the state quota and planning for new and novel ways. In language teaching, it means not sticking to prevalent and common teaching techniques. You should compare and contrast different ways of teaching different areas of language to find a novel one in a rational way.

Zeinab wants to see CT though the novelty it carries with itself. The building blocks of critical thinking is finding novel ways to our issues and problems. Zeinab rejects sticking to the most common teaching methods. Instead, she believes that the efficacy of each teaching method should be judged via thinking critically.

Hamid, 42, replied our question:

Critical thinking paves the way in how we think, we do, we aspire and we plan. CT aides us to adopt to the context. To evaluate the factors affecting the environment and to revise and modify our plans in the face of unpredictable conditions.

Hamid reclaims that critical thinking will assist human beings to adopt to their milieu and revise their own plans and programs accordingly. CT will help people to take the contextual factors into account dealing with their own problems.

Success

The sub-themes underlying “success” were; *achieving desired goals, escaping dangers, avoiding bankruptcy, enhancing abilities, and progress.*

Esmail, 44, responded our interview question as:

Critical thinking is a key to success and prosperity. With that in mind, you will find a series of tools available to you throughout your life time and beyond that it will highlight some of the innovative and meticulous analyses in your life that you

will engage into address some of the difficulties and challenges. In language teaching, CT makes you a highly qualified and effective teacher. To define educational objectives and find ways to meet those goals.

For Esmail, the milestone of critical thinking is success. He believes that critical thinkers are successful in their lives. Tactility stated is his remarks that CT is associated with both success and innovation. He assures the fact that CT in language teaching will make you a highly qualified and effective teacher.

Another participant, Javad, 41, is of the belief that:

Critical thinking is a path toward success. It helps people to ascertain their own strengths and weaknesses. CT will let people to decrease their weaknesses and in so doing move towards success. CT will assist people to attain self-awareness and know the barriers to achievement. In language teaching, teachers can help their students to find the most appropriate learning strategies suitable for each learner.

Javad believes that achieving goals and succeeding has a number of barriers. CT will act as a flashlight that sheds light on the barriers of success. He believes that CT arms you with some sort of self-awareness to ascertain the barriers of success.

Leila, 36, answered that:

Criticizing different solutions for solving a specific problem will be of help for you in succeeding and meeting your own goals. Critical thinking will assist you to evaluate accessible options for meeting a need and finding the most efficient way. That is why I believe that having CT will permit everyone to succeed at least in the long run. In language teaching and learning, it makes us not to stick solely to parrot fashion learning; rather it will be able us to analyze every material we are going to master.

For Leila, critical thinking and success goes hand in hand. He believes that CT provides people with assets and capabilities to achieve their own desired goals. She also assumes a higher position for CT in language learning as well.

Initiation

Jalal, 42, an experienced teacher of high school asserted that:

Critical thinking is to think about finding a novel way of answering your questions. It is closely related to your own creativity and initiates. Everybody, more or less, possess the construct. A farmer working on his farm, a housewife doing home chores presumably think critically. Critical thinking means you think in a critical manner to be the first to do things differently and to be the first to think differently. Sometimes, it means putting your own thoughts into acid test and to criticize your own way of thinking.

Jalal's perception of the notion of critical thinking is in line with definition and conceptualization of novelty and initiation. It seems that his view of the construct is largely a product-oriented one. He also believes that questioning the common and conventional way of doing things can be attributed to critical thinking.

Akbar, 41, pointed out that;

In my opinion, CT is best associated with innovation and initiation. You have critical thinking skill to the extent that you are well versed in the agreements binding the different thoughts and solutions. If you come up with a novel alternative out of available different ones, you are inevitably a critical thinker. Make sure! I think, CT makes a difference in education and language teaching. Capitalizing on it, teachers will be able to enhance their teaching quality.

It can be inferred from Akbar's remarks that he is mainly concerned with the notion of CT as a means to get the desired results in a novel manner. He largely makes connections between CT and initiation.

Nahid, 32 answered our question in the following manner:

No doubt, CT is related to the novelty and finding novel ways of tackling problems. In language teaching and learning, with respect to the individual differences, it can aid both learners and teachers to achieve their own goals.

Nahid is of the belief that novelty can be generated out of engaging in CT. To cultivate someone between the concept of individual differences in language teaching and indulging in nurturing CT of learners and teachers. CT means to lead him/her to generate new thoughts and ideas. Nahid, furthermore, makes association

Discussion

The current qualitative study shed illuminating light on the Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions of critical thinking and its role in language teaching. Like other similar qualitative studies conducted to elicit Iranian in-service teachers' cognitions on certain teacher-related issues the present qualitative study raised our understanding on the way Iranian EFL teachers view the notion of CT and its role in foreign language education.

Concerning the theme of *efficiency*, critical thinking is mainly tantamount to decision making in a logical manner. Applying and capitalizing CT, will lead people to achieve their desired objectives sooner and easily. It also means to consume lesser mental resources and physical resources while solving problems. The theme of *efficiency* means the participants conceive of CT in teaching in terms of employing the most effective techniques in language instruction and every effort the teachers make in the classrooms to put their students at ease. The theme reveals that a product-oriented and outcome-based view of CT. The theme provides us with less or no information about processes and procedures governing mental tasks of critical thinkers.

Regarding the theme of *intelligence*, the participants established association between CT and intelligence in a logical manner. They believe that CT drives people to act logically under unpredictable situations and handle them fruitfully. The theme indicates that CT is a vital and indispensable skill of life and ingredient of education. The theme also suggests that critical thinkers are intelligent people that can make a difference in both their personal and professional lives. With respect to the role of CT in language teaching, the theme shows that possessing CT can be related to effective language teaching and classroom management. Furthermore, CT will aid teachers in opting for the most effective ways of teaching language skills.

Regarding the theme of *change*, the participants mentioned that through thinking critically, people can make changes in their environment. Critical thinking is making difference in the world. The theme also demonstrates novelty is associated with the notion of CT. The building blocks of critical thinking is finding novel approaches and solutions to our issues and problems. The participants postulating and generating the theme rejected sticking to the most common teaching methods. Instead, they mentioned that the efficacy of each teaching method should be judged via thinking critically.

With respect to the theme of *success*, the participants pointed out that achieving goals and succeeding has a number of barriers. CT will shed light on the barriers of success. The theme indicates that CT arms you with some sort of self-awareness to ascertain the barriers of success. For the participants, critical thinking and success goes hand in hand. The participants pointed out that that CT provides people with assets and capabilities to achieve their own desired goals.

The theme *initiation* referred to critical thinking is in line with definition and conceptualization of novelty and initiation. It seems that his view of the construct is largely a product-oriented one. The participants believe that questioning the common and conventional way of doing things can be attributed to critical thinking. The theme also revealed that novelty can be generated out of engaging in CT. To cultivate CT means in language education, teachers are required to pay due attention to individual differences in language teaching and indulging in nurturing CT of learners and teachers.

It was made clear that the participants emphasized some fundamental building blocks and components of the construct. The teachers involved in this research advocated critical thinking - focused program of teacher education as well as the application of CT – centered tasks and activities for the purpose of teaching foreign languages including English. The participants pointed out that some teachers are, by nature, critical thinkers; whereas, critical thinking skills and strategies are teachable to other language teachers. The results show that based on the teachers' conceptions, novelty can be generated out of engaging in CT nurturing strategies. To cultivate someone CT means to lead him/her to generate new thoughts and ideas. The results of the present study are similar to Zhang, Yuan and He (2020) in that they found that Chinese EFL teachers contented that CT should be an important part of the EFL curriculum and classroom instruction. The study also revealed that the

participants appeared to lack professional knowledge of CT and how to implement it in their classes.

The present qualitative study examined the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of CT in general and its role in language teaching in particular. Generally speaking, seen from the perspectives of the language teachers participated in the current study, different themes were behind their beliefs including success, intelligence and efficiency. The results of the current study suggest that the participants are of the belief that "change" is mainly associated with processing critical thinking. To their minds, critical thinkers, to a larger extent, tend to make changes in their environment and critical thinker teachers do so in their own teaching milieu. Critical thinkers also approach the problems differently from other people. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that curriculum developers and syllabus designers should leave room for teachers' critical thinking merit.

The results of the current study revealed that for Iranian EFL teachers, CT is associated with logical decision making, achieving efficiency, success and intelligence. In other words, the study suggests that Iranian EFL teachers hold a product-oriented view of CT. They are relatively unaware of the processes and procedures governing mental tasks in critical thinkers. The participants of the present study view and judge critical thinkers in terms of their achievements and accomplishments. The study also revealed that EFL teachers do not possess the due knowledge of how to furnish their students' critical thinking skills and how to incorporate CT-based instruction in language learning and teaching. The findings of our study also show that Iranian EFL teachers stress the significance of teaching CT to their students and teaching them how to capitalize on their CT skills to learn foreign languages including English.

The findings of the present study give countenance to Lipman (2003) in that he believes that teachers are responsible for cultivating critical thinking in the learners other than helping them to go from one educational level to the next. The results also indicate that English teachers should design critical thinking-focused tasks in their syllabi, both speaking and writing tasks which lead to critical thinker language learners. The results of the current are similar to Liang and Fung (2021) in that they offer suggestions for critical-thinking cultivation in the English-as-a-second language context and contribute to scholarly understanding of the need to integrate instructional strategies for critical thinking into language classrooms. The present study also confirms the idea postulated by Zhao, Pandian, and Singh (2016) in that they highlighted the significance of fostering such thinking in language classrooms.

Conclusions

The results of the current study show that the participants of the study claim that language teachers armed with critical thinking are better able to provide inspiration and motivation for their learners. They also believe that these teachers will be good

at defining both short-term and long-term objectives for their learners to master foreign languages. The tentative results of the study suggest that teachers can also provide their students with directions not only on how to grow in their CT, but also as how to learn foreign languages effectively and efficiently. According to the results of the current study, it can be claimed that teachers with higher levels of CT skills will look for optimum use of resources. The participants pointed out that critical thinkers conduct trial and errors in their minds prior to implementing their programs including teaching techniques and methods. One of the main challenges encountering teacher educators is teaching and measuring critical thinking in language learning and language teaching among both in-service and pre-service teachers. Future studies are suggested that to look at the relationship between teachers' critical thinking skill and teachers' self-efficacy.

The current study was conducted with lower number of participants. The adopted research design was exploratory qualitative design which limited the generalization of the findings. Future studies can adopt mixed methods designs to add rigor and robustness to their findings. Future quantitative studies are recommended to compare language teachers' perceptions of CT with than those of subject matter teachers to find the similar and different patterns of thoughts among them.

Implications

The current qualitative study has a number of pedagogical implications for language teachers, applied linguists, curriculum developers, teacher educators and policy makers. First, the study recommended that language teachers to mobilize their own critical thinking skill in their own instructional practices and their teaching methodology, to apply in their classes and in the evaluating students' language development. Teachers are also suggested to capitalize on their learners' critical thinking and find ways to nurture it. Second, with respect to theory development in language teaching profession, applied linguistics are recommended that pay due considerations to the central role critical thinking plays in human learning in general and language learning in particular. Third, curriculum developers can benefit from the findings of the present study as an integral skill of life and significant construct in education. It is strongly recommended that critical thinking should find its way to curricula in general and classroom activities and tasks in particular.

Fourth, policy makers are recommended that critical thinking should be taken into consideration in selection and recruitment of language teachers. No doubt, language teachers with higher levels of critical thinking ability can educate critical thinking learners. Finally, the participants emphasized the integrative role of CT both in language teaching and language learning. They highlighted the fact that CT-based instruction should be incorporated both in language teaching and teacher education curricula.

Teachers need to design complex learning tasks to engage students in learning so that students can develop critical thinking skills through analysis of

complex tasks and transfer what they learn to the new tasks and learning situations (Helsdingen et al., 2011). Future studies are also recommended that to investigate the role of creative thinking and creativity in teachers' professional development.

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Measuring the Predictability of Iranian EFL Students' Pragmatic Listening Comprehension With Language Proficiency, Self-Regulated Learning in Listening, and Willingness to Communicate

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Abstract

Pragmatic Listening Comprehension (PLC), as a complex process, is influenced by various cognitive, psychological, contextual, social, cultural, and linguistic factors. To make a stride toward understanding the role of such factors in PLC, the present study sought not only to scrutinize to what extent PLC was associated with language proficiency, Self-Regulated Learning in Listening (SRL), and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) but also to examine an empirical path analysis model to predict PLC through language proficiency, SRL, and WTC. To this aim, a group of 269 upper-intermediate and advanced level Iranian EFL learners, whose ages ranged from 19 to 34, participated in the study by answering the 40-item pragmatic multiple-choice discourse completion test (MDCT), as well as the valid and reliable questionnaires of SRL and WTC. The results of correlational analyses revealed that PLC was significantly and positively associated with language proficiency, SRL, and WTC. These findings were further approved in the path analysis model; language proficiency, SRL, and WTC were significant positive predictors of PLC. The path model disclosed the significant prediction of PLC in terms of the three independent variables of the study. Based on these results, relevant pedagogical implications were proposed with the aim of enhancing the pedagogical knowledge and practice of key educational stakeholders.

Keywords: pragmatic listening comprehension (PLC), language proficiency, self-regulated learning in listening (SRL), willingness to communicate (WTC), English as a second/foreign language (EFL/ESL)

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Saturday, April, 3, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27199.1292>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

As an essential language skill, listening plays a pivotal role in the development of one's foreign or second language (FL / L2) proficiency (Vandergrift, 2007; Vandergrift & Baker, 2018). In fact, its development is highly required because of its widespread use in everyday interactions (Morley, 2001). Despite its significance as a self-governing and vital element of language learning, the listening skill has been treated as a Cinderella skill, which encompasses an undetectable mental procedure (Jung, 2003) and is also the least understood and researched skill among the four skills (Vandergrift, 2007). Hinkel (2006) asserted that this skill is usually disregarded in language teaching and pedagogy as its instruction requires dealing with different aspects of cross-cultural pragmatics and other variables essential for comprehending interlocutors' proposed meanings. At the same time, following the shift from structural-oriented syllabi to more communicative ones, the tendency to do research on different aspects of pragmatic competence has gradually increased, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. Research has evinced that pragmatic competence development is a consequential condition for reaching high proficiency levels in L2 / FL (e.g., Alcón-Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Derakhshan, 2019a; Derakhshan, 2019b, Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Derakhshan & Eslami, 2020; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2020; Eslami & Liu, 2013; Glaser, 2018; Shakki, Naeni, Mazandarani, & Derakhshan, 2020; Taguchi, 2013, 2019; Tajeddin & Zand Moghadam, 2012; Usó-Juan, 2013).

In addition, most of the studies in this area have investigated and substantiated the effectiveness of instruction, whether implicit or explicit, input-based or output-based, on pragmatic competence development (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2015; Derakhshan & Zangoei, 2014; Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Fordyce, 2013; Li, 2012; Taguchi, 2015; Yousefi & Nassaji, 2019). Although various studies have been conducted regarding the effectiveness of instruction for pragmatic development, the current study presents an innovative outlook to the field of studies in language learning in the Iranian EFL context, in general, and pragmatic research, in particular. More specifically, scant attention has been dedicated to identifying and examining the factors contributing to pragmatic competence in general and PLC, in particular. Another distinctive feature of the research distinguishing it from the previous ones is probing miscellaneous issues of tentative influential factors on pragmatic competence from broad-spectrum, namely general language proficiency to specific dynamics, including psychological, social, and interactive factors. In fact, PLC is one of the under-researched (Vandergrift, 2007), yet crucial, aspect of listening comprehension, which is significant for developing high levels of language proficiency.

As a stride toward occupying this research gap, the current research tried to explore the predictability of Iranian EFL learners' PLC in terms of SRL, WTC, and language proficiency variables, through adopting a path analysis model. In this respect, two research questions were specified:

1. Does PLC have any significant relationship with Iranian EFL learners' language proficiency, SRL, and WTC?

2. What is the best fit model regarding the variables of language proficiency, SRL, and WTC in relation to PLC of Iranian EFL learners?

Review of the Literature

Pragmatic Listening Comprehension (PLC)

PLC pertains to an individual's ability to grasp a speaker's intention in interaction in a particular situation, beyond the literal meaning of what is uttered (Rose & Kasper, 2001). In other words, pragmatic comprehension involves both the knowledge of speech acts, relating to one's ability to do something or convince the hearer to do the target action and conversational implicature, relating to the speakers' expression of his / her feelings and views through employing indirect utterances to be inferred by the hearer (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969; Thomas, 1995). Pragmatic knowledge, being normally culture-bound, is utilized by listeners in order to understand and make inferences about the speaker's implied meaning. As Rost (2002) believed, PLC requires knowledge of the linguistic aspect, including lexis, structures, and morphology, as well as awareness of contextual information (Rost, 2002; van Dijk, 1977). PLC involves a complicated process of interaction between linguistic forms, contextual factors, social, conventional, cultural norms, and psychological factors (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Takahashi, 2019). This complexity requires research on various potential contributing factors to the success or failure of pragmatic comprehension by L2 learners or speakers.

Despite the fact that pragmatic knowledge has been researched much in relation to L2 production, little research has been done on the employment of pragmatic knowledge for L2 comprehension (Vandergrift, 2007). However, there is a desideratum for investigating the potential contribution of various psychological, contextual, cognitive, linguistic, and social factors contributing to PLC, if a thorough understanding of this concept is to be achieved (Taguchi, 2019). As a response to this call for research, the present study attempted to examine the potential role of three factors of language proficiency, WTC, and SRL in relation to PLC. In the following section of the literature review, each of these three independent variables is discussed, and their relationship with PLC is determined based on previous research findings.

Language Proficiency and Pragmatic Competence

Triggered by the communicative competence framework of Bachman (1990), in which language competence was conceptualized as a construct encompassing two key aspects of organizational competence and pragmatic competence, pragmatic competence has been brought into the limelight in many communicative competence model and frameworks (Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006). LoCastro (2003) defined pragmatic competence as "the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and nonlinguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organized activities" (p. 15). Since its introduction in such models of language proficiency, pragmatic competence increasingly found its place in language pedagogy and research as reflected in various research studies in the field

(Alcón-Soler & Sánchez Hernández, 2017; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Uso'-Juan & Martí'nez-Flor, 2006).

Pragmatic competence development in L2 / FL is substantial for learners as miscommunication and communication breakdown / failure are very common issues in L2 speaker-L2 speaker and L2 speaker-native speaker interactions (Taguchi, 2011; Timpe-Laughlin, 2019). Such failures are either related to pragmalinguistic (i.e., the means through which meanings and communicative acts are transferred) (Rose & Kasper, 2001) or sociopragmatic competence “the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action which may differ depending on speakers' and hearers' speech communities” (Kasper, 1997, p. 10). Results of many previous studies have supported the importance of pragmatic competence development for obtaining high levels of L2 proficiency (e.g., Alcón-Soler & Sánchez Hernández, 2017; Cohen, 2017; Kondo, 2008; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Taguchi, 2018b; Takimoto, 2007; Tateyama, 2019). Moreover, a large number of studies in interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) have been dedicated to examining whether pragmatic instruction, whether in its implicit / explicit or input- / output-based form is effective or not (e.g., Cohen, 2012, 2017, 2019; Cohen & Sykes, 2013; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2020, 2021; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Jernigan, 2012; Lyster, 1994; Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2012; Shakki et al., 2020; Taguchi, 2011).

Furthermore, as pragmatic ability is a crucial element of language proficiency (Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980), its significance in interlanguage development and, more specifically, pragmatic comprehension has been recently appreciated by researchers. In this regard, some studies have attended to language proficiency in association with PLC. One overall finding agreed upon by all these studies is that language proficiency has a strong impact on pragmatic comprehension (Taguchi & Yamaguchi, 2019). It was mainly found that higher-proficiency learners had better comprehension of speech acts and implicature in comparison to lower-proficiency level learners. For instance, Cook and Liddicoat (2002) examined language proficiency in relation to PLC. They uncovered that a significant difference exists between low- and high-proficiency listeners as to processing linguistic and contextual cues for comprehending request speech acts. This is because the low-proficiency listeners were unable to automatically attend to both linguistic and contextual cues because of their reliance on bottom-up processing. This finding was in line with Garcia's (2004) finding, which showed that higher proficiency listeners have a better comprehension of the intentions of a speaker (i.e., conversational implicature).

In the same line, the results of Taguchi's (2011) study also uncovered the predictability of pragmatic comprehension in terms of language proficiency. The other studies in this area are those conducted by Bardovi-Harlig (1999), Derakhshan (2019), Koike (1996), Rafieyan (2018), Roever, Wang, and Brophy (2014), Taguchi (2005, 2008a, 2008b), Vandergrift (2007), Yamanaka (2003) which corroborated that high proficient learners outperformed the low proficient ones. Yet, it is apparent that in addition to language proficiency, there exist other variables that can

potentially influence PLC. Two of such variables, which are psychological in nature, namely SRL and WTC, will be discussed in the following sections.

Self-Regulated Learning in Listening

As a constructive process, self-regulated learning (Pintrich, 2000), is a broad concept encompassing an array of variables (e.g., cognitive strategies, self-efficacy, and volition), affecting the motivational, metacognitive, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of learning (Panadero, 2017; Tseng & Chen, 2017). Three important concepts in self-regulation are resource management, cognition, and metacognition (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). A learner who is good at regulating his / her own learning utilizes the repertoire of metacognitive, cognitive, emotional, and motivational strategies available to him / her for proactively participating in learning. Such a learner implements these strategies to acquire, recall, and comprehend information and instructions actively through engaging in self-directed and self-activated learning efforts (Zimmerman, 1998). Self-regulated learning was highlighted in educational psychology (Sahranavard, Miri, & Salehiniya, 2018), but it has its origin in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986).

The social cognitive conceptualization of self-regulation does not make a distinction between cognition and motivation. Neither does it consider internal components and external stimuli as sole contributors to human performance and learning. Rather, it offers a triadic model in which personal features, cognition, and behavior of the learner all communicate with the environment and with each other to influence learners' performance (Bandura, 1986). Thus, in this view, self-regulation refers to the extent to which learners can be "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process" (Zimmerman, 1989, p. 1). Accordingly, self-regulation requires learners' management of their motivation, behavior, and cognition.

Self-regulation learning has been linked and discussed in relation to the language skills (e.g., Ariyanti, Fitriana, & Pane, 2018), and in relation to self-regulation, importantly the self-regulatory capability and motivational ideas of the listener (Yabukoshi, 2021). SRL is characterized by an active involvement of individuals in their own listening comprehension. Recently, this area of research has attracted researchers' attention as few studies to date have attended to the importance of self-regulated learning in listening comprehension development (e.g., Li, 2017; Nasrollahi-Mouziraji & Birjandi, 2016; Taghizadeh & Saleh Abady, 2016; Yabukoshi, 2021; Zeng & Goh, 2018).

To explain some of these studies in more detail, for instance, through proposing a path analysis model, Nasrollahi-Mouziraji and Birjandi (2016) examined the influential role of Iranian EFL learners' motivational ideas (i.e., goal orientation, listening self-efficacy, and task value) in their self-regulation ability and listening comprehension ability by drawing on the social cognitive and expectancy-value learning theories. Path analysis outcomes uncovered that first, learners' listening comprehension could be positively influenced by their self-regulation and self-efficacy, and second, their self-regulation was positively influenced by perceptions of task value. Furthermore, they uncovered some effective ways for

promoting self-regulated learning and improving listening comprehension ability in the English language teaching context.

Similarly, in a case study done on four EFL Chinese university students, Zeng and Goh (2018) investigated the impacts that the self-regulating strategies in extensive listening activities employed by the four participants have on their achievement and metacognitive awareness. Results showed significant divergences in the metacognitive involvement of the two groups at the self-regulated learning stages. It was found that the listening ability of the students was influenced by these differences.

Despite the potential role that SRL can play in facilitating PLC, there has been a dearth of research examining this associative link. A somewhat pertinent research study was that conducted by Corsetti (2014), which examined the influence of strategy-based listening in PLC. However, no study has examined SRL in association with PLC. To address this gap, the present study attempted to examine SRL as a potential determinant of Iranian EFL learners' PLC.

Willingness to Communicate

The concept of WTC was initially put forward by Burgoon (1976). It was first named as "Unwillingness to Communicate" and defined as "enduring and chronic tendency to avoid or devalue oral communication" (p. 62). It was characterized as a trait-like propensity and a personality feature and to explain personal variances in interaction in the first language. Moreover, Mortensen, Arntson, and Lustig (1977) argued that global speech qualities are systematic and long-lasting as they do not normally change from one context to another. Later, McCroskey and Baer (1985) and McCroskey and Richmond (1991), among others, identified the construct of WTC and defined it as a person's inclination to start communication, when the situation arises. According to them, WTC encompassed an amalgam of personality features such as self-esteem, communicative competence, introversion / extroversion, self-confidence, and communication apprehension, all found to be influencing the individual's ultimate willingness and decision to communicate (Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2014).

Moreover, MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, and Noels (1998) disregarded questioned trait-like view of the concept as they said that it could be best conceptualized as a situational variable, influenced by both enduring and transient factors. In this respect, WTC was regarded as a multidimensional concept encompassing a myriad of instructional, emotional, instructional, cognitive, and cultural variables (MacIntyre et al., 1998). In their conceptualization, MacIntyre et al. (1998) tried to capture as many variables as possible that can influence a learner's WTC in L2.

Six levels exist in this model of WTC. The first level pertains to real interactions in L2. In the second level, the communicative use of L2 is mainly accounted for by one's WTC. The third level shows the tendency to interact with a particular individual and explains WTC in terms of its predictability by state communication self-confidence. The fourth level explains the predictability of WTC

by fixed motivational tendencies, including self-confidence in L2, interpersonal motivation, and intergroup motivation. The fifth level relates to affective-cognitive context variables. Included at this level are social situation, communicative competence, and intergroup attitudes. Variables at this level influence WTC by impacting the variables of the previous levels. The sixth level includes the individual and social context variables. Social setting, referring to intergroup atmosphere, as well as the personal context, covering those personality features connected to interaction, are within this layer (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Since the emergence of this concept, a large body of empirical studies have been done on it, exploring the potential correlates, causes, and consequences of WTC in L2. Among the factors found to be associated with WTC are affect, writing performance in English, attitudes, communicative competence, motivation, communication apprehension, speaking ability, individual characteristics, context, language learning anxiety, emotions, and classroom environment (e.g., Behshad, Amirian, Davoudi, & Ghaniabadi, 2018; Elahi Shirvan, Khajavy, MacIntyre, & Taherian, 2019; Khalaj & Tousi, 2014; Khajavy, MacIntyre, & Barabadi, 2017; Lee & Lee, 2020; Öz, Demirezen, & Pourfeiz, 2015; Peng, 2015; Riasati, 2018; Yashima, MacIntyre, & Ikeda, 2016). But to date, no research has been dedicated to examining the role of WTC in PLC. The only study conducted in this regard was Mehrpak, Gholami-Mehrdad, & Ahmadi's (2016) study, which examined the influence of instruction regarding speech acts on Iranian EFL students' WTC. So the present study is unique in the sense that it examines the role of WTC in PLC aspects, including implicature and speech acts. All in all, in order to add to the nascent literature on the correlates and contributors of PLC, the current research attempted to the correlational and predictive link of Iranian EFL learners' SRTL, WTC, and language proficiency with their PLC.

Methodology

Participants and Setting

The present study setting included two provinces of Khorasan Razavi and Golestan, Iran. More specifically, EFL learners from the three universities of Hakim Sabzevari, University of Gonabad, and Golestan University, two institutes of Hezare Sevom (two branches) in Mashhad and Radmehr in Gonabad, and finally, eight high schools in Gonabad participated in this study. The underlying reason for selecting this wide range of participants was to have a rich set of data from miscellaneous groups based on pragmatic features like socioeconomic status, power, and levels of language proficiency. The participants were chosen based on convenience sampling.

The initial sample comprised 483 EFL learners who voluntarily accepted to cooperate in this study. To assess the language proficiency of the participants, the updated version of Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT) was administered in 2019. This test is usually used as a quick reliable measure of a student's general language ability (Brown, 1989). Moreover, to get access to the participants for the following stages, they were asked to type their complete demographic information, including telephone number, email address, age, and gender, at the beginning of the OOPT. The possible range of score for this test is between 0 to 120. After screening

out the missing data, out of 483 test-takers, only 269 of them were selected for further consideration. Their overall scores were between 90 to 120 with the mean score of 108 and the standard deviation of 15.58. The rubric for the test shows that those participants who get 90 or above are considered upper intermediate or advanced learners, categorized in C proficiency level of the 269 participants in this phase, 0.58 were male, and 0.42 were female. They were aged between 16 to 36 years.

Instrumentation

The only instrument (with three sub-instruments) developed and used in this research was an online software named “Self-regulation English Pragmatic Comprehension” (SREPC), accessible through the www.Srepc.ir web address. The instrument included four parts; the Demographic Information Set, two questionnaires of SRLL and WTC, and, finally, the three subsections of the pragmatic multiple discourse completion tasks (PMDCT) of routines, implicature, and speech acts, each of which is explained in detail as follows:

The Demographic Information Set

The demographic information set elicited information such as name, telephone number, age, gender, job, major, years of learning / teaching English, and language proficiency levels from the participants.

The Self-Regulated Learning in Listening (SRLL) Questionnaire

Kobayashi (2017) developed and validated a SRLL questionnaire for assessing the construct of SRLL and its relationship with PLC. The SRLL questionnaire includes four parts of self-efficacy, knowledge of cognition, awareness of metacognition and regulation of cognition, and strategic behavior, each of which including 3, 3, 6, and 6 items, respectively. The items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1 (0–20%), 2 (20–40%), 3 (40–60%), 4 (60–80%), 5 (80–100%)). To make these items more understandable for the participants of the present study, five English teachers individually translated the SRLL questionnaire from English into Persian, and, in the end, they reached a consensus on the semi-final version of the Persian questionnaire. Then, this version was piloted with 37 participants. Next, five translators did a back-translation of the scale from Persian to English. The new version was then compared with the original English SRLL questionnaire. Finally, the inconsistencies were resolved, and the teachers and researchers agreed on the final version of the Persian scale.

The Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Questionnaire

The 17-items WTC questionnaire was developed and validated by Weaver (2005) for assessing the construct of WTC and its relationship with PLC. Answers given to these items ranged on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., a) Definitely not Willing, b) Probably not Willing, c) Probably Willing, d) Mostly Willing., and e) Definitely Willing). In the present study, the process of adaptation and validation of the WTC questionnaire was done similar to those performed for the SRLL questionnaire.

Pragmatic Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test (PMDCT)

The present study deals with the comprehension of major elements of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), namely routines, implicature, and request, apology, and refusal speech acts. To this aim, an instrument was adopted and validated to measure the participants' ILP comprehension in English. The integrated instrument provides observations of learners' PLC by inquiring their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge in contextualized situations and in an interactive pathway with the test-taker. The answers of the respondents to PMDCT are observable test scores which were validated by the pragmatic experts and resorted according to the viability of native-speaker criteria. Liu (2006) states that "the observed score is generalized as a universe score and interpreted as covering the whole universe of possible items and responses" (p. 7). Then, the universe score, checked by Cronbach's alpha or interrater reliability, can be generalized to a target score across the target domain, which is the display of interests manifested by an array of observations. Meanwhile, the validation of the pragmatic test heavily rests on practical or theoretical arguments (Roever, 2011). The last stage is to have pedagogical implications for the features of the construct under study such as admission programs and also making decisions about test takers' language proficiency for putting them in appropriate channels of remedial instruction.

Grounded in the above logic, and for the sake of reaching potential objectivity, the PMDCT was chosen as the test battery for the present study. PMDCT covers some situations premeditated to bring about a certain pragmatic aspect like speech act. Each test-taker reads the PMDCT and answers to a prompt in the written mode. Dissimilar to the written discourse completion test (WDCT), in PMDCT, the test-takers should select the best alternative among three, four, or five alternatives. Actually, in the PMDCT, there is a key that is the most pragmatically appropriate response, and there are two, three, or four other distracters that are inappropriate. Ahn (2005, as cited in Birjandi & Rezaei, 2010) mentions that PMDCT is easy to administer and is time-saving with regard to administration and evaluation. However, this fact exists that developing good distractors and the best alternative for each item is hard.

In the present study, the PMDCT was adapted and validated, taking into account the PLC knowledge of test-takers. As Linde (2009) states, the PMDCT is a good instrument for collecting data to assess various pragmatic competence aspects such as routines, implicature, as well as speech acts. The PMDCT in our study has a standard multiple-choice format of one answer and four distractors (one distractor was added to the existing distractors to meet the research aim of this study) which covers 16 written questions and 40 listening questions for assessing EFL learners' comprehension of routines, implicature, request, apology, and refusal speech acts. Within each situation, the test takers were supposed to opt the most appropriate answer.

This PMDCT is an integrated set of two PMDCTs designed by Xu (2015) for routines and Derakhshan (2014) for implicature and speech acts. The reliability of Xu's (2015) test was reported to be .86, and that of Derakhshan's (2014) test was found to be .78. The internal consistency of the test was examined by employing KR-21 formula in order to ensure that the merged PMDCT in the test battery is

reliable. The reliability index was .81. The different sections of the PMDCT used in the study are explained briefly below:

Multiple-Choice Pragmatic Discourse Completion Test (MPDCT) for Routines. The respondents were presented with 16 questions related to routines in a written mode as the first part of pragmatic comprehension test. The alternatives of each item were increased from four to five based on the three pragmatic experts' opinions and comments. The items for this part were adapted and validated from Xu's (2015) study.

Pragmatic Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test (PMDCT) for Implicature and Request, Apology, and Refusal Speech Acts. This test includes 16 listening conversations for routines and 24 listening conversations for speech acts (eight refusals, eight requests, and eight apologies), followed by a multiple-choice question which was adapted from the instrument developed by Derakhshan (2014). It should be noted that the interrater reliability of the three pragmatic experts was high as a result of adding one option to the previous ones (i.e., the correlation was .93 at the significance level of .05).

Procedure

In this research, the objective was to investigate potential factors contributing to Iranian EFL learners' PLC. To achieve this aim, the following stages were done: for the first phase of data collection regarding the addition of a distractor to each item of the PMDCT, semi-structured interviews were done with four experts (two males and two females) in the field of pragmatics. Subsequently, the interview data were transcribed and analyzed. Then the SREPC software, being accessible through the www.srepc.ir web address, was developed. It included three parts of demographic information set, SRL questionnaire, WTC scale, and also three sub-parts of PMDCT. Responding to each part was obligatory to go to the next part. Also, for answering each part, specific amount of time was allocated. Moreover, the software was designed in a way that each test-taker's performance and responses were recorded online, and then the data for each participant was exported into CSV for MS Excel, XML, PHP array, Open Document text, CSV, JSON, PDF, Open Document Spreadsheet, YAML, LaTeX, CodeGen, Microsoft word 2000, MediaWiki Table, and SQL.

After the software was developed, the participants were asked to voluntarily take part in this study. Meanwhile, permission for collecting data from the universities, institutes, and schools was gained. The participants were completely briefed about how to respond to each part of the questionnaires and pragmatic tests in the software, and they were informed that their data would be kept confidential and were collected exclusively for academic research purposes. The data for this study was collected electronically, and each participant's data was transferred into the SPSS (version 22) and AMOS (version 24) statistical packages. The reliability for each of the scales was computed through Cronbach's alpha coefficient procedure and Kuder-Richardson Formula 21 (KR-21).

Results

The study intended to explore the probable relationships among Iranian EFL learners' language proficiency, SRL, WTC, and PLC and to find the best fit model for the explanatory variables of this study. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov revealed that the data were normally distributed, so a parametric test of Pearson Product moment correlation was utilized.

Results of Research Questions

This section includes the answer to each of two proposed research questions:

Result of Research Question One

1. Does PLC have any significant relationship with Iranian EFL learners' language proficiency, SRL, and WTC?

To answer this research question, Pearson correlation was employed (Table 1).

Table 1

Results of Pearson Correlation Among the Variables

		PLC	Language Proficiency	WTC	SRL
PLC	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	269			
Language Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	.49**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00			
	N	269	269		
WTC	Pearson Correlation	.68**	.42**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00		
	N	269	269	269	
SRL	Pearson Correlation	.65**	.33**	.61**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	
	N	269	269	269	269

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

Based on Table 1, a significant positive association exists between PLC and other variables: SRL ($r = .65, p = .000, \alpha = 0.01$), WTC ($r = .68, p = .000, \alpha = 0.01$), and language proficiency ($r = .49, p = .000, \alpha = 0.01$).

Table 2 shows the results of the Pearson correlation between the sub-constructs of PLC, overall WTC, SRL, and language proficiency.

Table 2

Results of Pearson Correlation Between the Sub-Constructs of PLC, and Overall WTC, SRL, and Language Proficiency Scores

		WTC	SRL	Language Proficiency
IMP	Pearson Correlation	.77	.61	.47
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00
	N	269	269	269
SA	Pearson Correlation	.82	.62	.51
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00
	N	269	269	269

Based on Table 2, IMP correlated positively and significantly with WTC ($r = .77, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$), SRL ($r = .61, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$), and language proficiency ($r = .47, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$). Moreover, SA correlated positively and significantly with WTC ($r = .82, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$), SRL ($r = .62, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$), and language proficiency ($r = .51, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$).

Table 3 shows the results of the Pearson correlation between the sub-constructs of SRL, and overall PLC.

Table 3

Results of Pearson Correlation Between the Sub-Constructs of SRL and Overall PLC

		SE	KC	AM	SB
PLC	Pearson Correlation	.75	.69	.58	.60
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.00
	N	269	269	269	269

Based on Table 3, all four sub-constructs of SRL correlated positively and significantly with overall PLC; SE ($r = .75, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$), KC ($r = .69, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$), AM ($r = .58, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$), and SB ($r = .60, p = .00, \alpha = 0.01$).

Result of Research Question Two

2. *What is the best fit model for the variables of language proficiency, SRLL, WTC, and PLC of Iranian EFL Learners?*

Regarding the second research question, a path analysis model was proposed. To examine the structural relations, the proposed model was tested using the Amos 24 statistical package. To see if the proposed model fits our data, some fit indices were examined; the magnitude of Chi-square should be non-significant, the Chi-square / *df* ratio which should be between 2 and 3, the cut values of the comparative fit index (CFI), the normed fit index (NFI), as well as the good fit index (GFI) should be greater than .90, and finally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be smaller than .80 (Schreiber et al., 2006). The results of estimating these indices on our data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Goodness of Fit Indices

	X2/df	GFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Acceptable Fit	< 3	> .90	> .90	> .90	< .08
Model	2.17	.92	.94	.91	.05

Based on Table 4, all the goodness of fit indices were within the acceptable range; NFI (.91), X2 / *df* (2.17), RMSEA (.05) CFI (.94), and GFI (.92). The finalized path analysis model of the study is presented in Figure 1.

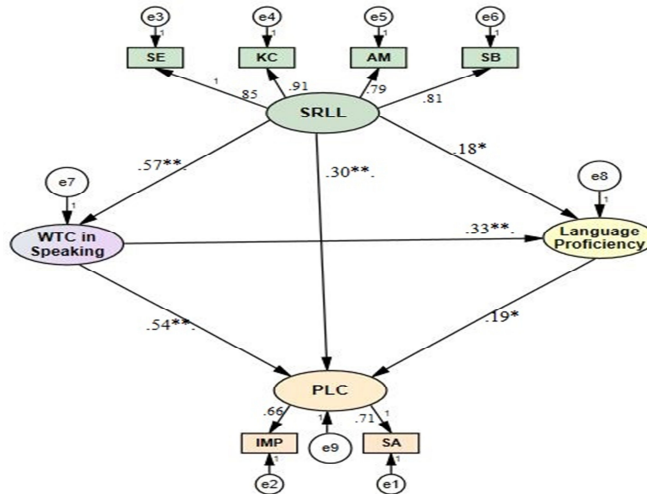


Figure 1

The Model of Interrelationship Among PLC, SRLL, WTC, and Language Proficiency

According to Figure 1, PLC is predicted positively and significantly by SRL ($\beta = .30, p < 0.05$), WTC ($\beta = .54, p < 0.05$), and language proficiency ($\beta = .19, p < 0.05$). Moreover, it was found that both SRL ($\beta = .18, p < 0.05$) and WTC ($\beta = .33, p < 0.05$) positively and significantly predicted language proficiency. Finally, a direct positive path was found from SRL to WTC ($\beta = .57, p < 0.05$).

Discussion

To elaborate on the research findings, it was identified that Iranian EFL learners' PLC and their language proficiency were moderately interrelated. In other words, there was a significant difference between the performance of Iranian EFL learners with high, medium, and low language proficiency in the PLC test. The variation pattern for their performance was high > medium > low. The results lend support to the previous literature on the association of language proficiency and PLC (e.g., Cook & Liddicoat, 2002; Derakhshan, 2019a; Garcia, 2004; Koike, 1996; Rafieyan, 2018; Roever et al., 2014; Taguchi, 2005, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Taguchi & Yamaguchi, 2019; Vandergrift, 2007; Yamanaka, 2003). The reason for a moderate correlation between language proficiency and PLC rather than a strong relationship may be traced back to some reasons accounted for in this study. The first one is applying a self-report as a measure of the participants' language proficiency. In fact, due to practical constraints because of our large sample size, self-report of language proficiency level was the most convenient measure. To this aim, the researchers inserted a self-report section in the software so that the participants check their self-perceived language proficiency level in a range of 1 to 9 scores.

Despite the imprecision of self-report measures, in Shameem's (1998) study, the self-report language proficiency measure was found as a relatively valid and reliable measure as a strong positive relationship was found between the participants' actual test scores and their self-report language proficiency levels. Another reason for a moderate relationship may be that language proficiency encompasses different components of lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic competencies, among others. Therefore, learners who have high grammatical or lexical competence may not be necessarily pragmatically competent (Xiao, 2015). Moreover, it may also be partly due to the reason that EFL learners have usually little opportunity to be exposed to sufficient pragmatic input such as conventional and nonconventional implicature and speech acts (Derakhshan, 2014, 2019a). EFL learners' English use and learning are normally limited to the classroom context (Farashaiyan & Hua, 2012). Matsumura (2003) concluded that while language proficiency had no significant effect on PLC, exposure to target language forms and functions played an outstanding role in EFL learners' pragmatic achievement. However, he simultaneously accounted for language proficiency as a mediator variable in the relationship between PLC and exposure to English.

It can also be mentioned that the relationship between language proficiency and PLC can be mediated by psycholinguistic factors like motivation. According to Xu and Wannaruk (2016), EFL learners with higher motivation may have positive attitudes toward the target language and desire to integrate with L2 culture, and as a consequence, may endeavor more to develop their language competencies in all

aspects of language learning such as PLC. The process of language learning, even at the highest levels, such as pragmatic comprehension of implicature and speech acts in ILP system can be facilitated through a high level of motivation where the input, lasting for a short period of time, can be converted into intake in the long-term memory and result into learning (Ellis, 2008).

Another variable predicting PLC in this study was SRL with the four sub-constructs of self-efficacy, knowledge of cognition, awareness of metacognition, and strategic behaviors. This finding corroborates previous accounts highlighting the role that learners' cognitive and psychological factors play in their PLC (Taguchi, 2019). The results of the present study are also in line with Nasrollahi-Mouziraji and Birjandi's (2016) findings which revealed the significant effect of each sub-component of SRL on English listening achievement of Iranian EFL learners. While in their study, path analysis results determined self-efficacy as the strongest predictor of listening achievement, the proposed model in our study identified self-efficacy as the contributor to PLC, subsequent to the knowledge of cognition. However, the magnitude of the effect of knowledge of cognition (.91) in our proposed model does not downplay the high explanatory power of self-efficacy (.85) for PLC.

The results of the present study are also in correspondence with the postulations of the socio-cognitive and self-expectancy theories, which underscored the significant impact of the sub-constructs of SRL (i.e., self-efficacy, motivational beliefs, knowledge of cognition and strategic behavior, and awareness of metacognition) on development of learners' language competencies. Moreover, the results of the present study were in line with Zeng and Goh's (2018) study, which accentuated the usefulness of SRL for cultivating EFL learners' L2 listening comprehension.

The last variable investigated in relation to PLC in this study was WTC. The findings of the present research indicated a strong positive relationship between Iranian EFL learners' PLC and their WTC. As the path analysis model indicated, some variations in PLC achievement scores can fairly be accounted for by the variations in WTC. These results are to some degree in line with the findings of Mehrpak et al.'s (2016) study, which revealed that a positive significant relationship exists between Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic comprehension of speech acts and WTC in English. As there is a scarcity of research examining the link between WTC and PLC, the results of this research should be compared with outcomes of studies conducted on the association of WTC and language skills. In this regard, WTC was also found by previous researchers to be positively linked to Iranian EFL learners' speaking ability (Khalaj & Tousi, 2014) and writing performance (Behshad et al., 2018).

All in all, the results of this research lend support to the theoretically-rich argument that learners' PLC, as a part of ILP, is influenced by an array of linguistic, contextual, psychological, cultural, cognitive, and social factors (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Rost, 2002; van Dijk, 1977; Takahashi, 2019).

Conclusion

To recapitulate what was stated till now, the main goal of the current research was to examine the associative as well as predictive links of language proficiency, WTC, and SRLL with Iranian EFL learners' PLC. In a nutshell, the outcomes of current research uncovered the positive association of the four variables of this study. More importantly, these findings were supported by the path analysis results, which demonstrated the predictability of Iranian EFL learners' PLC in terms of their WTC, language proficiency, and SRLL. Thus, it can be concluded that PLC, as a complex process undertaken by L2 / FL language learners, is influenced by learners' linguistic (i.e., language proficiency) and psychological (i.e., WTC and SRLL) variables, among others.

All in all, the findings of the present study can contribute to the knowledge and practice of teachers and learners as key stakeholders in the context of English language teaching and learning. In this respect, EFL teachers can enhance their learners' PLC ability by taking account of learners' psychological and linguistic background into account. In addition to providing opportunities for exposure to the pragmatically appropriate input and interactions in the classroom, teachers can tailor input and instruction to learners' language proficiency level. In other words, teachers can present different authentic and pragmatically-rich input and activities according to whether learners are of high, medium, or low language proficiency. In addition, for the successful PLC of students to happen, teachers can teach various SRLL to learners. As Taguchi (2018a) cogently elaborated, self-regulated learning strategies are potentially valuable guidelines intended for conquering the problems of learning pragmatics, straightly coaching learners how to being alert to pragmatic components such as listening aspects and how to screen, govern, and assess their personal learning developments. By doing so, students can become autonomous language learners who can take responsibility for their own learning in general and PLC in particular.

When students' knowledge repertoire is equipped with sufficient and useful strategies for self-regulating their learning process, they can more effectively tolerate and solve pragmatically the thorniest challenges and take the lead for their own learning (Derakhshan, Malmir, & Greenier, 2021). Such a SRLL teaching can be instilled into the instructional courses by dedicating some time and materials to teaching these strategies each session to the learners. Moreover, students' WTC can also play a role in their PLC. Based on this account, teachers can enhance their students' WTC by creating a humanized, motivating, interesting, and personalized learning environment. When learning is linked to students' needs, interests, and personal lives, it is more likely to increase their positive attitudes toward the course, and, in turn, enhance their WTC. Meanwhile, they can make learners aware of how their increased WTC inside and outside of the classroom can foster their PLC. This is because when they interact more in the target language, they find more opportunities to be exposed to the language input. Through communication and interaction with other L2 users (whether peers, teachers, or native speakers), interlocuters can play the role of a listener and also a speaker; they can engage in negotiation of meaning, discuss instances of pragmatic failure or

miscommunication, develop better metalinguistic and pragmatic awareness and knowledge, receive interactionally-modified input, find an opportunity to produce interactionally-modified output, and, thus, arrive at better PLC.

However, similar to any research attempt, this study also has some limitations. First of all, the present study data were collected only from Iranian EFL learners due to their easier accessibility to the researchers. Therefore, the findings must be cautiously generalized to all EFL learners from other cultural contexts. Second, as a large number of participants were involved in the study, the examination of their language proficiency through taking proficiency tests was not feasible, and, as a result, language proficiency data of the participants were collected through a self-report measure. Thirdly, in this study, only quantitative means of data collection and analysis were employed. Future studies can broaden the scope and depth of their research by adding more qualitative research instruments and analytic techniques.

As with any research undertaking, the results of this study were affected by many variables that were not to be controlled for in this research. Future studies may be interested in controlling for factors such as learners' gender, age, and years of learning English, and then investigate the link between the factors of this study. Last but not least, as stated in the literature review, PLC is influenced by many linguistic, contextual, psychological, cognitive, social, and cultural variables. However, due to feasibility issues and space constraints, only three variables of WTC, SRLL, and language proficiency were examined in relation to PLC. Future studies can continue this nascent line of research by exploring other important but less attended-to variables in this regard.

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Exploring EFL Teachers' Attitudes Toward Teacher Supervision in Iranian Language Schools

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Abstract

Although supervision is an integral component of EFL teacher professional development, there have not been enough studies on language teacher supervision and EFL teachers' attitudes toward supervision. The present study investigated EFL teachers' attitudes toward supervision in Iranian language schools. To this end, 218 EFL teachers who received supervision were selected and asked to complete a teacher supervision questionnaire (Moradi, Sephehrifar, & Khadiv, 2014) to elicit their attitudes, feelings, and experiences toward supervision. The questionnaire consisted of five subcategories: teachers' evaluation of supervision, their attitudes toward the mode of supervision, the contributions of teacher-supervision to their development, and the process before, during, and after supervision. The findings revealed that a great number of the participants harbored this view that the current supervision is useful for them and necessary for novice teachers. However, some held negative attitudes toward supervision as it puts them under pressure, creates anxiety, and damages their confidence and motivation. They found their supervisors' feedback unsatisfactory mainly done for paperwork formalities. To improve the ongoing supervisory practices, they suggested the need for the development of transparent criteria and rubrics for supervision and called for discontinuation of unannounced and sudden supervisory observations.

Keywords: EFL teachers, language schools, language school supervisors, supervision, language teacher supervision

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Saturday, April, 17, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27221.1300>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

Supervision emerged at the beginning of the 20th century and was implemented vigorously in the 18th century (Bolin & Panaritis, 1992). Supervision in the sense of inspection was the most crucial supervisory practice (Glanz, 1995). Supervision appeared in school practices at the beginning of the 20th century in line with the industrial models implemented in educational contexts (Glanz, 2000). Thus, school contexts were considered as factories in which students were regarded raw materials to be changed into products with great qualities. It should be noted that in those ages in the USA, all schools and factories were managed by the same methods entitled as scientific management methods.

Teacher supervision is a significant and fundamental part of language teachers' professional development (Chen & Cheng, 2013). There is not enough information to show that school supervisors have supportive positions, and their roles are to use autocratic observation and restrict the instructors without providing them with any helpful direction to develop their teaching (Horn, 2010). Further, Glanz (1995) considered supervision models, although collaborative, to be control-oriented. In educational contexts, supervision can improve the instruction quality by identifying students' needs and parents' degree of satisfaction (Janssens & Van Amelsvoort, 2008). Nowadays, supervising is considered as a function that highlights the importance of teachers' improvement rather than supervision (Kapusuzoglu & Dilekci, 2017). Therefore, according to this standpoint, the supervision and improvement of education are the most critical issues in achieving educational goals.

Historically, language instructors considered themselves as agents to follow the prescriptions good models of teaching most often determined and enforced by their supervisors. Over the years, this attitude has been noted and still exists among some instructors. However, they nowadays see the more positive characteristics of teacher supervision and view teacher supervision as an essential part of the management and prefer discussions with their supervisor about the observation (Moradi et al., 2014). Although American instructors showed positive attitudes toward the directive, non-directive and collaborative supervisory approaches, their reaction to the non-directive supervisory approach was less positive than the directive and collaborative approaches (Gordon, 1990). Gordon stated this by proposing the claim that these instructors have not had decision making responsibilities.

Supervision is a pivotal feature and it is significant to explore how EFL teachers envisage supervision. Moreover, the relationship between the teachers and supervisor affects the outcome of supervision and because of that it becomes of paramount importance to delve into the perceptions of these teachers regarding supervision. Azizpour and Gholami (2021b) underscored the significance of establishing rapport and positive relationship with teachers and noted that teacher-supervisors are expected to respect, motivate, and appreciate teachers in Iranian language schools. Besides, they should be friendly with teachers, communicate effectively, employ praise and feedback, and build empathy and trust. Besides, to the

best of the researchers' knowledge, there have not been enough studies in the literature on the teachers' attitudes toward EFL teacher supervision in the Iranian EFL context. Just one of the studies elaborated in the literature has focused on exploring teachers' views on supervision in Iranian EFL settings, and it has employed a limited number of participants (Moradi et al., 2014). Thus, this research topic has remained under-researched, and this prompted the researchers to undertake this study. The present study aimed at discovering the attitudes EFL teachers hold toward EFL teacher supervision in Iranian language schools. By investigating teachers' attitudes, language school managers, supervisors, and teachers can gain insights into the nature of teacher supervision and benefit more from supervisory practices. The following research question was formulated to address the objective of the present study: What attitudes do EFL teachers hold toward supervision in Iranian language schools?

Literature Review

Defining supervision is not a simple task, as some definitions are not compatible with one another. Supervision has a variety of definitions. In some contexts, supervision has been defined for contractual and legal aims. For instance, based on Hazi (1994, p. 199), New Jersey law defines a teacher-supervisor as "any appropriately certified individual assigned with the responsibility for the direction and guidance of the work of teaching staff members". In that situation, supervision is defined by the administrative code and is very similar to evaluation. Besides, supervision has been used in different fields of life, such as management, business, education, and health, military, and social services (Dangel & Tanguay, 2014). Sullivan and Glanz (2000) defined supervision as a process of perusing and scanning a passage to identify errors and deviations from the original passage. Daresh (2001) provided a broader definition of supervision and believed that it is a process of overseeing individuals' ability to meet the organization's aims where they work. He emphasized that supervision must be considered as a process, not a professional role.

Supervision is a crucial strategy that enables language instructors to improve their classroom practices and professional development (Hoque, Subramaniam, & Islam, 2020). Therefore, it is vital to recruit supervisors to facilitate language schools' development, evaluate instruction, and teaching quality (Mette, Aguilar, & Wiczorek, 2020). Teacher supervision and evaluation enhance teacher growth and instructional leadership (Brandon, Hollweck, Donlevy, & Whalen, 2018). Supervision helps instructors learn from the complexity of teaching (Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020). Moreover, a successful supervisor is expected to help teachers connect theory to practice and learn from their experiences in the field (Diacopoulos & Butler, 2020).

EFL teacher-supervisors are required to observe classes in order to evaluate teachers' instruction. Further, classroom observations must be employed as a part of a supportive system and empowering strategy for instructors and should be viewed positively (Gholaminejad, 2020). In recent years, supervisors tend to employ video recordings of teachers' performance to decrease their classroom anxiety (Johnson, Ivers, Avera, & Frazee, 2020). Novice teacher-supervisors' collaboration enables

them to think critically and support one another in guiding teachers (Higgins, Morton, & Wolkenhauer, 2018).

Phillips and Rogers (2020) underscored the importance of establishing rapport and pointed out that building positive relationship with instructors is a crucial part of being a good supervisor. Supervisors should respect novice and experienced teachers' needs and provide some opportunities for them to transfer information and construct deeper understanding of their teaching practices (Zepeda, 2017). Supervisors support teachers in developing their instructional practices, and with considerable time in classes and close relationships with instructors, the benefits of such scaffolding could be felt among students as well (Garver & Maloney, 2020).

Supervision is about creating working associations with staff. Creating a trusting relationship requires time. When a supervisor and a supervisee trust each other, their thoughts and efforts can be applied to each situation. Besides, they can minimize the probability of time-wasting arguments. The supervisor requires to trust the supervisee to get assigned tasks done adequately, and the supervisee should be able to trust the supervisor to back him fairly. Thus, both of them are required to exchange positive emotions and attitudes for the benefit of their organization and the enhancement of work. But when it comes to assessment and evaluation, the relationship between supervisors and those who are supervised becomes complicated (Siddiek, 2012).

Language teacher supervision is not just concerned with the creative and positive aspects of assisting instructors to accomplish their full potential. If it were, the title might be "teacher development", rather than teacher supervision. Moreover, Sullivan and Glanz (2000) maintained that, in the past, language teacher supervision was considered as an act of finding faults through observing language teachers' classes. Therefore, by this very early definition, supervision equated to an inspection which is well put by Blumberg (1980) in his book entitled *Supervisors and Teachers: A Private Cold War*. Supervision is for all the staff at schools such as instructors, managers and other individuals in charge (Duke, 1987). Besides, in the context of teaching and learning, unfortunately, many language instructors never receive any training for performing the duties of supervisors. In addition, it is usually believed that language instructors who are upgraded to supervisory positions will automatically know how to supervise probably because they are higher in status than their colleagues (Bailey, 2006).

Teacher supervision is a significant and fundamental part of language teachers' professional development, and the supervisor should improve the teaching process and the effectiveness of training without having a judgmental attitude. Furthermore, the way teachers consider supervision in schools and classrooms is an essential factor that determines the results of the supervision process (Chen & Cheng, 2013). Moreover, because of evaluative approaches of supervision, novice teachers harbor more negative beliefs toward the act of supervision than skilled and professional teachers. Novice teachers believe that supervisors' main duty is only

finding their faults and fear that supervisors will report their deficiencies to the school managers (Tesfaw & Hofman, 2014).

An attitude is “a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner” (Rokeach, 1971, p. 180). Freeman (1989, p. 36) defined attitude as “a stance toward self, activity, and others that links intrapersonal dynamics with external performance and behaviors”. Students’ attitudes toward language teaching have been examined in sociolinguistics and second language acquisition research for decades. However, language instructors’ attitudes toward supervision have received no attention (Bailey, 2006). Attitude is the predisposition of the people to judge some symbol or object or aspect of their world in a positive or critical manner. Opinions are considered as the verbal expressions of attitudes. However, attitudes might be expressed in nonverbal behavior as well. Attitudes involve both the affective core of liking or disliking, and the belief or cognitive elements that can describe the object of the attitude, the characteristics of the attitude, and its relations to other objects. It can be concluded that all attitudes involve beliefs, but not all beliefs are attitudes (Katz, 1960).

Supervision has been examined by different researchers and scholars from a diverse range of aspects. Acheson and Gall (1997) reported that in Zimbabwe many teachers fear being supervised because they believed that teacher supervision has always been biased toward judgement. Furthermore, Zimbabwean teachers have a negative viewpoint about supervision and they consider their supervisors as fault finders in the classroom. Besides, teachers with opposing expectations may feel dissatisfied with a reflective rather than evaluative post-observation meeting. In most of the cases, what teachers expect to receive from the post-observation conference is a balance of positive appraisal and constructive criticism (Chamberlin, 2000). Further, Kutsyuruba (2003) examined the standpoints of Ukrainian and Canadian beginning high school teachers. According to the results of his study, the Ukrainian and Canadian participants believed that the supervision is important for their professional development. Moreover, the participants of his study agreed that as novice teachers, they should grow and develop in order to become professional teachers.

In a qualitative study, Azizpour and Gholami (2021b) investigated seven teacher-supervisors’ attitudes toward supervision in Iranian language schools. They conducted semi-structured interviews with the supervisors to explore their attitudes and experiences toward supervision. The interviews drew upon emergent methodology to categorize the interviewees’ value-laden comments into four major attitudinal themes and nine subthemes. The results of the study demonstrated that supervisors’ workload is too demanding with many other non-supervisory responsibilities. Moreover, the supervisors voiced some ethical conflicts they face in this position such as critically commenting on their friends’ performance and firing teachers. Besides, teacher-supervisors are assigned to supervisory roles due to their outstanding teaching potentials, merits, and experience with no formal training on supervision. It is worth noting that there are not any transparent criteria and rubrics

for language school managers to draw upon to select supervisors in Iranian language schools (Azizpour & Gholami, 2021a).

In another study, Kayaoglu (2012) surveyed Turkish supervisees' standpoints and found that supervision has no specific value regarding professional improvement and growth of teachers. In addition, Turkish supervised teachers considered supervision as a negative experience. Regarding peer evaluation, Salih (2013) studied instructors' viewpoints toward peer evaluation or review of teaching as a factor for professional enhancement and quality improvement. The analysis of data provided different insights into the instructors' viewpoints toward peer evaluation as a process in the quality assurance system. Consequently, the findings of the study revealed that peer evaluation is an efficient factor for developing instructors' teaching profession.

Furthermore, Tesfaw and Hofman (2014) investigated the existing attitudes of instructors toward instructional supervision in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The purpose of their study was to determine whether there is any difference between experienced and novice instructors in their perceptions toward supervisory practices, and whether there is any relationship with perceived professional development. The findings of the study showed that the supervisory approaches were infrequently practiced in secondary schools. No significant differences were found between novice and experienced instructors in their attitudes toward supervisory processes practiced at their schools. In addition, there were significant weak to moderate positive relationships between the actual supervisory approaches, instructors' attitudes, and professional development. Finally, instructors' attitudes were considered as the significant contributor to their professional development and growth. Besides, Moradi et al. (2014) investigated the perceptions of 34 teachers on supervision through a questionnaire and interview. The result of the study revealed that teachers in classroom observations attempted to please their supervisor and ensure supervisors that they adhere to the program policy, because they were worried about the consequences of getting the unsatisfactory rating by supervisors and even being fired.

As supervision is mainly done with the purpose of professional development and provision of constructive feedback and scaffolding to teachers in Iranian EFL context, the present study subscribes to the Freeman's (1982) "supervisory model" as its theoretical framework. This model confers the greatest importance to constructive feedback and the improvement of teaching and learning. According to this model, the supervisor acts as an evaluator and expert providing constructive feedback to teachers and evaluates the overall quality of their performance. Moreover, the supervisor makes recommendations to assist teachers to excel in their practices, and these recommendations could cover a wide range of areas such as lesson planning, teaching activities, and classroom management. Freeman (1982) contented that the criteria for evaluation in this model need to be crystal clear and that throughout the supervision process, teachers should be made aware of the standards they are going to be judged against.

Consistent with the centralized nature of the education system in Iran, supervision of language schools is also centralized. Teacher-supervisors inspect teachers, observe their classes and evaluate their teaching performance, but what is being done in the name of teacher supervision is unclear and we do not know what attitudes teachers hold toward supervision system. Language teacher supervision is a necessary function and an integral part of teachers and supervisors' careers and professional experiences (Amini & Gholami, 2018).

Furthermore, EFL teacher supervision in Iranian language schools plays a crucial role in the improvement of education system and the way in which teachers perceive it. Nowadays, there is an extending scope of supervisory practices in Iranian language schools, managers most often select an experienced teacher to act as a teacher-supervisor with too much authority entrusted in supervisors in most of the language schools, and they invest much money and time in their teacher-supervisors. It is worth noting that these supervisors' duties can be mainly evaluative and judgmental or more developmental in focus. Therefore, EFL teachers are supervised and evaluated by supervisors; however, most of them cannot benefit from the supervisors as much as they need. On the other hand, supervision in Iranian language schools does not enjoy a rich basis and requires improvements in both its theoretical foundations as well as classroom practices. The literature on language teacher supervision from the past few decades includes descriptions and analyses of supervisory approaches (Bailey, 2006). However, the current study makes a unique contribution to this field, as it offers a detailed account of EFL teachers' attitudes toward teacher supervision in Iranian language schools. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there have not been enough studies in the literature on language teacher supervision and on the attitudes EFL teachers hold toward teacher supervision in Iranian language schools. Thus, this research topic has remained under-researched.

Methodology

Participants

The participants of the current study were 218 EFL teachers and included 142 female and 76 male teachers. The teachers participating in this study were selected from English language schools of different cities in Iran. The teachers' ages ranged from 21 to 50 with a mean age of 30 and their years of teaching experience varied from 2 to 27 years with a mean of 7 years. Moreover, the participating teachers had BA, MA, PhD, or they were MA, or PhD students in TEFL, English language and literature, or English Translation Studies.

Instruments

The researchers employed a questionnaire for exploring Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes on teacher supervision. This questionnaire was adopted from Moradi et al. (2014) and included 35 multiple choice items rated on five points labeled strongly

disagree, disagree, no idea, agree, and strongly agree. Thus, the researchers assigned 1-5 for positively worded items and 5-1 for negatively worded items when scoring. Five university professors of Applied Linguistics confirmed the validity of this questionnaire. Besides, through using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, the reliability of the questionnaire was also found to be (0.90). According to Moradi et al. (2014), the questionnaire consisted of five subcategories: teachers' evaluation of supervision, their attitudes toward the mode of supervision, the contributions of supervision to their development, and the process before, during, and after supervision.

Procedure

The present study aimed at discovering the attitudes EFL teachers hold toward teacher supervision in Iranian language schools. In order to achieve the desired goal of the study, the researchers selected 218 EFL teachers from different English language schools in Iran. It is worth noting that the participants were selected based on purposeful sampling. To this end, the researchers selected the teachers who have been supervised for at least two years. Afterwards, the researchers employed a questionnaire developed by Moradi et al. (2014) for exploring the participants' attitudes toward supervision. The questionnaire included 35 multiple choice items that were rated on five points labeled strongly disagree, disagree, no idea, agree, and strongly agree. Thus, the researchers assigned 1-5 for positively worded items and 5-1 for negatively worded items when scoring. Furthermore, it must be noted that the questionnaire included five subcategories in terms of teachers' evaluation of supervision, their attitudes toward the mode of supervision, the contributions of supervision to their development, and the process prior to, during, and after supervision. Then, the researchers reported the data based on the principles of qualitative research and reported EFL teachers' attitudes, feelings, suggestions, and experiences regarding teacher supervision in Iranian language schools.

Data Analysis and Results

The data collected in the current study was analyzed and reported quantitatively using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 21 for Windows. Besides, it should be noted that the data obtained through the questionnaire was subjected to descriptive analysis based on the research question in order to explore the attitudes EFL teachers hold toward teacher supervision in Iranian language schools.

The research question of the current study was concerned with the attitudes EFL teachers hold toward supervision in Iranian language schools. One major component of the questionnaire addressed the general evaluation of supervision by EFL teachers and the findings in this respect are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

General Evaluation of Supervision by EFL Teachers

The current supervision ...	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	No Idea 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1	
1. Is useful for teachers.		20.2	38.5	26.6	7.3	7.3
2. Is necessary for novice teachers.		45.4	38.1	4.1	6	6.4
3. Is mostly for paperwork formalities and regulations.		34.9	23.4	32.1	5.5	4.1

As is evident in Table 1, just over a fifth of the teachers participating in this study agree that the current supervision is useful for them. Furthermore, more than two fifths of the teachers strongly agree that the supervision is necessary for novice teachers. Therefore, the analysis of the first two items in this table reveals that most of the participants hold positive feelings toward supervision. In contrast, over one third of the participants strongly agree, and slightly less than a quarter of them agree that the supervision is mainly for paperwork formalities and regulations.

This questionnaire also explores teachers' attitudes toward the mode of supervision. This is demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Mode of Supervision

The current supervision...	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	No Idea 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
4. Is more or less "looking for errors" and critical.	30.7	28.9	26.6	6.9	6.9
5. Is democratic rather than authoritative.	3.2	6.9	18.3	38.5	33
6. Includes sharing mutual responsibilities and participation between the teacher and the supervisor.	5.5	8.7	31.2	36.2	18.3
7. Is done with the aim of control, rather than teaching improvement.	36.2	23.4	29.8	6	4.6
8. Is collaborative rather than an inspection process.	0.9	6.9	34.9	38.5	18.8
9. Puts the teacher under pressure.	31.7	28	28	7.3	5
10. Creates anxiety in teachers.	34.4	48.2	8.7	4.6	4.1
11. Focuses mostly on teachers.	32.6	48.6	6.9	6.4	5.5
12. Focuses mostly on learners.	5	7.3	11	35.3	14.3

Therefore, a great number of the teachers have the fear of being controlled and penalized through supervision. In addition, over a third of the participants strongly agree that the supervision is done with the aim of control, rather than teaching improvement. On the other hand, around two fifths of the teachers disagree that the current supervision is collaborative rather than an inspection process. Thus, there is no proper atmosphere for collaboration in real sense and the current supervisor dominates the whole process. It is worth noting that just under a third of the teachers strongly agree that the supervision puts them under pressure and most of the teachers agree that supervision creates anxiety in them. In addition, approximately half of the participants agree that supervision focuses mostly on teachers. Nonetheless, a small number of them strongly agree that it focuses mostly on learners.

On the other hand, EFL teachers' attitudes toward the contributions of supervision to their growth are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Contributions of Supervision to Their Growth

The current supervision...	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	No Idea 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
13. guides us in problem-solving.	4.6	11	28	34.4	22
14. provides educational materials and assists in teaching our courses.	6.9	9.2	11	31.7	41.3
15. increases our motivation and morale (sense of team-work).	7.8	7.8	25.7	32.1	26.6
16. makes contribution to our professional growth and developments.	8.3	37.6	7.3	22.9	23.9
17. increases my teaching skills and practice	8.7	36.2	25.2	4.6	25.2
18. helps me discover my shortcomings and improve them	8.3	7.3	30.3	36.7	17.4
19. helps me overcome instructional problems.	2.8	29.8	28	35.8	3.7
20. damages my confidence effectiveness.	30.3	49.5	9.2	6.9	4.1
21. Provides the educational leadership.	6.4	9.6	45.4	31.2	7.3

A great number of the teachers participating in this study believe that the current supervision cannot guide them in solving their teaching problems; however, an insignificant number of them strongly agree that the supervision guides them in problem-solving. Moreover, more than two fifths of the teachers strongly disagree that the supervision provides educational materials and assists in teaching their courses. Furthermore, a significant number of the teachers noted that the supervision decreases their motivation and morale. On the contrary, a small number of them agree that supervision increases* their motivation and confidence in team-work. Besides, over a third of the teachers agree that the current supervision makes contribution to their professional growth, develops their teaching skills and practices, and helps them discover their shortcomings and improve them. In contrast, more than a third of the teachers disagree that supervision helps them overcome instructional problems. It must be noted that nearly a half of the teachers agree that the supervision damages their confidence and effectiveness. In addition, a small minority of the participants strongly agree that the current supervision provides the educational leadership.

Furthermore, EFL teachers' attitudes toward the process prior to supervision are addressed through the questionnaire, too. Table 4 makes it evident that over two fifths of the participants strongly agree and more than a third of them agree that they prefer the supervisor checks their lesson plan before observing and discusses it.

Table 4

Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Process Prior to Supervision

Before observing...	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	No Idea 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
22. I prefer that supervisor check my lesson plan before observing and discusses it.	45.4	36.7	5.5	7.3	5
23. Teachers should be observed unexpectedly.	4.1	5	11	44.5	35.3
24. Unexpected observation shows real performance.	3.7	6	6	48.2	36.2
25. Teachers should be aware of observation criteria.	38.5	47.7	7.8	2.3	3.7

Besides, more than two fifths of the teachers disagree and more than a third of them strongly disagree with the item that “teachers should be observed unexpectedly.” It is significant to note that a very small number of the teachers strongly agree that unexpected observation shows real performance. Thus, a great

number of them disagree with unexpected observation and they believe that unexpected observation cannot show their real performance. Moreover, nearly a half of the participants agree that the supervisor should make teachers aware of observation criteria before observing their classes.

In addition, the questionnaire explored EFL teachers' attitudes toward the process during and after supervision. As is evident in Table 5, just over half of the participants agree that during supervision, they try to please supervisor and teach the way the supervisor is satisfied.

Table 5

Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Process During and After Supervision

During observation, I	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	No Idea 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
26. try to please supervisor and teach the way he is satisfied.	29.8	50.9	9.2	5.5	4.6
27. ensure supervisor that I adhere to the program policy.	35.8	48.6	6.9	5.5	3.2
28. Worry about the consequences of getting the unsatisfactory rating by supervisors and even being fired.	31.7	50.9	7.8	5	4.6
29. Study the evaluation report carefully.	35.8	24.8	25.7	9.2	4.6
30. Try to use the feedback to improve my teaching practice.	42.2	26.1	22.5	5.5	3.7
31. Try to change my teaching method according to the feedback.	8.3	37.2	44.5	5.5	4.6
32. Feedback is superficial and unsatisfactory.	43.1	31.7	12.8	5.5	6.9
33. I am not sufficiently Challenged and involved in briefing discussion.	40.4	35.8	12.8	6.9	4.1
34. I follow my teaching style and ignore the supervisor's ideas.	39	8.7	6.4	40.8	5
35. The feedback damage my confidence.	48.6	24.8	10.6	11.9	4.1

Moreover, approximately half of the teachers agree that during the supervision, they ensure supervisor that adhere to the program policy. In addition, more than half of the participants agree that during the supervision, they “worry about the consequences of getting the unsatisfactory rating by supervisors and even being fired”. Therefore, according to the results of this table, nearly a half of the teachers strongly agree that they feel annoyed and anxious in the presence of a supervisor in their classrooms. As is evident in the second part of Table 5, more than a third of the teachers strongly agree that, after supervision, they study the evaluation report carefully. Further, over two fifths of the participants strongly agree that after supervision, they try to use the feedback to improve their teaching practice. On the contrary, slightly less than a quarter of them have no idea on the supervisors’ feedback. On the other hand, more than two fifths of the teachers strongly agree that after supervision, the feedback is superficial and unsatisfactory. Furthermore, it is worth noting that just over two fifths of the participants strongly agree that after supervision, they are not sufficiently challenged and involved in briefing discussion. Although just over two fifths of the participants disagree with the item that after supervision, “I follow my teaching style and ignore the supervisor’s ideas”, still around two fifths of them strongly agree that after supervision, they follow their teaching style and ignore the supervisor’s ideas. Finally, approximately half of the participants strongly agree that after supervision, the supervisors’ feedback damage their confidence.

Discussion

This study intended to identify the attitudes EFL teachers hold toward EFL teacher supervision in Iranian language schools. The findings of the study revealed that a great number of the participants found the current supervision to be useful and necessary for novice teachers. Over a third of the teachers were under the impression that the current supervision contributes to their professional development and improves their teaching skills and practices. These findings are echoed in the literature by some scholars (e.g. Amini & Gholami, 2018; Kutsyuruba, 2003). For instance, Kutsyuruba (2003) examined the standpoints of Ukrainian and Canadian beginning high school teachers. According to the results of his study, the Ukrainian and Canadian participants believed that the supervision is important for their professional development. Moreover, the participants of his study agreed that as novice teachers, they should develop in order to become professional teachers. Besides, language teacher supervision is a necessary function and an integral part of teachers and supervisors’ careers and professional experiences, and it can develop language teachers and learners (Amini & Gholami, 2018). In contrast to these findings, in another study, Kayaoglu (2012) surveyed the standpoints of Turkish supervisees and found that supervision has no specific value regarding professional improvement of teachers.

One plausible justification for this finding is that novice language teachers struggle with data keeping, classroom management, arranging the setting of their classes, and teaching rules more than experienced teachers. Thus, teacher-supervisors are required to guide them to improve in their teaching. This is in line with some scholars' findings who believed that effective supervisors are expected to understand novice instructors' problems and struggles, and support them to improve their instruction and classroom management skills (Roberson & Roberson, 2009; Watkins, 2005).

In the same vein, Zepeda (2012) underscored the importance of providing supervision, guidance, and constructive feedback to novice teachers about levels of learner engagement in their classes. Besides, Salih (2013) studied the viewpoints of instructors toward peer evaluation or review of teaching as a factor for professional enhancement and quality improvement. This study provides different insights into the instructors' viewpoints toward peer evaluation as a process in the quality assurance system. Consequently, the findings of the study revealed that peer evaluation is an efficient factor for developing instructors' teaching profession.

In contrast to these findings, over one third of the participants strongly agreed, and slightly less than a quarter of them agreed that the supervision is mainly for paperwork formalities and regulations. Moreover, slightly less than a quarter of the teachers had no idea on their supervisors' feedback, and more than two fifths of them reported that their supervisors' feedback is superficial and unsatisfactory.

Such findings emanate from the fact that teacher-supervisors are expected to meet the expectations of managers in Iranian language schools and submit them the required documents and records regarding classroom observation and supervision. However, as we noted earlier, language teacher supervision is expected to be supportive, focusing on the quality of instruction, and improving outcomes for teachers rather than meeting language school targets.

In contrast to teachers' positive attitudes toward the general evaluation of supervision, almost a third of the teachers maintained that the current supervision is more or less "looking for errors" and critical and they had the fear of being controlled and penalized through supervision. Nearly, half of the teachers agreed that the supervision damages their confidence and effectiveness. Over a third of the participants strongly agreed that the supervision is done with the aim of controlling rather than improving their teaching practices. A significant number of the teachers agreed that supervision puts them under pressure and creates anxiety in them. Furthermore, a significant number of the teachers asserted that the supervision decreases their motivation and morale. On the other hand, it is clear from the findings that slightly less than a quarter of the participants do not receive feedback after observation, and this indicates that the supervisors do not focus on the teachers' strengths and weaknesses. In contrast, some teachers noted that their supervisors merely provide critical and negative feedback on their instruction without taking into account the positive aspect of their instruction. Furthermore, because of evaluative nature of supervision, novice teachers harbor more negative feelings toward the act of supervision than skilled and professional teachers. Novice teachers

contend that the main duty of supervisors is only finding their faults and fear that supervisors will report their deficiencies to the school managers (Tesfaw & Hofman, 2014).

According to the participants' pessimistic attitudes toward the mode of supervision, teachers' anxiety in the presence of the supervisor in their language classrooms may be as a result of the fact that their promotion and pay raise depend on the supervisor's satisfaction. Thus, they may experience serious anxiety due to the presence of the supervisor in their classes. Moreover, the participants' nervousness and concern can also be as a result of their unfamiliarity with the supervisor and the fact that they had not been observed by him earlier. Another major source of the uneasiness might be unfamiliarity with the supervisor's expectations and evaluation criteria before observation. The teacher-supervisor evaluates teachers' teaching performance through classroom visits. Thus, teachers will be at ease if they know their supervisor and be familiar with the supervisor's supervisory style and expectations. In the same vein, Acheson and Gall (1997) reported that, in Zimbabwe, many teachers are concerned about being supervised because they believed that teacher supervision is done with some bias. Furthermore, Zimbabwean teachers had a negative viewpoint about supervision and saw their supervisors as fault finders in the classroom.

Besides, Iranian language school managers choose some teachers as supervisors because they are considered as cooperative employees and efficient instructors. If supervisors continue to teach while in their supervisory positions, undoubtedly, they will serve as good role models for other teachers, but if their new responsibilities mean they no longer teach, then, they are expected to convey to other teachers, through discussion and explanation, what they know about language teaching. Moreover, a great number of the Iranian EFL teachers participating in the current study claimed that they cannot feel confident when the supervisor does not notify them of the observation protocol beforehand. Therefore, if they know when their supervisor will come, they will be more relaxed. In this regard, Lam (2001) identified educators' perceptions to classroom observation as a means of professional development and appraisal through using questionnaires. After analyzing the data, he found that participants prefer peer coaching, believing that appraisal causes pressure among teachers. He also concluded that it is advantageous to build a model of classroom observation that is exclusively used for staff development. Furthermore, instructors may consider supervision as a constructive and necessary activity if the supervisors give them security by supporting them, guiding them and evaluating them fairly in their supervisory activities (Wiles & Lovell, 1975). When a supervisor and a supervisee trust each other, their thoughts and efforts can be applied to each situation and the probability of time-wasting arguments decreases. The supervisor is expected to trust the supervisee to get assigned tasks done adequately, and the supervisee should be able to trust the supervisor to back him fairly. Thus, both of them are required to exchange positive emotions and attitudes for the benefit of their organization and the enhancement of work (Siddiek, 2012).

As for the procedure of implementing supervision, a great number of the participants disagreed with unexpected observation and noted that unexpected observation cannot show their real performance. Moreover, nearly a half of the teachers agreed that the supervisor should make them aware of observation criteria prior to observing their classes. One possible solution for this issue is that if teachers are dissatisfied with supervision, they must discuss this issue with their supervisor to resolve the problems; however, if they cannot reach agreement with the supervisor, they should raise the issues with their language school manager.

Just one of the studies elaborated in the literature has focused on the exploration of teachers' views on supervision in Iranian EFL setting, and it has employed a limited number of participants (Moradi et al., 2014). Further, the findings of the present study regarding the processes during supervision revealed that over half of the participants indicated that during supervision, they try to please supervisor, and "worry about the consequences of getting the unsatisfactory rating by supervisors and even being fired". Besides, nearly a half of them strongly agreed that they feel annoyed and anxious in the presence of a supervisor in their classrooms. Moreover, over two fifths of the participants pointed out that after supervision, they try to use the feedback to improve their teaching practice. This has been echoed in the literature by Moradi et al. (2014).

Conclusion

The current study investigated the attitudes EFL teachers hold toward teacher supervision in Iranian language schools and analyzed 218 teachers' attitudes toward supervision through a questionnaire. The findings of the study indicated that a great number of the instructors find the supervision helpful and significant for inexperienced teachers. On the contrary, a good number of the teachers held negative attitudes toward supervision in that supervision makes them anxious, threatens them, and destroys their self-esteem, and motivation. Meanwhile, most of them pointed out that the current supervision is authoritative and critical, and is carried out mostly for paperwork formalities and regulations. Furthermore, a great number of the teachers indicated that their supervisors' feedback is superficial and unsatisfactory. In conclusion, some of the negative attitudes of EFL teachers toward supervision result from the fact that the supervisors have received no professional training to act as a supervisor. Therefore, they fail to establish a positive relationship with teachers. Another conclusion is that teacher-supervisors in Iranian language schools need to consider the characteristics of teachers. Moreover, supervisors' feedback should be constructive and encouraging and they must establish rapport with teachers. In order for the supervision to be effective, a positive working relationship among supervisor, teachers and manager should be ensured. Moreover, pre and post-observation meetings need to be held in order to improve teaching and learning and clarify observation procedure for teachers. Besides, the supervisors should assess teachers' needs, discover their strengths and weaknesses, and encourage them to enhance their teaching skills.

The results of the current study provide some pedagogical implications that can be of benefit for EFL teachers, teacher-supervisors, and managers in Iranian

language schools. The findings could be of importance to teacher-supervisors and help them discover teachers' positive and negative attitudes toward teacher supervision. Thus, they could have an opportunity to concern teachers' feelings in their future practices and offer more effective support and feedback to teachers.

To sum up, teacher-supervisors, and language school managers can consult these results as a means of identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis (Hill & Westbrook, 1997) of teacher supervision in Iranian language schools. SWOT analysis is a framework for identifying and analyzing the internal and external factors that can have an impact on the viability of a project, product, place or person (Hill & Westbrook, 1997). The SWOT analysis of teacher supervision could help supervisors develop a full awareness of all the factors involved in making decisions and can increase control over teaching and supervisory practices in addition to improving professional development among teachers.

The present study faced the following limitations throughout its conduction and these limitations should be taken into account in interpreting the findings. The first limitation concerns the data collection technique in that the researchers employed a questionnaire to collect the data from the participants. Therefore, future studies can include other data collection techniques, for instance semi-structured interviews, to yield more in-depth results. Moreover, this study calls for further investigation of the topic through considering the differences in their age, gender, academic degree, and job experience of supervisors.

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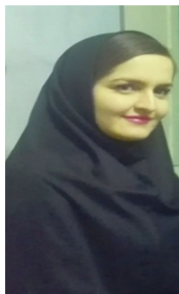
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EAP Learners' Attitudes Toward Problem-Based Learning: A Fast-Track to Fourth Generation Universities

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Abstract

Problem-based Learning (PBL) is considered one of the instructional models of learning with many pedagogical advantages that can bridge the current traditional learning systems' gaps. It is a method of learning in which the students start with a problem rather than the input provided by the teacher. The current study set out to investigate the major underlying factors of PBL from the Iranian English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students' point of view. It also aimed at identifying their attitudes toward the different elements of PBL. The data were collected through a validated and piloted questionnaire based on Likert scale (Cronbach's Alpha of 0.73) from among 379 Iranian EAP university students (196 male and 183 female) from soft and hard science fields of studies. The results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) showed that the students considered four different factors, namely (1) Project-Based Learning, (2) Collaborative Learning, (3) Use of Technology in Learning, and (4) Autonomous Learning. Moreover, the results of descriptive statistics also indicated that the Iranian students had a generally positive attitude toward PBL and believed that it would assist them in the process of language learning. Our findings can hold important implications for EFL teachers and materials developers and remind them to consider the students' socio-cultural background and previous educational experiences and accordingly plan an apt curriculum based on the students' needs and preferences.

Keywords: PBL, EAP university students, attitude, questionnaire, Iran

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Saturday, May, 15, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27258.1313>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

With the turn of the third millennium, the higher education systems require profound metamorphosis to account for the society's needs. The outcomes of the first and second-generation universities are too insufficient to saturate the requirements of present-time societies. The third and fourth generation universities' missions lie beyond education and research and are mostly targeted toward promoting knowledge, entrepreneurship, and creation of value for the immediate society (Lukovics & Zuti, 2015). These universities have to develop human resources which are skillful, creative, self-directed, problem-solver, and entrepreneur. A review of the literature reveals the superiority and prominence of student-centered learning over the traditional educational procedures, as it will assist the students to be more responsible for their learning, collaborate with their classmates, be autonomous, and improve their critical thinking skills (Liu et al., 2020).

The current status of higher education in Iran also indicates a preference for student-centered learning in academia. This is mainly witnessed in EAP courses, where the learners' cooperation and involvement can greatly improve the learners' progress. This is of course in spite of the fact that a number of challenges from both learners' and teachers' perspectives are pinpointed in the literature on the status of EAP in Iran, namely lack of practice, students' low level of language proficiency, teacher-centered classes, students' negative attitudes toward English, language exposure, and availability of the material (Eslami, 2010; Eslami Rasekh & Simin, 2011; Farhady, Hazaveh, & Hedayati, 2010). These challenges are due to the fact that the dominant learning model in the universities in Iran is lecture-based which can give rise to sheer friction and resistance in the mechanism of developing trained people for the community that has been levelled up to match those expected from third and fourth generation universities. Addressing the aforesaid problems requires adopting an innovative educational system with a progressive pedagogical approach. PBL is one of the modern pedagogical models of learning with versatile competencies which can hopefully contribute effectively to the fulfilment of the universities' mission in Iran. Savery (2006) defines PBL, first introduced in 1960s, as "an instructional (and curricular) learner-centered approach that empowers learners to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem" (p. 12). In PBL, the focus is on the active participation of the students in learning, their ability to solve problems and explain the reasons, as well as developing skills in analysis and doing research (Barrows, 2000; Hmelo-Silver, 2004). During the recent years, a growing number of researchers as well as educators have noticed PBL and its use in different disciplines. The main purpose of the current study is to explore the Iranian university EAP students' attitude toward PBL and examine its underlying factors.

The core concept of PBL is believed to have been rooted back to the time before the dawn of history (Wee & Kek, 2002) since they used to pursue the apprenticeship framework of learning and knowledge transmission from father/master to an apprentice. The modern scientific conceptualization of the term is related to Socrates's views in ancient Greek by defining it in his "dialogs" or

dialectical approach (Schmidt, 2012) and, more recently, in the 20th century, Dewey's (1938) model of experiential learning. The first higher education center that is believed to be the pioneer of PBL is McMaster university in Canada, which started a reform in its medical education programs since 1967 (Lee & Kwan, 2014; Servant-Miklos, Norman, & Schmidt, 2019). Other universities like Maastricht had also experienced reform using PBL.

PBL is considered one of the instructional models of learning in the new millennium with many pedagogical merits that can bridge the current traditional learning systems' gaps. PBL is a method of learning in which the students start with a problem rather than the input provided by the teacher. It is a learner-centered (Savery, 2006), self-directed (Barrows, 1996) method of learning in which students are involved in self-search activities and through collaboration with the peers in small groups (Springer, Stann, & Donovan, 1999) and the supervision of the teacher can solve the problem or investigate a raised case. Schmidt, Rotgans, and Yew (2019, p. 26) summarized six distinct characteristics of Problem Based Learning: (a) PBL starts with a problem, (b) the students are required to collaborate in some small groups, (c) the instructor provides supple guidance, (d) there are limited lectures from the instructors, (e) the educations and learning is student-centered, and (f) the students have enough time to self-study.

Although PBL has its genesis in medical education, a brief telescopic view of the literature in the last 30 years reveals that it is now widely used in different disciplines. Studies range from the fields of medical education (e.g., Abdelkarim, Schween, & Ford, 2018; Choi, Lindquist, & Song, 2014; Ungaretti, Thompson, Miller & Peterson, 2015), pure science (e.g., Klegeris & Hurren, 2011; Li & Tsai, 2018), mathematical competence (Juandi, 2021), and engineering (e.g., Arman, 2018; Orji & Ogbuanya, 2018), to language education (e.g., Aliyue, 2017; Bejarano Beltran, Perez, & Yucely, 2016; Coffin, 2013; Fonseca-Martínez, 2017; Shin & Azman, 2014). The topics under investigation are also varied. In the realm of education, excluding humanities and social sciences, such topics as comparing the PBL and the traditional lecture-based methods (Choi, Lindquist & Song, 2014; Orji & Ogbuanya, 2018; Wong & Day, 2009), the effect of PBL on problem-solving activities (e.g., Choi, Lindquist & Song, 2014; Klegeris & Hurren, 2011), the effect of PBL on critical thinking (e.g., Choi, Lindquist & Song, 2014), change on students' perception (e.g., Klegeris & Hurren, 2011), and students' and teachers' attitudes toward PBL (e.g., Abdelkarim, Schween, & Ford, 2018; Arman, 2018) have been the targets of investigation. It needs to be noted that majority of previous studies in the literature reported the positive impact of PBL among the students of different ability levels and grades (e.g., Guimarães & Lima, 2021; Hmelo-Silver, 2013; Liu et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Merritt, Lee, Rillero, & Kinach, 2017; Nariman & Chrispeels, 2015)

Interestingly, humanities and social sciences were among the last disciplines which welcomed PBL pedagogy, and it was early 21st century when language education used the tenets (Ansarian & Lin, 2018). The literature on the English language learning mostly concerns the application of PBL in improving language skills / subskills (e.g., Abdullah & Tan, 2008; Aliyue, 2017; Fard & Vakili,

2018; Lin, 2017; Elizabeth & Zulida, 2012; Sy, Adnan, & Ardi, 2013, Othman & Shah, 2013; Shin & Azman, 2014), metacognition (e.g., Aliyue, 2017), learning anxiety (Hwang, Hsu, Lai, & Hsueh, 2017), social interaction (e.g., Bejarano Beltran, Perez, & Yucely, 2016), and learners' attitudes (e.g., Huang, 2012). In the past few years, few studies have dealt with the learning and teaching stakeholders' attitudes toward PBL. The distinguishing factor among the existing studies is that two out of them - Huang (2012) and Abdelkarim, Schween, & Ford (2018) - administered data collection instrument after the students' / faculty members' involvement in the PBL program to help restructure and renovate the existing programs while in the study by Arman (2018), the data were collected prior to the implementation of the PBL program to embed it into their educational framework. Huang (2012) administered a 16-item-interview related to students' perception, satisfaction, motivation, and learning achievements in PBL to 42 medical first-year university students' who experienced PBL in their English classes. The findings revealed mostly positive results in terms of students' four areas of research. Arman (2018), on the other hand, collected data using a 30-item survey collecting data on four areas of Using Computer and Internet in Education, Self-Directed Learning, Cooperative Learning Style, and Practical Skills in Electronics from a number of undergraduate electrical engineering students. The findings confirmed the positive attitude of the students toward the PBL program in the Analog Electronic course.

Moreover, in the study by Abdelkarim, Schween, and Ford (2018), 243 faculty members from six U.S. medical and dental schools answered a 10-item survey to compare their attitudes about PBL which resulted in a significant increase in the enthusiasm, engagement, and agreement with PBL program. Similarly, Dole, Bloom, and Doss (2017) also reported a boost in the students' motivation, autonomy, and involvement in the lesson. In another study, Ulger (2018) stated that due to the use of PBL, there was a significant increase in the creative thinking of seventeen undergraduate students from Turkey. In another study, Liu et al. (2020) explored the implementation of PBL in different schools in the U.S. and the data on attitudes toward PBL, the experienced challenges, and the used techniques were collected from twenty-five teachers through conducting a series of interviews. The results showed that overall, as a result of the increase in the learners' motivation and their rate of deep learning and critical thinking skills, the teachers favored PBL.

Although the benefits of PBL are acclaimed and acknowledged by numerous scholars in the literature, there is still a need for inspecting the students' attitudes, especially quantitative ones, toward the issue (Liu et al., 2020; Merritt, Lee, Rillero, & Kinach, 2017). This may of course be as a result of the experienced challenges in the implementation of PBL (Kim, Belland, & Axelrod, 2018). To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is no published evidence for the development and implementation of the PBL program in universities in the context of Iran, let alone any empirical evidence regarding the psychological aspects of the PBL and attitude toward it. Therefore, in response to this niche in the literature this study is an attempt to examine the Iranian EAP students' attitudes toward the implementation of problem-based learning in the pedagogical framework of EAP students as a step forward to lay the foundation of a change in the educational

system in Iran's higher education institutions. Accordingly, the current study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors are regarded by the Iranian EAP learners concerning the implementation of PBL?
2. What is the Iranian EAP learners' attitude toward PBL approach and its different mentioned factors?

Method

Participants

Two groups of participants took part in the current study. The first group were 40 Iranian university students who took part in the study's preliminary pilot phase on developing the questionnaire (22 male and 18 female). The second group of participants, as depicted in Table 1, were 379 university students (196 male participants and 183 female participants, with an average age of 23) studying EAP courses. This group took part in the main data collection phase of this study. They were from different fields of study (*hard science* like mechanical engineering, industrial engineering, civil engineering, accounting, and *soft science* like Persian literature, law, psychology, philosophy) and were selected through convenience sampling procedure. This group was requested to fill out the developed questionnaire on EFL Learners' attitudes toward problem-based learning (PBL) approach. Also, it needs to be noted that all of the participants were Iranian and native speakers of Persian.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Main Participants of the Study

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Major	Soft science	135	35.6%
	Hard science	244	64.4%
Grade	Freshman	293	77.30%
	Sophomore	49	12.92%
	Junior	29	7.65%
	Senior	8	2.11%
Gender	Male	196	51.7%
	Female	183	48.3%
Age	18-25	285	75.19%
	26-30	69	18.20%
	31-35	25	6.59%
Total		379	100%

Instrument

The main instrument used in this study is a researcher-developed 30-item-questionnaire. To generate the questionnaire items, the researchers studied an extensive review of the literature on PBL and came up with a relevant questionnaire (Arman, 2018), which was close to the purpose of this study. Some of the items were modified and localized to fit the EFL context and the related course in Iran. Consequently, the researchers translated the items into the participants' first language (Persian) to facilitate the process of data collection (Appendix A). Then, three experts in the field of Applied Linguistics and an expert in translation and 4 EFL teachers checked the questionnaire for clarity and intelligibility to ensure its content validity. Finally, it was piloted with 40 Iranian EFL university students to check the questionnaire's reliability. Accordingly, a Cornbrash's Alpha of 0.73 was reported, which is an acceptable rate (Pallant, 2010). The questionnaire included 30 items concerning the different aspects of PBL in general English courses at universities and was based on a five-point-Likert scale (ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree").

Data Collection and Analysis

The process of data collection and analysis in the current study was done in the following two phases:

Phase 1: Piloting (Small-Scale)

In the first phase of data collection, the developed PBL questionnaire was piloted. In order to do so, 40 university students, similar to the main participants of our study (22 male and 18 female participants, with an average age of 22), filled out the questionnaire. Their similarity was established based on their age level, field of study, degree, and gender. The questionnaires were all distributed in print form and were mostly gathered from the students at one of the universities in Tehran (Therefore care must be taken regarding the generalizability of the results) and in person. The collected data were later fed into SPSS, and the Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of the questionnaire.

Phase 2: Main Data Collection (Large-Scale)

In the second stage and in order to facilitate the process of data collection, the on-line version of the questionnaire was produced via Google Forms. Later, the questionnaire link was sent to the prospective participants through email, messaging on social networks (e.g., Telegram or WhatsApp), or in person. The data were collected both through the on-line and print form of the questionnaire, as in many cases the students were found in university classes. Also, the snowball sampling procedure was adopted, and the participants were kindly asked to share the questionnaire with their other classmates and friends. In this way, a total of 400 questionnaires were collected after nearly six months. However, we had to discard 21 questionnaires upon their large number of missing items. Consequently, 379 questionnaires went for the final analysis. In order to analyze the data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. To make sure of the construct

validity of the questionnaire as well as answering the first research question and discovering the factors of PBL in Iranian students' view, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was run. Furthermore, to answer the second research question, descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were reported.

Results

Findings: Research Question One

The first research question in this study was: *What factors are regarded by the Iranian EAP learners concerning the implementation of PBL?*

In order to answer this research question, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was utilized to investigate the factor structure of students' attitude toward PBL questionnaire (30 items, in five-point Likert scale format), with the factor extraction method of principal axis factoring (PAF) and also *promax*, as a rotation method. The rationale behind using this factor extraction method, that is, PAF, was that it would yield a factor structure in which common variance was represented and unique variance, and error variance were removed (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), with the ultimate goal being maximizing the extracted variance (i.e., representing the maximum amount of data in a questionnaire). Also, the *promax* rotation method was exploited given that moderate correlation coefficients were observed among the extracted factors in the factor correlation matrix.

The suitability of the data structure for EFA was checked before its administration. First, the normality assumption of the data was inspected by examining the item's skewness and kurtosis measures with all of them being between -2 and +2. Hence, according to Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) recommendation, the data met the assumption of normality. Secondly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure was utilized to test the sufficiency of sample size for EFA, and it was 0.87, far exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Field, 2009; Kaiser, 1970, 1974). Ultimately, Bartlett's test of Sphericity was $X^2(435) = 4218.23$, $p = .00$ (see Table 2), illustrating that the correlations' magnitudes between items were sufficiently large for using PAF accurately.

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.870
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4218.23
	Df	435
	Sig.	.00

Having conducted EFA along with PAF as its extraction method, we came up with a preliminary six-factor structure (see Table 3). It should also be said that *Kaiser Criterion* was our factor retention criterion alongside a parallel analysis (see

Plonsky & Gonulal, 2015). After inspecting the factor structure matrix more closely (see Table 4), we found that two factors were indicated by just two items. As has been recommended by Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino (2013), there is a need to have at least three items per factor for it not to be considered a weak factor, one which has a moderate influence on the factor structure (Briggs & MacCallum, 2003); consequently, those two factors (factors 5 and 6 with accompanying items of 3, 4, 6, 7, see Table 4) were removed from the analysis given that they were not sufficiently represented by the items, and hence this rendered a final four-factor solution explaining 41.35% of total common variance, with those four factors accounting for 23.03 %, 9.81%, 4.80%, and 3.71%, of that common variance, respectively.

Table 3

Total Variance Explained by the Four-Factor Solution

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	Variance	Cumulative %	Total	Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	7.38	24.59	24.59	6.91	23.03	23.03	6.14
2	3.47	11.55	36.14	2.94	9.81	32.85	4.09
3	1.98	6.61	42.75	1.44	4.80	37.64	3.97
4	1.61	5.36	48.11	1.11	3.71	41.35	4.05
5	1.46	4.86	52.97	0.95	3.18	44.53	2.67
6	1.39	4.63	57.60	0.79	2.64	47.17	2.62

Based on these findings, the final “Attitude toward PBL Scale” included the following four components and their related items:

(1) Component 1: “Project-based Learning”, which accounted for 23.03 of the total variance. This factor includes 6 items (27, 25, 24, 26, 23, and 30; Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.89)

(2) Component 2: “Collaborative Learning”, which accounted for 9.81% of the total variance. This factor includes 7 items (9, 22, 13, 12, 11, 28, and 10; Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.83).

(3) Component 3: “Use of Technology in Learning”, which accounted for 4.80% of the total variance. This factor includes 5 items (21, 2, 1, 8, and 20; Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.73).

(4) Component 4: “Autonomous Learning”, which accounted for 3.71% of the total variance. This factor includes 6 items (14, 17, 16, 29, 19, and 15; Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.72).

It should be emphasized here that items 5 and 18 were removed from the factor structure because of their low coefficients (lower than the cutoff value of .47) and thus not fully represented by it (see Table 4 for more information on all six preliminary factors and their accompanying items).

Table 4

Structure Matrix of Factors and Items

	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Item 27	.845					
Item 25	.823					
Item 24	.816					
Item 26	.801					
Item 23	.720					
Item 30	.605					
Item 9		.731				
Item 22		.703				
Item 13		.692				
Item 12		.665				
Item 11		.639				
Item 28		.544				
Item 10		.534				
Item 18						
Item 21			.634			
Item 2			.628			
item 1			.616			
Item 8			.576			
Item 20			.495			
Item 14				.704		
Item 17				.565		
Item 16				.548		
Item 29				.513		
Item 19				.479		
Item 15				.478		
Item 7					0.520	
Item 6					0.501	
Item 5						
Item 4						0.515
Item 3						0.678

Findings: Research Question Two

The second research question in this study was: *What is the Iranian EAP learners' attitude toward PBL approach and its different mentioned factors?*

In the following section and to answer the second research question, the descriptive statistics for the different items on the scale are presented in more details. As depicted in Table 5, six items were associated with the first factor (i.e., *Project-Based Learning*). It was observed that item 30 received the highest mean rating score ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.03$). Nearly 70% of the students agreed that projects would improve the learners' self-confidence to a great extent. With little difference, item 27 was placed in the second place in this factor with a mean rating score of 3.79 ($SD = .95$). Moreover, nearly half of the participants believed that project will improve their language self-assessment skills ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .98$), encourage their creativity ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.03$), and make them more responsible ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.08$).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Factor 1, "Project-Based Learning" (N = 379)

Item	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	M	SD
30 English lesson projects in the class will help me improve my self-confidence.	3.4	7.1	19.5	39.8	30.1	3.86	1.03
27 Projects in the English class can assist me in mastering different language skills.	3.7	5.5	19.8	50.1	20.8	3.79	.95
26 Projects in the English class will encourage me to improve my English language self-assessment skills.	4.0	7.1	25.9	45.1	17.9	3.66	.98
25 Projects in the English class will encourage my creativity and help me enrich my practical skills.	4.5	9.5	32.7	35.6	17.7	3.53	1.03
24 English lesson projects will improve my sense of responsibility.	6.6	10.3	31.7	35.6	15.8	3.44	1.08
23 English projects will increase my interest in English language courses.	8.7	13.2	32.7	30.9	14.5	3.29	1.13

The least scored item in this section was item 23 ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.13$) on the questionnaire, which ascertained that projects would increase the learners' interest, agreed by less than half of the students. The descriptive statistics regarding

the six items related to the second factor, *Collaborative Learning*, are presented in Table 6. As can be seen, items 13 (M = 3.90, SD = .93) and 9 (M = 3.89, SD = 1.08) were the most highly scored one. It was found that nearly 70% of the participants agreed that they are in favor of group works and prefer language learning in cooperation with the other classmates.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Factor 2, “Collaborative Learning” (N = 379)

Item	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	M	SD
13 When dealing with a problem in English learning, I like to cooperate with the other students.	2.1	7.4	13.7	51.7	25.1	3.90	.93
9 I prefer to learn English in a group with my classmates.	4.0	7.1	19.3	34.8	34.8	3.89	1.08
11 I am interested in doing group work to do a project with my friends.	5.8	10.3	18.7	40.1	25.1	3.68	1.12
12 It is a waste of time to study English with the other students in a group.	10.6	12.1	16.9	30.9	29.6	3.57	1.31
28 I like to work alone on my English lesson projects.	9.0	17.4	27.2	30.3	16.1	3.27	1.18
22 When learning English, I prefer individual studying to studying in a group.	17.4	20.1	19.8	26.9	15.8	3.04	1.34

By the same token, the results also indicated that the least scored items were items 28 (M = 3.27, SD = 1.18) and 22 (3.04, SD = 1.34), which stated that individual learning is prioritized over group learning. These items were agreed on by even less than half of the participants.

The third factor regarding the use of PBL was linked to the *Use of Technology in Learning*, which was comprised of five items. As displayed in Table 7, generally, the students were positively disposed toward the use of technology to learn English. Majority of the students (nearly 60%) agreed that the role of

computers in language learning could not be denied. Item 2, which denoted this belief, received the highest mean rating score in this section ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.07$). Interestingly, it was also observed that the Iranian EAP students advocated the reading on-line material and preferred it to the printed materials. In this regard, items 20 and 21 were agreed upon by 30% ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.14$) and 53% ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.14$) of the participants respectively. However, very few were interested in computerized simulation in language learning.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Factor 3, "Use of Technology in Learning" (N = 379)

Item	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	M	SD
2 Computers should play more important roles in English language learning.	4.7	11.3	24.3	39.3	20.3	3.59	1.07
1 I am interested in using office applications (like MS-Word & Excel) and on-line courses based on educational platforms like Edmodo and Moodle in learning English.	8.7	11.6	33.2	30.3	16.1	3.48	1.04
20 I prefer to learn English using a computer instead of reading English language textbooks.	12.9	24.3	31.4	20.8	10.6	3.40	1.14
21 I enjoy reading on-line English texts in an English language lesson.	8.4	12.7	25.1	38.3	15.6	3.33	1.14
8 I am interested in computerized simulations in English lesson activities.	4.0	11.1	36.4	29.6	19.0	2.92	1.17

Concerning the last factor, *Autonomous Learning*, the detailed results are portrayed in Table 8. A close look at the table shows that generally, the students did not consider themselves autonomous, and this was evident in their views. Although they believed that they might be able to use some software to learn English (Item 29, $M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.08$; & Item 19, $M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.33$) or choose the right type of source material in the process of English learning (Item 16, $M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.18$), they stated that it would be better to learn English with the help of a teacher (Item 17, $M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.02$).

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Factor 4, “Autonomous Learning” (N = 379)

	Item	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	M	SD
29	I can easily use different software to do my English lesson project.	9.8	19.3	29.6	30.6	10.8	3.37	1.08
17	I can never learn English without the help of a teacher and on my own.	18.2	24.5	20.1	23.0	14.2	3.23	1.20
16	I can locate different suitable sources for learning the English lesson.	5.3	16.1	29.8	33.8	15.0	3.19	1.18
15	I cannot choose my favorite topic in English language lessons.	8.4	18.7	36.7	17.7	18.5	3.13	1.07
14	I can learn new topics in the English language lessons on my own.	8.4	21.9	23.2	30.6	15.8	3.13	1.14
19	I can easily choose a required software for a specific purpose in English language lesson.	8.4	17.7	36.1	28.2	9.5	2.91	1.33

Discussion

The current study was conducted with the aim of exploring the factors that the Iranian EAP students considered with regard to the pros of PBL in universities and its associated factors. It also investigated the students' attitudes toward the different elements of PBL through a validated questionnaire. The results of the exploratory factor analysis revealed four different leading factors in the implementation of PBL among Iranian EAP students. The factors were (1) *Project-Based Learning*, (2) *Collaborative Learning*, (3) *Use of Technology in Learning*, and (4) *Autonomous Learning*. The findings also indicated that the Iranian students had a generally positive attitude toward PBL, which is in line with some previous studies (e.g., Albanese & Mitchell, 1993; Dochy, Segers, Van den Bossche, & Gijbels, 2003; Reynolds & Hancock, 2010). With regard to the extracted factors underlying PBL, the findings of the current study were in line with majority of the previous studies found in the literature. For instance, some analogous factors such as collaborative and student-centered learning, as well as the significant role of teachers in educating autonomous learners, were advocated by Hmelo-Silver (2004) and Schmidt, Van der Molen, Te Winkel, and Wijnen (2009) to be among the main features of PBL.

The results also showed that overall, the Iranian EAP students favored project-based learning, considered collaborations and group-works so effective, had a positive attitude toward using technology in learning a language, and did not

consider themselves very independent from the teacher in language learning. For instance, nearly 40% of the participants believed that doing projects in English class will increase their interests in learning. Our results appear to be in harmony with Klegeris and Hurren (2011) who also reported that the students in the University of British Columbia had a positive attitude toward PBL and also increased levels of motivation were observed among them. This fact can be of significant importance since most university instructors around the world have difficulties motivating undergraduate students and keeping them involved in learning (Fukuzawa & Boyd, 2016). Similarly, Wiznia et al. (2012) also claimed that PBL could lead to more class activity and learner engagement among 100 American medical students. Their results showed that there was more interaction among the students, learning level increased, and also the students were more inclined to spend more time on their studies. By contrast, the current study is incompatible with Pohan, Asmin, and Menanti (2020), who reported no significant difference in the motivation of students who underwent the PBL approach and those who were taught based on the traditional approach.

When justifying the results, what first comes to mind is the important role of personal differences and personality traits among different students. The significant role of personal differences in the internalization of PBL was previously acclaimed by Frambach, Driessen, Beh, and Van der Vleuten (2014). Park et al. (2012) also asserted that the role of personal differences might be even greater than cultural differences. With regard to the findings of the current study, it needs to be noted that the reported results suggested that roughly an equal number of participants showed for-and-against attitudes toward group-based or individual works in language learning. This issue does not seem to be a simple one, but a complex one in nature. Accordingly, Frambach, Driessen, Beh, and Van der Vleuten (2014) also reported similar findings and claimed that this may be due to the fact that “some societies may be defined as collectivistic in certain aspects, but as individualistic in others” (p. 1018).

The obtained results also indicated that majority of the students had a positive attitude toward using technology in language learning. This finding may be due to the age level of the students, as the participants in this study were all undergraduate students. It would seem natural to associate youth with technology, as nowadays it seems unthinkable to live without technology. In this day and age, technology has influenced young people and their lives from different perspectives, and Iranian youth would not be an exception. Based on the findings, it can be argued that young people are mostly searching for novelty and modernism, and this tendency is further reflected in their education. In fact, the education sector around the world is increasingly attached to the complex and evolving use of technology, in its various forms and especially in the domain of language education. This widespread use of technology in education generally, and more specifically English language learning, may be due the easier access to information, increased interest in language learning, a rise in possible interactions and collaborations among students, and also the economic benefits of using technology in language learning (e.g., the use of internet and access to millions of free source materials). The results of the

current study seem to be in harmony with Fukuzawa and Boyd (2016) who also reported that after using computers and on-line courses based on PBL, there was an increase in the motivation and engagement of the students in the lessons as well as increased levels of collaboration among the students.

Furthermore, as mentioned before, it was observed that the students were not autonomous and needed some assistance in learning English. They also claimed that the presence of a teacher is essential for the whole language learning to be fulfilled. It needs to be noted that although PBL can be applied to every educational setting, the leading role of culture should not be forgotten. Cultural differences among the students from various cultural backgrounds can have an impact on the whole process of PBL implementation (Wijnia, Loyens, & Rikers, 2019). The PBL approach is still new in Iran, and Iranian students are accustomed to the traditional teacher-centered, exam-focused instructional approach. A great number of not only language classes, but classes on different other topics are held based on the traditional approach. Students are mostly required to memorize a bunch of reading materials and very seldom are invited to challenge an issue critically. In the same line, Frambach, Driessen, Beh, and Van der Vleuten's (2014) study on 88 medical university students from different cultures also said that those students with traditional educational backgrounds (e.g., the countries in the Middle East) faced more challenges with PBL and did not take much part in critical discussions. The same results on the role of the students' culture were also reported by Al Kadri et al. (2011), Bridger (2007), as well as Leung, Ginns, and Kember (2008). Hung, Moallem, and Dabbagh (2019) also stressed the important role of social factors in the successful implementation of PBL.

That may be the reason behind Hallinger and Lu's (2012) emphasis on the need to adapt PBL teaching materials and resources to the students' sociocultural living context. It also needs to be pointed out that PBL is a developing process, and the students may gain differently in the various stages of the PBL implementation. Frambach, Driessen, Beh, and Van der Vleuten (2014) also reported that the students' discussion skills and self-confidence level improved during the term. Likewise, the non-Western students finally could adapt themselves to the student-centered approach. Consequently, although the student-centered approach in PBL may confront the academia in some contexts with some hurdles, there is hope that the students of any personal or cultural backgrounds can successfully adapt to the PBL approach and there is no limitation in this regard.

Conclusion

The present study highlights the attitudes and perceptions of Iranian EAP students toward the principles of PBL. The results from a validated and piloted questionnaire from 379 Iranian university EAP students indicated that the participants generally favored PBL and considered it helpful and beneficial to their language learning experience. To put it differently, the students stated that problem-based learning would be much useful as collaboration and team-work among the students can increase learning. They also believed that the academia is supposed to use more

technology in language pedagogy. Finally, they considered themselves very much dependent on the teacher in the learning process.

It is argued that it would not be possible to run one ideal and perfect version of PBL (Wijnia, Loyens, & Rikers, 2019) due to its multifaceted nature. Therefore, care must be taken into account when applying PBL in a specific context. Teachers first need to decide on the type of knowledge the students are to acquire and also consider the students' socio-cultural background and previous educational experiences and accordingly plan an apt curriculum based on the students' needs and preferences. Also, another point to bear in mind is that, any reform will take some time to be established. Switching to a problem-based learning approach in a country which has mainly experienced traditional, teacher-centered pedagogical systems would not be an easy task. It may take some time for both the teachers and the students to adapt fully to this novel educational structure, and this itself further calls for more effort and attention from the stakeholders in the domain of education. To put it another way, teachers need to first be made aware of the underlying principles and theoretical foundations of PBL and later be trained on its successful application in the classrooms. The writers would argue that a successful translation of the theoretical knowledge on PBL into a real and practical application of its rules in the classrooms is in need of more attention. In this regard, holding some workshops and training programs stressing the significance of PBL and its accurate practice in classrooms can be beneficial. Furthermore, the educational material (in this case, English textbooks), also need to be adjusted to this shift from teacher-centered and lecture-based teaching methods to more student-centered ones.

In fact, it goes without saying that for having a better implementation of PBL in the classrooms, teachers need to first be completely prepared and equipped with the necessary materials and methods to handle the procedure successfully. In this regard and as mentioned before, the call for more attention to the issue of teacher education regarding the main tenets of PBL comes to the fore. Forthcoming research may explore the existence of PBL paradigms in teacher education courses along with the teacher educators' attitude toward PBL in teacher education courses. Also, there is a paucity of research on the impact of different cultural backgrounds on the learners' appreciation of PBL. This, itself, can be another line of research. Moreover, the present study was only limited to EAP undergraduate university students. Another significant avenue for research could be the examination of attitudes toward and perceptions of PBL among the students of lower (high school students) or higher educational levels (graduate levels).

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The Relationship Between Iranian EFL Learners' International Posture and Willingness to Communicate Across High Versus Low English Proficiency Levels

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Abstract

The study attempted to investigate the relationship between male Iranian EFL learners' international posture (IP) and willingness to communicate (WTC) across two proficiency levels. The study was carried out with 106 participants from selected universities in Tabriz and Sarab, Northwest Iran, who were divided into two groups of high and low proficiency based on a Preliminary English Test (PET). The data were collected by the administration of WTC Scale (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990) and IP questionnaire (Yashima, 2000). The collected data were analyzed through Pearson correlation and independent samples t-test. The results showed that there was positive correlation between WTC and IP in the high-proficiency group while the correlation in the low proficiency-group was not statistically significant. It was also found that high proficiency learners had higher levels of both IP and WTC compared to their lower level counterparts. The findings of the study offer pedagogical implications for EFL learners, teachers, and syllabus designers.

Keywords: international posture, Iranian EFL learners' proficiency level, willingness to communicate

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Friday, March 5, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27167.1278>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

Research on second language (L2) acquisition supports that interaction in the target language and production of linguistic output lead to language development (Ellis, 2008; Swain, 2000, 2005). L2 researchers seem to agree that language students who are more active in language use have a greater potential to develop communicative competence by having more opportunities to interact with others (Ellis, 2008). MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Conrod (2001) argue that willingness to communicate (WTC) facilitates the language learning process, a view based on their findings that higher-level WTC among students translates into more opportunity for practice in an L2 and authentic L2 use. Most of the researchers agree that WTC has a multidimensional nature and is a complicated term which can be affected by a wide range of cognitive, instructional, situational, cultural, and affective factors (Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2015).

Several other studies have also been done to investigate the variables that may predict WTC. According to Chu (2008), shyness and anxiety influenced WTC negatively. Oz, Demirezen, and Pourfeiz (2015) reported self-perceived communicative competence as the best predictor of WTC, while Yashima (2000) indicated “L2 communication confidence and international posture” (p. 63) as the variables directly affecting it. In addition to these studies, Cetinkaya (2005), in his research with Turkish college students, concluded that WTC was directly associated with the learners' attitudes towards the international community and perceptions of linguistic self-confidence.

Yashima (2000) used the concept of “international posture” (IP) in investigating the goals and attitudes of Japanese EFL students who showed that they had dual goals for learning English. Some participants were mainly concerned with their educational and academic goals, such as test scores and classroom achievement, and some others had the goal of communication with people who used English as a foreign language. The concept of IP had elements such as interest in foreign or international affairs, desire to travel abroad to stay or to work, and readiness to communicate with people from English speaking countries.

Another variable that seems to play a determining role in the learners' WTC is their language proficiency level. Previous research has shown positive interrelationship between EFL learners' language proficiency level (e.g., Biria & Jouybari, 2016; Rostami, Kashanian, & Golami, 2016). However, considering the results obtained from the previous research it becomes evident that there is still a gap in the literature regarding the factors that may be related to the learners' WTC. Thus, in order to shed light on the nature of the concept of WTC in relation to other variables, the present study attempted to investigate the relationship between male Iranian EFL learners' WTC and their international posture (IP) across high versus low English proficiency levels.

Literature Review

The idea of willingness to communicate (WTC) was primarily used by the researchers (e. g., McCroskey & Baer, 1985) in the first language (L1) research as adopted from an earlier concept “unwillingness to communicate” used by Burgoon (1976). WTC has been defined as a lasting desire to communicate when a person likes to do so. According to Xie (2011), WTC in L1 is a personality-related trait which is almost fixed in different communication settings and with different types of interlocutors. In other words, while other factors such as context may affect a person’s inclination to speak, individuals show rather fixed WTC in various situations. McCroskey and Richmond (1990) who worked on WTC with the native language speakers of various languages in different countries such as Micronesia, Sweden, and Australia found that several variables come to influence WTC in L1 acquisition including communication competence, self-efficacy, introversion, communication anxiety, and cultural diversities.

MacIntyre (1994) suggested a model for WTC in L1 acquisition in which the learners’ perceived communication ability and speaking anxiety have direct influence on their WTC. It was suggested that a combination of high language proficiency level and also a relative shortage of speaking anxiety lead to a high level of WTC. Another influencing variable in his model was the personality trait known as introversion and also communication apprehension. Other researchers who have also investigated the influence of individual’s variables on WTC have found that perceived communicative competence and communication apprehension are the best predictors of WTC (e. g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2001).

Two years later, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) carried out a research with 92 English speaking learners in a French immersion setting in Canada in order to operationalize MacIntyre’s (1994) model to interactions in the second or foreign language (L2). Based on the data gathered with questionnaires, they explored a relationship among different affective factors, like attitude, anxiety, and perceived competence, as well as the effect of these factors on the frequency of interactions in the L2.

Some years later, MacIntyre and his colleagues (MacIntyre et al., 1998) claimed that in L2 situation, the context is more complicated because language proficiency level is an additional variable. Therefore, they came to the conclusion that WTC in the L2 is not a simple manifestation of WTC in the L1. Thus, they defined the term as a person’s readiness to enter into communication at a particular time with people by using the foreign language and they also offered a model of WTC in the L2 in order to explain the interrelation between attitude and WTC with the claim that “authentic communication in the L2 can be seen as the result of complex system of interrelated variables” (p. 547). They used this model to explain the different levels of WTC in English language students.

In the evaluation of MacIntyre et al.’s (1998) model in the Chinese EFL context, Wen and Clément (2003) argued that the factors identified in the western model may not explain Chinese EFL learners’ WTC which is a far more complicated notion in the Chinese context under the influence of Confucianism. In

the view of Wen and Clément (2003), under the influence of Confucianism in China, cultural values make up the dominant force shaping an individual's perceptions and ways of learning, which may also manifest themselves in L2 communication. They suggest that Chinese students' lack of WTC in public is not just a language phenomenon, but deeply rooted in their other-directed self and submissive way of learning. In Chinese philosophy and culture, the other-directed self includes a face-protected orientation and the insider effect. According to Confucius, the self does not exist as a single entity; its existential reality is dialectically related to the family, the community, the nation, and the world (Chai & Chai, 1965; as cited in Wen & Clément, 2003).

The concept of international posture (IP) has been introduced by Yashima (2000) who operationally defined IP based on his preliminary studies with Japanese EFL learners who studied at the university level. The results of his research showed that the concept of IP was related to other variables including motivation, language proficiency, self-confidence and WTC. Yashima (2000) designed a foreign language communication model in which IP was significantly related to motivation which, in turn, was significantly related to the participants' level of English language proficiency. Motivation could also affect the learners' self-confidence in the L2 communication, which led to their WTC. Moreover, there was found a positive correlation between IP and L2 WTC because learners with higher scores on IP were more interested in intercultural contact, which often required the use of foreign language (Yashima, 2000).

Gender was also revealed as a substantial individual factor influencing learners' level of WTC. MacIntyre, et al. (2002) found that female learners appeared to outperform their male peers in terms of WTC levels. However, the study conducted by Jamaledin (2015) challenged their findings and showed that male learners had much higher WTC in L2 compared to female learners. Some other studies have found no significant difference between male and female learners' WTC. A study of 140 intermediate level EFL students in Iran found no significant difference in WTC between male and female participants (Valadi et al., 2015). Another study of 55 English department university students in Iran revealed no significant difference between female and male participants in communication apprehension, perceived competence, and WTC (Afghari & Sadeghi, 2012).

Regarding the role of other variables in predicting Iranian EFL learners' WTC, some studies have recently been done in the Iranian EFL context. For example, Karimi and Abbaszadeh (2017) examined the potential relationships among learners' WTC in English, their perceptions of autonomy-supportive teaching, their motivation and English-speaking self-efficacy. Regarding the role of teachers in promoting students' WTC, Zarei, Saeidi, and Ahangari (2019) examined the effect of teachers' socio-affective and pedagogic strategies on learners' WTC. Zakian (2019) found significant positive correlation between WTC and the learners' level of intelligence.

Research has also been done to examine the relationship between EFL learners' English language proficiency level and their WTC. Tan and Phairot (2018)

conducted a study with Thai EFL students who had different English proficiency levels. They found that language proficiency was a significant predictor of WTC because there were significant differences among low, moderate, and high proficient students in terms of their WTC both inside and outside classroom contexts. Another study in Iranian EFL context by Rostami, et al. (2016) showed a significant positive correlation between Iranian EFL learners' general English proficiency levels and their WTC. In their study, learners at the advanced level of English proficiency had higher WTC scores than those at the intermediate level. However, their research showed that the relationship between learners' age and WTC was not statistically significant. Biria and Jouybari (2016) also found that there was a statistically significant relationship among Iranian EFL learners' WTC, language proficiency, and oral proficiency meaning that those who had higher WTC could express themselves more fluently.

In Turkish EFL context, Altuner (2018) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between learners' level of WTC and two other variables of learners' gender and English language proficiency. The study which was done with 711 student participants at a state university in Turkey indicated that the learners had higher WTC in controlled situations (like classroom) compared to more meaning-focused situations. Regarding the learners' gender, the study showed that female participants were more willing to communicate in English in the classroom compared to their male classmates. Lastly, learners who had higher language proficiency levels were found to have higher WTC level compared to learners who had lower language proficiency levels.

However, other research studies have not all reached the same conclusion. For example, in a study, at Iranian context, Alemi, Daftarifard, and Pashmforoosh (2011) attempted to examine the Iranian EFL university students' WTC and its interaction with their language anxiety and language proficiency. The results revealed that the students' WTC was directly related to their language proficiency but surprisingly higher proficient learners showed to be less communicative than lower proficient ones outside the classroom. Moreover, the interaction between WTC and anxiety did not turn out to be significant in their study.

Since the findings of the previous research are far from conclusive, there is still need for further research in the field. Accordingly, the current study aimed at investigating the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' WTC and IP across two levels of English proficiency. The study attempted to find answers for the following four research questions.

- 1) Is there any relationship between Iranian high proficiency male EFL learners' WTC and their IP?
- 2) Is there any relationship between Iranian low proficient male EFL learners' WTC and their IP?
- 3) Is there any significant difference between high and low proficiency male EFL learners' WTC?
- 4) Is there any significant difference between high and low proficiency male EFL learners' IP?

Method

Participants and Sampling

Purposeful and convenience sampling was used to select the participants. In purposeful sampling, the researcher purposefully selects participants and in convenience sampling, the researcher selects participants who are willing to and available to participate in the study (Creswell, 2011). The participants in the study were 106 university students studying English Language Teaching (TEFL) and English Translation at the Islamic Azad University and Payameh-noor University in Sarab and Tabriz. In order to control the gender variable, the study focused only on male participants. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 29 and they came from East Azarbayjan. Based on the results of an English proficiency test, the participants were divided into two groups of high proficient (63) and low proficient (43) learners.

Instruments

Three instruments were used for data collection in the study. Preliminary English test (PET) was used to examine the participants' level of English proficiency. The test had four sections in accordance with four language skills; however, only the written sections were used because of practicality considerations. The total score of the written section including reading and writing subsections was 50 and the middle score of 25 was considered as the cut off score to divide the participants into high (above 25) and low (below 25) proficiency groups.

The instrument used for collecting data regarding the participants' WTC was a scaled questionnaire published by McCroskey (1992) with 20 items, of which 12 were related to four communication contexts (public speaking, talking in meetings, talking in small groups, and talking in dyads) and three types of receivers (strangers, acquaintances, and friends) and 8 items were filler (dummy) items. The participants were required to answer each item by using a number between 0 and 100 showing the percentage of their agreement with the situation in the item. The average of percentage scores for the items was calculated as each individual's score in the WTC Scale. Thus, the scores were in interval scale. (See Appendix A)

To measure the participants' IP, the researcher used a questionnaire designed by Yashima (2000) including 31 items and based on research with Japanese EFL learners. Each item had a 7-point scale that the participants selected with regard to their agreement or disagreement. The scale had subdivisions as follows. Items 1 to 4 (*Intercultural Friendship Orientation*) were related to intercultural friendship and asked the participants' reasons for taking English courses. Items 5 to 10 (*Motivational Intensity*) rated the degree to which each statement matched their state of mind. Items 11 to 16 asked the learners' *desire to learn English*. Items 17 to 23 asked the participants' tendency to approach or avoid foreigners in the local community. Items 24 to 29 examined how much an individual was interested in foreign affairs and living abroad. Items 30 and 31 asked the students' interest in international issues for example reading or watching news about

events in foreign countries. Thus, the range of the scores in the interval scale was between 7 and 217. (See Appendix B)

The reliability of the questionnaires was examined through their pilot administration to a group of 25 students from the same population. Cronbach α was found to be .89 and .91 for the WTC and IP questionnaires, respectively. For validity considerations, expert opinion and back-translation techniques were conducted. The original English versions were translated to Farsi and then back-translated into English. Two experienced EFL teachers were consulted for the final modified versions.

Design

The design of the study was quantitative and descriptive. The correlational design was used to investigate the relationship between the research variables, and between groups design was employed to compare the mean scores of WTC and IP between high and low proficiency groups. The variables were the male Iranian EFL learners' WTC, IP, and English proficiency level (high vs. low). The gender variable was controlled in the study.

Procedure

The study began with the researcher's inviting the students who studied TEFL and English Translation in Tabriz and Sarab Islamic Azad and Payameh-noor Universities. From among the students who were informed and invited, 106 students finally accepted to participate in the study. The participants took PET as a standard English proficiency test, and, based on their test scores, they were divided into two groups of high proficient and low proficient learners.

Before the administration of the questionnaires, their reliability and validity were checked and confirmed through a pilot administration with 25 candidates from the same population. The participants were then given the questionnaires and guided and informed as to how to respond and fill out the answer sheets. They were also ensured that their names and identities would be kept confidential. In all data collection sessions, the researcher was present to explain the goal of the study and help the participants to fully understand the content of the items in the questionnaires. In some cases, the researcher had to translate some items into Farsi in order to ensure their comprehensibility. The answer sheets were then collected and scored by the researcher and the results were statistically analyzed to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis and Results

Four sets of scores were obtained through the questionnaires; scores for WTC and international posture (IP) in high and low proficiency groups. The normality of the scores' distribution was checked by Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test of normality. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the scores obtained and the results of the KS test.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and KS Test Results for WTC and IP Scores in High and Low Groups

		HIP	HWTC	LIP	LWTC
N		63	63	43	43
Normal Parameters ^{a, b}	Mean	126.17	86.08	102.14	67.74
	Std. Deviation	16.380	6.414	10.618	8.197
	Absolute	.163	.184	.156	.097
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.061	.083	.156	.097
	Negative	-.163	-.184	-.096	-.097
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.297	1.457	1.026	.636
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.069	.088	.244	.813

As is seen in Table 1, High proficiency group with 63 participants had the mean score of 126.17 in IP and 86.08 in WTC. Low proficient group with 43 participants had the mean score of 102.14 in IP and 67.74 in WTC. P-values observed for One-sample KS test, for all sets of scores were above the alpha level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) confirming the normality of the distributions. Thus, it was legitimate to use parametric tests of inferential statistics to investigate the research questions.

Based on the first research question which asked if there was any significant correlation between the participants' WTC and IP in high proficiency group, a null hypothesis was developed and tested by running Pearson correlation. Table 2 shows the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 2

Correlation Between WTC and IP in High Proficient Group

		HIP	HWTC
MHIP	Pearson Correlation	1	.261
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.033
	N	63	63
MHWTC	Pearson Correlation	.261	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
	N	63	63

The correlation data in Table 2 shows that a positive coefficient of 0.261 was found between the high proficient learners' level of WTC and their IP. As the p-value observed (.033) was below the α level of significance ($p < .05$), the null hypothesis of no significant correlation between the two variables was rejected and the answer to the first research question was affirmative.

The second research question asked if there was any significant correlation between low proficient participants' WTC and IP. The results of Pearson correlation are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation Between WTC and IP in Low Proficient Group

		LIP	LWTC
LIP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.157
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.316
	N	43	43
LWTC	Pearson Correlation	-.157	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.316	
	N	43	43

As is seen in Table 3, Pearson coefficient of correlation between WTC and IP in low proficiency group was -.157 and the p-value observed was .316 and above the level of significance selected for the study ($p > .05$). So, the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant correlation between the two variables could not be rejected and the answer to the second research question was negative. It means that there was not a significant correlation between WTC and IP in participants with low English proficiency.

The third research question asked if there was any significant difference between high and low proficient learners' WTC. The Independent samples t-test was run to compare the two means of WTC scores in high and low proficient groups. Table 4 shows the results of the t-test.

Table 4
Independent Samples T-Test Comparing High and Low Proficient Groups' WTC Mean Scores

	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
High- Low WTC	3.62	.060	12.86	104	.000	18.335	1.421
Equal variances assumed							
Low WTC			12.38	75.50	.000	18.335	1.488
Equal variances not assumed							

The results in Table 4 show that the p-value observed for the comparison between two groups was below α level of significance ($p < .05$) indicating that the null hypothesis of no difference between two means could be rejected. There was a statistically significant difference between the two means, and the high proficiency group mean (86.08) was significantly higher than that in low proficiency group (67.74). So, the answer to the third research question was affirmative

The last research question addressed the difference between high proficient and low proficient learners' IP. The independent samples t-test was run to examine the significance of the difference between the two mean scores. Table 5 shows the results of the t-test.

Table 5
Independent Samples T-Test Comparing High and Low Proficiency Groups' IP Mean Scores

		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
High-IP	Equal variances assumed	9.77	.002	8.47	104	.000	24.035	2.835
	Not equal variances assumed			9.16	103.7	.000	24.035	2.623

As is seen in Table 5, Leven's test returns the p-value (.002) below the α level of significance ($p < .05$) showing that the null hypothesis of no difference (equality) between two variances was rejected, and accordingly, the second row of t-test table shows the p-value observed for the t-value of 9.16 was under the α level of significance ($p < .05$), so the null hypothesis of no difference between the two means was rejected showing that the difference was statistically significant. The answer to the fourth research question was affirmative and the high proficient learners had significantly higher scores in IP than low proficient ones.

Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' WTC and IP while taking the learners' proficiency level into account. Significant moderate positive correlation (.261) was found between the high-proficient learners' WTC and IP. This finding was supportive of Yashima's (2000) model which suggested that there were relations among learners' IP and other learner variables such as learning motivation, language proficiency, and WTC.

The finding also supported Macintyre et al.'s (1998) heuristic model of WTC in L2 that explains the interrelation between attitude and WTC. Regarding the relation between participants' English proficiency level and their WTC level, the

study supported Rostami et al.'s (2016) research that showed a significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' proficiency levels and their WTC. Also, the present study confirmed Cetinkaya's (2005) conclusion in his research with Turkish college students that WTC was directly associated with the learners' attitudes towards the international community.

The results concerning the correlation between WTC and IP of low-proficient learners indicated insignificant weak negative correlation (-.157). This finding is again in support of Yashima's (2000) model suggesting that learners' proficiency level is a determining factor in learners' attitudes to foreign language speakers and culture and their desire to participate in the communicative events.

The next purpose of the study was to compare the level of WTC and IP between high-proficiency and low-proficiency groups. High proficient learners turned out to be significantly more willing to communicate in EFL context. This finding can be justified regarding the dialectical relation between being able and being willing to successfully communicate and use the L2. However, the findings of the previous research have been far from conclusive. Alemi et al. (2011) found that Iranian university students' WTC was negatively related to their language proficiency. On the contrary, Rostami et al. (2016) who made observation to see how willing their research participants were to communicate in real classroom context found that there was a significant relationship between learners' proficiency levels and their WTC. In other words, advanced level learners were more willing to communicate than intermediate level learners. The study by Altiner (2018), in Turkish EFL context, also showed that learners who had higher language proficiency levels had higher WTC levels compared to learners who had lower language proficiency levels in the classroom context. Therefore, in addition to language proficiency, other situational factors come to play an intervening role in the complex array of relationships.

The effect of general L2 proficiency level on the learners' WTC and other communication related variables can be justified on the ground that communication and ability to participate in oral classroom activities require that learners have sufficient proficiency to feel confidence to take such high risks. Chang (2018) also found in his research with classroom EFL learners that English proficiency influenced the WTC of university students. Student participants revealed that they were always ready to participate in class. However, their basic English proficiency kept them from expressing their ideas, since they did not know how to initiate or finish conversation, as well as key words and phrases they could use to present their ideas. Student participants in Chang's (2018) study put forward the claim that their limited vocabulary knowledge left them at a literal loss for words. This had already been emphasized by (de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009, as cited in Chang, 2018) that limited vocabulary was one of the obstacles demotivating the WTC of ESL university students. The findings of the present study were also in line with those of Biria and Jouybari (2016) who had shown that there was a statistically significant relationship among WTC, language proficiency, and oral proficiency of the Iranian EFL learners.

Regarding the role of L2 proficiency level in L2 learners' international attitude, the present study reached similar results that high proficient learners enjoyed a higher level of International Posture compared to their Lower-level counterparts. This finding was consistent with the previous research that has found relationship between language proficiency and affective variables in general and learners' attitudes in particular. For example, Zeinivand, Azizifar, and Gowhari (2015) already found a strong positive correlation between Iranian EFL learners' attitudes and their EFL speaking proficiency. Miller (2017) also found positive relationship between language proficiency and learners' attitudes among young Spanish-English learners.

Contrary to the results of our study, the results of a study by Jahin and Idrees (2012) showed no significant correlation between EFL major students' attitudes towards English language learning and their overall English language proficiency. In Iran, Dehbozorgi (2012) investigated the effects of attitude towards language learning on EFL college students majoring in English translation. The results showed that the relationship between language proficiency level and attitude towards language learning was not significant.

All in all, the findings of this study offered more insights towards the current literature about Iranian EFL learners' WTC in a learning setting and its interaction with some variables such as language proficiency level and learners' attitudes toward international community. In relation to the sociocultural theory of learning on which the present study was grounded, it can be said that there exists a cyclical interrelationship between learners' opportunities for communication and interaction on one hand and their language proficiency that may lead to more WTC and more positive attitudes to the learning situations. Although the present study does not claim causality among WTC and any other variables investigated, some predictions can be made. For instance, high levels of English proficiency can be a good predictor of both WTC and IP. Besides, positive attitudes and high degrees of integrative motivation as compiled in the concept of IP in this study lead to higher participation on the part of language learners, and consequently, lead to higher WTC.

Conclusion

The results of the present study indicated the existence of relationship between L2 learners' language ability and their attitudes towards the language and language learning on one hand and their overall willingness to participate in communicative events in the L2. The relationship was positive among the learners who had almost high proficiency level while among the learners who had relatively lower proficiency level such relation did not significantly exist. Furthermore, the amount of both WTC and IP was higher among the learners with relatively higher L2 proficiency level.

The findings of this research can raise some crucial implications for designing teaching materials. Material designers should focus on developing contexts to increase students' WTC and help them develop positive attitudes

towards English speaking community. The attention should also be given to activities that come to increase the learners' general English proficiency since it turned out to be a predictor of the other two variables. An important message that this finding brings to the area of EFL learning and teaching is that the L2 instruction must incorporate activities to enhance learners' general English proficiency, on one hand, and to create a positive attitude to the international community and L2 speakers, on the other.

Interpretations of the results of this study may lead to several recommendations for future research studies. It is suggested that this study be replicated with a larger number of participants across different language proficiency levels, from intermediate to advanced levels. Other psychological variables such as language learning motivation and language learning anxiety can be incorporated in future studies.

The present study suffered from some limitations through employing a quantitative correlational design and controlling for the gender variable by selecting only male participants. Further studies, with more participants and mixed method designs are needed before coming to more valid conclusions. Considering this specific group of learners and learning context in the current study, any generalization from this study to other learning contexts should be drawn with caution. Since there are quite a large number of variables that come to affect the learners' overall communicative behavior and their L2 achievement, more qualitative research through open-ended questionnaires, free response interviews and close observations must be done in the future in order to explore the array of factors that may play a role in L2 learners' success and achievement.

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Appendix A

Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTC)

Directions: Below are 20 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Presume you have completely free choice. Indicate the percentage of times you would choose to communicate in each type of situation. Indicate in the space at the left of the item what percent of the time you would choose to communicate. (0 = Never to 100 = Always)

- _____ 1. Talk with a service station attendant.
- _____ 2. Talk with a physician.
- _____ 3. Present a talk to a group of strangers.
- _____ 4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.
- _____ 5. Talk with a salesperson in a store.
- _____ 6. Talk in a large meeting of friends.
- _____ 7. Talk with a police officer.
- _____ 8. Talk in a small group of strangers.
- _____ 9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.
- _____ 10. Talk with a waiter / waitress in a restaurant.
- _____ 11. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.
- _____ 12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.
- _____ 13. Talk with a secretary.
- _____ 14. Present a talk to a group of friends.
- _____ 15. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.
- _____ 16. Talk with a garbage collector.
- _____ 17. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.
- _____ 18. Talk with a spouse (or girl / boyfriend).
- _____ 19. Talk in a small group of friends.
- _____ 20. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

Appendix B

Questionnaire for International Posture (Adopted from Yashima, 2000)

Intercultural Friendship Orientation in English Learning

As a reason to study English:

- 1. It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.
- 2. It will allow me to get to know various cultures and peoples.
- 3. I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.
- 4. I'd like to make friends with foreigners.

Motivational Intensity

5. Compared to my classmates, I think I study English relatively hard.
6. I often think about the words and ideas which I learn about in my English classes.
7. If English were not taught at school, I would study on my own.
8. I think I spend fairly long hours studying English.
9. I really try to learn English.
10. After I graduate from college, I will continue to study English and try to improve.

Desire to Learn English

11. When I have assignments to do in English, I try to do them immediately.
12. I would read English newspapers or magazines outside my English course work.
13. During English classes I'm absorbed in what is taught and concentrate on my studies.
14. I would like the number of English classes at school increased.
15. I absolutely believe English should be taught at school.
16. I find studying English more interesting than other subjects.

Intergroup Approach-Avoidance Tendency

17. I want to make friends with international students studying in Iran.
18. I try to avoid talking with foreigners if I can.
19. I would talk to an international student if there is one at school.
20. I wouldn't mind sharing an apartment or room with an international student.
21. I want to participate in a volunteer activity to help foreigners living in the neighboring community.
22. I would feel somewhat uncomfortable if a foreigner moved in next door.
23. I would help a foreigner who is in trouble communicating in a restaurant or at a station.

Interest in International Vocation or Activities

24. I would rather stay in my hometown.
25. I want to live in a foreign country.
26. I want to work in an international organization such as the United Nations.
27. I'm interested in volunteer activities in developing countries such as participating in Youth International Development Assistance.
28. I don't think what's happening overseas has much to do with my daily life.
29. I'd rather avoid the kind of work that sends me overseas frequently.

Interest in Foreign Affairs

30. I often read and watch news about foreign countries.
31. I often talk about situations and events in foreign countries with my family and / or friends.

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Analysis of Culture and Multimodality in a Local English Textbook Series

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Abstract

Culture is regarded as a part of English language teaching (ELT). Also, ELT textbooks are a main source of intercultural teaching / learning in most English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning contexts. Thus, representation of cultural content and development of (inter)cultural aspects are important issues in ELT textbooks, particularly in EFL contexts. This study analyzed the representation of culture in the *Vision* series, a recently developed ELT series used nationwide in Iranian high schools, and examined how multimodality in these local textbooks would provide context to develop (inter)cultural aspects. To collect the data, an adapted version of Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) classification of culture (source, target, international, and globally-shared) was used to analyze the content of the *Vision* series to see which culture was reflected in these high school textbooks. Additionally, the Weninger and Kiss's (2013) semiotic framework was used to examine how multimodality would serve cultural contents through analyzing image-text relationship. The content analysis demonstrated the domination of source (i.e., Iranian) and globally-shared cultural elements with less attention to the target and international cultures. Furthermore, the results showed that multimodality in these textbooks could provide the opportunity for critical cultural reflection, though it was limited to source and globally-shared cultures. By implication, ELT material developers in Iran should incorporate more appropriate materials and culturally engaging visuals associated with diverse cultures into local ELT textbooks to promote Iranian EFL students' cultural reflection, and, subsequently, their intercultural competence.

Keywords: culture, ELT textbooks, intercultural competence, *Vision* series, semiotics

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Friday, March, 26, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27190.1287>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

English as an international language is now learned and used by millions of nonnative speakers who outnumber native speakers. Hence, many scholars (e.g., Jenkins, 2006; Sharifian, 2009; 2017) are critical of the hegemony of the American or British native-speaker norms in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and, in consequence, advocate *intercultural competence* in English language teaching (ELT). Intercultural competence is “the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world” (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009, p. 7).

Culture, whether through an emphasis on the target language literature or whether through a sense of concern and curiosity about the people, country, and customs, is affiliated with the language (Baker, 2015). It is dynamic and is created and recreated by individuals through communication (Baker, 2012), and, more importantly, it is viewed as an integral part of second / foreign language (L2) education (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014). That is to say, central to the process of learning another language is the realization of the ways in which language and culture interact, and the ways culture is represented in L2, including ELT, programs and materials to foster adequate intercultural competence or intercultural communication skills in today’s world (Tolosa et al., 2018). That is why the representation of culture in instructional L2 instructional materials, particularly in ELT materials taught in EFL contexts, has become an important concern in recent decades (McConachy & Hatta, 2013). Unquestionably, instructional L2 textbooks, including ELT textbooks, are one of the main sources of cultural knowledge and one important avenue for investigating the synergy of culture and language (Derakhshan, 2018; Kilickaya, 2004), the potential sources for transferring intercultural messages, and an authentic source to improve intercultural awareness of L2 learners (Oakes & Sunders, 2004). Despite this issue, not all the instructional L2 textbooks, including ELT textbooks, present cultural content appropriately, and some exclude important aspects of local or target culture, hindering EFL students’ cultural learning and intercultural development. Hence, it is important to see *how* and *whose* culture is to be represented in ELT textbooks. The research on this topic can help to expand ELT material developers’ understanding of cultural content and how to incorporate culture into their instructional textbooks more effectively.

Over and above that, visual representation has become a pervasive and visible feature of many instructional textbooks, including multimodal ELT textbooks, and, as Janko & Peskova (2013) maintain, visuals hold the potential of producing manifold layers of meaning (Mofidi & Hashemi, 2019), and can be a good source of language learning and fostering students’ intercultural competence (Kiss & Weninger, 2017). As Emmison and Smith (2000) maintain, the inclusion of visuals in textbooks is advantageous because they bear an iconic resemblance to the cultural reality they represent. However, surprisingly, not much attention has been paid to the role of visuals, namely multimodality in ELT textbooks, in meaning making regarding culture and its representation (Weninger & Kiss, 2015).

Therefore, research, such as the current study, on the role of visuals in presenting cultural content in ELT textbooks can be promising.

To touch upon intercultural competence and explore cultural meaning potential embedded in multimodal ELT textbooks, multimodal resources, namely visuals (e.g., photos and pictures) combined with texts, can be examined through a semiotic approach, that is, semiotic relationships between images and texts in ELT textbooks. Semiotics, as the “formal science of signs”, and semiosis, as the “action of signs”, can be utilized to investigate cultural content in instructional textbooks (Queiroz & Merrell, 2006). In fact, a semiotic approach to the analysis of cultural content of multimodal ELT textbooks can “explicate how contextual semiotic resources shape the process of meaning making” (Weninger & Kiss, 2013, p. 22). The current study was an attempt to explore how culture was presented in a recently developed ELT series, i.e., the *Vision* series, and examine whether visuals in the multimodal texts, namely visuals combined with language in texts, served cultural contents in these local ELT textbooks taught nationwide in Iranian high schools. More specifically, it first sought to see which culture (source, target, or other) was presented more and, second, how multimodal resources in these textbooks would serve (inter)cultural contents by relying on a semiotic analytic approach.

Literature Review

(Inter)cultural Competence and Language Learning

In relating culture to language, many scholars (e.g., Byram, 2008) support the claim that L2 speakers would not be able to use the target language properly without knowledge of cultural context in which it is used. Hence, the concept of intercultural communicative competence or intercultural competence (ICC, henceforth) largely prevails in the field of L2 teaching / learning. ICC is “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 13). It aims to develop learners’ cultural awareness to make them ready for culturally effective communication with individuals from other cultures (Larzen-ÖstermarK, 2008). ICC can help L2 learners understand how intercultural interactions take place and how intercultural perceptions may influence the success of communication (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). Therefore, the necessity of including cultural elements and dealing with aspects of culture for developing ICC seems to be vital for L2 policy makers and educators.

As Valencia and Medina (2009) assert, to develop ICC necessitates taking a critical standpoint, which include the judgement about the target culture, such as English, and the understanding of their own culture. When L2 students deal with only a limited range of cultures, they cannot promote ICC skills because they have little opportunity to engage in the critical process of viewing and reflecting over cultural diversities (Göldner, 2011). One possibility for providing L2 learners with cultural diversity and, consequently, raising their cultural awareness and enhancing their skills to ensure appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts is through the representation of diverse cultures and cultural elements in L2

instructional textbooks. However, this issue might not be a serious concern for many textbook writers who are involved, in one way or another, with L2 pedagogy. As Valencia and Medina (2009) and Borjian (2013) point out, the issue of ICC development and offering critical queries about culture might be in the background for many L2 textbook authors and, accordingly, for many L2 teachers who pay scant attention to the students' development of ICC in writing or teaching their L2 textbooks.

Culture in ELT Textbooks

Cultural contents are represented in ELT textbooks in various manners. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) described three major categories to which ELT textbooks can be aligned to: source, target, and international cultures. The source culture represents first language (L1) or local culture, that is, language learners' own culture at national level. The target culture represents the culture of the people who speak the target language. In case of EFL learners, it mainly focuses on the cultures of Anglophone countries, such as the US and UK. Finally, the international culture includes a wide range of different cultures, such as the culture of countries where English is used as an international language. Later, Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) added another category to Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) classification and named it neutral culture. They have used this category for those cultural elements which are neutral. The neutral elements may be "cultural in nature but cannot be attributed to any particular culture" (p. 5).

The decision as to which culture is to be addressed in ELT textbooks and how it should be represented by L2 material developers, including textbook writers, who may have their own hidden agendas for incorporating or discarding specific cultural contents, are far from being agreed. Yet, as many scholars (e.g., Sukarni, 2003; Tolosa et al., 2018) state, for the ELT textbooks to develop EFL learner's intercultural competence, they should consider learners' own culture, namely, local culture, in addition to the target language culture. As many L2 researchers (e.g., Majdzadeh, 2002; Borjian, 2013) assert, even when ELT textbooks are to be localized, they should not exclude the target and international cultures if they aim to facilitate EFL learners' intercultural development.

With the aim of contributing to the issue of cultural understating and awareness, several researchers have made attempts to explore the representation of culture in ELT textbooks. For instance, Garcia (2005) analyzed international and intercultural aspects in 14 ELT textbooks in Spain. The findings indicated that the ELT textbooks taught in Spain did not have a cross-cultural approach and provided little opportunity for Spanish EFL students to develop ICC. Also, in a European Union founded project (Languages and Cultures in Europe), language curricula in 13 countries were analyzed in 2007 to find out what objectives in the area of intercultural competences were prescribed by foreign language curricula. The results showed that the national curricula mostly paid attention to the development of linguistic competences. Intercultural competences, if included in the curriculum, received less consideration (European Union, 2007).

Other researchers have also indicated that scant attention has been paid to the issue of the local culture in ELT textbooks. For instance, bringing the issue of cultural hegemony to the foreground, Shin et al. (2011) investigated the representation of local and international culture in seven series of internationally distributed ELT textbooks. They found that cultural content of Anglophone countries dominated most of the ELT textbooks published internationally. Furthermore, in the context of Korea, Kim and Paek (2015) investigated the representation of culture-related contents in five ELT textbooks for second year middle school students in Korea. The findings revealed that all five ELT textbooks had relatively less intercultural interaction elements, constraining the opportunities to reinforce Korean students' multicultural perspectives. Moreover, Baker (2012) designed a course in global Englishes and intercultural awareness for undergraduate university students in Thailand. This online course adopted a perspective that probed local or Thai, regional or Asian, and global English uses as well as the various socio-cultural contexts. The course included elements of cultural awareness, especially in offering connections between language and culture exceeding domestic understandings of culture. According to the results, both Thai teachers and students largely demonstrated positive attitudes toward the course. Baker's (2012) project accentuates the feasibility of taking an intercultural perspective in a language teaching course.

In the context of Iran, Majdzadeh (2002) investigated the role of culture in secondary school ELT textbooks published in the last decade. The findings of her study revealed that the locally produced Iranian ELT textbooks exclusively advocated Iranian culture. Accordingly, she asked for more provision of target culture in these textbooks to provide opportunity for Iranian students to develop ICC. Also, Aliakbari (2004) analyzed the old version of the local ELT textbooks used in Iranian high schools and concluded that these textbooks were not well enough to develop ICC and cultural understanding, because target and international cultural elements were largely excluded from them. Similarly, Razmjoo (2007) concluded high school ELT textbooks in Iran mainly were bereft of cultural diversity. Unlike the above the studies by Majdzadeh (2002) and Aliakbari (2004), Roohani and Molana (2013) focused on the international textbooks taught in the context of Iran. They analyzed cultural representation in the international *Interchange* series and found that international cultures and American culture were dominant in these popular textbooks. Later, Tajeddin and Teimourzhad (2014) compared and contrasted two international (*Top Notch: English for Today's World*) and localized (*The ILI English Series: Intermediate*) series, widely taught in Iran. The results revealed that most of the cultural elements included in the localized ELT textbooks were culturally neutral. Surprisingly, they found that L1 culture was not featured, to a large extent, in the localized ILI textbooks. They concluded that localized ELT textbooks published in Iran lacked enough references to EFL learners' target, source, and international cultures.

Recently, Mofidi and Hashemi (2019) examined culture representation in a recent ELT series published by Iran Language Institute, namely, the *ACT* series, with an eye on the visual materials. The analysis of the visual materials (e.g.,

pictures and photos) showed that the writers of this series put an emphasis on the international and source (Persian) cultures in the visuals. In essence, the English (target) culture received comparatively insufficient attention to meet the objective for which the *ACT* textbooks were written. However, the researchers concluded that the series could be useful in developing intercultural awareness in Iranian EFL readers and offering them an opportunity to interact and communicate their identity at the cultural level with other English speakers from other countries.

By reviewing the aforementioned studies, it is understood that although intercultural development requires reflection and attention in instructional L2 materials, such as ELT textbooks, many ELT textbook writers pay little attention to the issue of ICC in ELT textbooks whereas, as Canagarajah (2005) maintains, ELT materials should offer diverse culture references and help language learners enhance critical awareness of local exigencies by, first, identifying cross-cultural differences and problems, and then, reflecting and taking actions. Moreover, it is clear that quite few studies have considered the potential of semiotic relationship between the texts, images, and tasks in cultural content analysis. This issue deserves more attention and the current study is an attempt to make use of the potential of the text-image semiotic relationship to examine the multimodality in a local ELT series, which is dealt with in the next section.

Semiotics and Multimodal ELT Textbooks

Semiotics studies the signs with respect to their functioning in sign processes within sign systems (Queiroz & Merrell, 2006). A semiotic approach is an analytic tool for conducting a discursive investigation of how individuals communicate meanings in signs (Al-Naimat & Saidat, 2019). This approach tries to “explicate how contextual semiotic resources shape the process of meaning making” (Weninger & Kiss, 2013, p. 22). Evidently, language learners often engage with textbooks through different modes including images, texts, as well as the activity within which they are situated. That is, visuals which are included in ELT textbooks may form a particular semiotic relationship with texts within given tasks in the textbooks.

Using Peircé's (1980) terms, the semiotic relationship between visuals (images) and texts can be iconic, symbolic, or indexical. Icons resemble their referent (the object, person, or phenomena that the sign refers to) based on the virtue that they have something in common. Symbols refer back to their referent by some sort of habit, norm, or law. Indexes and their referent are connected through an actual relationship or direct contact. If an image stands in a manner which can be freely interpreted, that is, it is not there to reinforce lexical or grammatical forms, there could be an iconic or symbolic relationship. In their engagement with iconic or symbolic visuals, learners explore their own understanding of texts and images without the constraints of a pedagogic task that channels learners' attention to the lexical or grammatical forms. In contrast, if an image just exists as lexical or grammatical reinforcement, it may form an indexical relationship, that is, both image and text refer to one another. In the semiotic approach, language learners'

participation during meaning-making process in the classroom and their critical engagement with the multimodal materials are crucial.

The semiotic approach can be used to look into different modes and the interaction of texts, images and tasks to analyze the meaning and cultural message that is communicated to textbook readers. This approach can demonstrate the interrelatedness of language and culture at different levels and substantiate this relationship in EFL textbooks by focusing on intercultural dimensions of cultural competence and awareness development (Risager, 2012; Tseng, 2002; Weninger & Kiss, 2013). As Ishihara and Cohen (2010) maintain, through this viable approach, it is possible to examine the construction of cultural meanings from the co-representation of images, texts, and tasks via semiosis process and find out the cultural messages which underlie visual materials and facilitate learners' cultural learning. Despite its potential for textbook evaluation and image analysis, quite a few studies have capitalized on the semiotic approach and employed it to analyze multimodality in L2 textbooks for cultural content. In a study which was done in 2013, Weninger and Kiss took the principles of Peircean semiotics to examine the Hungarian ELT textbooks in terms of their cultural representation. They found that images were typically used as visual reinforcement of vocabulary and grammar, but their cultural meaning potentials were unexploited in the Hungarian ELT textbooks. They concluded that, for the ELT textbooks to foster (inter)cultural awareness, images should perform a function more than just being as visual reinforcement or space-fillers.

In sum, ICC requires more reflection on the local and foreign cultures, and, as Kramsch (2013) maintains, knowing a foreign culture needs placing the target culture in association with our one's own culture. It needs knowledge of learners' local culture and understanding culturally-shaped behaviors of the target culture. One way to achieve this objective is to provide context for language learners to reflect on diverse cultural and intercultural issues in their instructional L2 textbooks (Shin et al., 2011). However, based on the review of the literature, this issue is sometimes disregarded by textbook writer and the important role of visuals as carriers of ideological and culturally-loaded meanings and practices of a given culture is overlooked in some recently published ELT textbooks. After all, research on both cultural and visual content, namely, cultural representation and visual analysis, in new ELT textbooks may provide some insight for L2 educators and materials developers to reconsider ICC in L2 teaching. All things considered, this study investigated cultural representation in a newly developed ELT textbooks (i.e., the *Vision* series) taught nationwide in Iranian high schools. Also, attempt was made to investigate how the multimodality in these local textbooks could provide the context for EFL learners to reflect upon (inter)cultural contents by relying on semiotic approach. Hence, the following *questions* were posed in this study:

1. Which cultures (source, target, international, globally-shared?) are presented in the *Vision* textbooks?
2. How does multimodality in the *Vision* textbooks provide context to develop (inter)cultural aspects through analysis of image-text semiotic relationship?

Methodology

Materials

The corpus consists of three local ELT textbooks (*Vision 1*, *Vision 2*, and *Vision 3*), developed and published by Iranian ministry of education in 2016-2018 to be taught nationwide in Iranian senior high schools for EFL students with age range of 16-19. The three *Vision* textbooks have similar patterns and structures. All four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are addressed in these ELT series. Each lesson in the *Vision* series starts with *Get Ready* section, and *Conversation* and *New Words* sections present new vocabularies and dialogs. Other sections are tilted as *Reading*, *Grammar*, *Listening*, *Speaking*, *Pronunciation* and *Writing*. These textbooks emphasize communicative approaches to ELT (Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2018). Table 1 presents a summary of descriptive information about these ELT series.

Table 1
Descriptive Information on the Textbooks

Textbook	Authors and Publisher	Number of Units	Title of Units
<i>Vision 1</i>	Alavimoghadam, Kheirabadi, Rahimi, and Davari, published by Iranian Ministry of Education in 2016	4	1. Saving Nature 2. Wonders of Creation 3. The Value of Knowledge 4. Travelling the World
<i>Vision 2</i>	Alavimoghadam, Kheirabadi, Rahimi, and Davari, published by Iranian Ministry of Education in 2017	3	1. Understanding People 2. A Healthy Lifestyle 3. Art and Culture
<i>Vision 3</i>	Alavimoghadam, Kheirabadi, Rahimi, and Davari, published by Iranian Ministry of Education in 2018	3	1. Sense of Appreciation 2. Look it Up! 3. Renewable Energy

Data Collection and Data Analysis Framework

Two frameworks were used to identify and analyze cultural contents embedded in the *Vision* textbooks. To address the first research question, the modified version of Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework was used because this framework could provide a model, going beyond the simple classification of local and target cultures, to classify ELT materials into four types with respect to their cultural content: (1)

source or L1 culture materials, (2) target or L2 culture materials, (3) international culture materials, and (4) culturally neutral / globally-shared culture materials. The source / L1 culture materials refer to those materials presenting language learners' own culture. The aim of the target / L2 target materials is usually to expose language learners to the cultural contexts of the target language, and international culture materials refer to those materials presenting a wide variety of cultures in countries where English is not used as L1 or L2, but as an international language. Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) added a fourth category to the Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework of (1) source culture materials, (2) target culture materials, and (3) international culture materials, to deal with elements that could be considered culturally neutral, that is, they may be cultural in nature, but cannot necessarily be associated with any specific culture. In the current study, culturally neutral category is reworded as globally-shared culture because a fourth category because it is believed that culture cannot be totally neutral and even those elements which are not attributed to any particular culture can be considered as universally shared.

By drawing on the aforementioned framework, content analysis, which is put to good use for texts, images, and transcripts (Weber, 1990), was applied. As Sándorová (2014) states, high quality research can apply it to combine both quantitative and qualitative analysis of images and texts as a useful way to certify the trustworthiness of the study. To ensure the validity / credibility of the data, several steps were taken in the current study. First, through the content analysis method / procedure, aspects of culture, such as clothing, food, lifestyle, festivals, rules, ceremonies, proverbs, and customs, which represented culture were identified by the two researchers i.e., raters. Second, they were categorized by each rater through drawing on the four categories of modified version of Cortazzi and Jin's (1990) framework, and their occurrences, that is, the representations, were obtained and reported in terms of frequencies and percentages for each category. This was done based on an agreed-upon definition of each of the four categories. Third, the outcomes were compared by the two raters before the conclusion was made in the last step. That is to say, the two raters (an associate professor of applied linguistics and a PhD student of TEFL who taught the *Vision* textbooks for three years) carried out content analysis individually to obtain the raw data, which were tabulated later based on the above-mentioned framework. For instance, Iranian artworks and handicrafts presented in *Vision 2* were considered as elements of source / L1 culture; English proverbs in *Vision 3* were considered as an element of the target culture; pictures of Eiffel tower in *Vision 1* were considered as an element of international culture; and a short text about respecting parents in *Vision 3* were taken as an element of globally appreciated culture. The agreement index, namely, Kappa coefficient, between the raters was also calculated in codifying the data in four categories. It should be noted that the raters' agreement was high (96%), a good index of interrater consistency. Yet, to improve the dependability of the data analysis, the two raters, together with another invited Professor of Applied Linguistics attended two sessions to resolve any disagreement in categorizing and tabulating the raw data before making inferences and drawing conclusions out of the data.

To address the second research question, Weninger and Kiss's (2013) framework was used because it had the potential for analyzing cultural contents of the *Vision* textbooks through drawing on image-text semiotic relationship so as to

examine how multimodality in the *Vision* series would provide context for reflection on (inter)cultural elements. Through this framework, it was possible to examine the construction of cultural messages or meanings in the images accompanied by texts or tasks. Weninger and Kiss's (2013) framework is "an alternative, semiotic framework that examines texts, images, and tasks as merely engendering particular meanings in the act of semiosis" (p. 1). According to this framework, the relationship between images and texts was categorized into two main types: (1) indexical and (2) symbolic or iconic. The rationale is, as Weninger and Kiss (2013) have pointed out, to foster (inter)cultural reflection and awareness, images need to form symbolic or iconic relationships with texts complemented by tasks. That is, iconic and symbolic relationship put together in contrast to indexical relationship. The second research question was not meant basically to be answered quantitatively. Rather, to address this question, content analysis of each textbook (*Vision 1*, *Vision 2*, and *Vision 3*) was done in the second round by the two researchers in six joint sessions. Mainly, a deductive content analysis was used. The primary unit of analysis was images, which were accompanied by texts, and sometimes by tasks, in the whole textbooks. Based on agreed-upon definitions and explicit categories based on the Weninger and Kiss's (2013) framework, the raters together decided whether the visuals i.e., images in each textbook were signs (e.g., the photo of the polar bear) which stood as icons or symbols or whether they were signs (e.g., cutting trees) which stood as indexes. The aim was to find out indexical vs. symbolic / iconic relationship between images and texts in the three textbooks to make inference or conclusion about whether multimodality in the *Vision* series could provide context to develop cultural aspects. Though it was not the main focus, the percentages of indexical relationship vs. symbolic / iconic relationship in the series was calculated and interrater consistency, which was high (Kapp = .98), was measured. The suitability of the framework, clear definitions and explicit classification, content analysis by two experts contributed to both validity / credibility and dependability of the data in the second round of content analysis. In sum, there were two rounds of analyses by the present researchers. In the first round of analysis, as mentioned above, the type of culture represented in the *Vision* series was examined in the entire sections of the textbooks, and tabulated in terms of frequencies and percentages. In the second round of analysis, the textbooks were scrutinized for the image-text semeiotic relationship.

Findings and Discussion

The first research question aimed to investigate the types of culture represented in the *Vision* series. The source culture was represented through such elements as "Iranian handicrafts" and "Iranian scientists". For instance, a conversation which was about Iranian cheetahs in *Vision 1* was considered as an aspect of the source culture. The target culture was represented through such elements as English proverbs (e.g., birds of a feather flock together) and different food vocabulary and American / British dishes. International culture was represented through such elements as pictures of famous places and monuments around the world (e.g., the Pizza tower and Egyptian pyramids). Globally-shared culture was represented through such elements as saving nature and preserving endangered species in the world (e.g., whales). Table 2 presents some cultural elements or aspects with corresponding examples based on the types of culture used in the textbooks.

Table 2

Types of Culture and Some Cultural Elements Represented in the Vision Series

Cultural Category	Textbook	Elements / Aspects	Example
Source culture	<i>Vision 1</i>	Iranian rare species Iranian scientists Iranian attractions and monuments	Persian zebra, Iranian Cheetah, Persian gazelle Razi, <i>Nasireddin Toosi</i> , Mount Damavand, Milad Tower, Gahar Lake,
	<i>Vision 2</i>	Iranian artworks and handicrafts Popular Iranian food Iranian famous places	Qashqai Gabbeh, Isfahan Termeh, Iranian Calligraphy, Rice dishes Darband, Mazandaran
	<i>Vision 3</i>	Iranian poets, Iranian scientists, Iranian architecture, Iranian Ceremonies	Ferdowsi, Hafez Dr. Gharib Yazd Historical buildings Norooz / Nowruz
Target culture	<i>Vision 1</i>	American inventions British scientists English names for boys / girls	Edison's inventions Alexander Fleming Jim, David
	<i>Vision 2</i>	Food vocabulary and diet in English	English or British bread and cake
	<i>Vision 3</i>	English proverbs American and British dictionaries and books	Practice makes perfect Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
International culture	<i>Vision 1</i>	Different nationalities, famous places and monuments	Japanese traditional house, The Nile River in Egypt, famous places in Africa
	<i>Vision 2</i>	Important languages around the world Different continents in the world	French, Russian, German Asia, Africa, America, Europe, Oceania
	<i>Vision 3</i>		
Globally-shared culture	<i>Vision 1</i>	Saving endangered species Wonders of creation	Whales, pandas, elephants Wonderful parts of human body, Planet Earth
	<i>Vision 2</i>	Lifestyle, diet, education Preserving and promoting languages	Healthy lifestyle, healthy diet Endangered languages
	<i>Vision 3</i>	Renewable energy, clean energy Elderly and parent issues	Solar power, wind power Elderly care and respect

Tables 3 presents the frequency and percentage of the data representing the four types of culture in the *Vision* textbooks.

Table 3

Types of Culture and Frequency of Their Representation in the Vision Series

Type of culture	Textbook	Frequency	Total
Source culture	<i>Vision 1</i>	40 (37%)	108 (46.1%)
	<i>Vision 2</i>	36 (33%)	
	<i>Vision 3</i>	32 (30%)	
Target culture	<i>Vision 1</i>	3 (37.5%)	8 (3.5%)
	<i>Vision 2</i>	5 (62.5%)	
	<i>Vision 3</i>	0	
International culture	<i>Vision 1</i>	15 (40.5%)	37 (15.8%)
	<i>Vision 2</i>	13 (35.2%)	
	<i>Vision 3</i>	9 (24.3%)	
Globally-shared culture	<i>Vision 1</i>	23 (28.4%)	81 (34.6%)
	<i>Vision 2</i>	25 (30.9%)	
	<i>Vision 3</i>	33 (40.7%)	

All four types of culture were represented in the *Vision* textbooks to different degrees. The target culture constituting 3.5% of the data received very little attention. By contrast, there were frequent realizations of the source cultural elements in the three textbooks. Also, the representation of the source culture was followed in percentage by the globally-shared culture.

The source cultural elements, such as “Iranian handicrafts” and “Iranian scientists”, were represented more frequently in the *Vision* textbooks and the realization of the source culture, unlike the target culture, was a dominant feature. This finding is in agreement with the findings of prior research, such as Majdzadeh (2002) and Aliakbari (2004) indicating the locally produced Iranian ELT textbooks largely advocate Iranian culture. This finding of the study was not against expectation. The local *Vision* textbooks have been introduced by Iranian ministry of education as an attempt to touch on the principles of communicative language teaching. According to the guidelines of National Curriculum Document in Iran, English should be taught to Iranian students as a foreign language to enable them to effectively communicate with people from other parts of the world. However, this should be done by stressing the values of Iranian and Islamic culture (Kheirabadi, 2019). Also, the Comprehensive Science Roadmap, which makes and prioritize policies in social and physical sciences, has demanded the inclusion of the Iranian

and Islamic perspective in syllabuses and textbooks in education as well as the localization of foreign language education contents and syllabuses in line with local and Islamic culture (Mofidi & Hashemi, 2019). In this way, Iranian EFL students would become more aware of their own identity and be culturally equipped to communicate in the target language (English), but not by ignoring their L1 cultural values and ideologies.

Also, it is likely that differences between Iran and some countries such as the US at the political level might have made the writers of these ELT textbooks pay more attention to the home culture to safeguard against the *invading culture* of some Anglophone countries such as the US and UK. That is, cultural invasion might be in the back of their mind. Therefore, it is not surprising that the series have mainly employed elements from the local culture. As Cortazzi and Jinn (1999) state, by including aspects of the local culture, language learners become aware of their own identity by dealing with elements from their own culture and be able to introduce their culture to the world and interact more successfully with people from other cultures. This issue might be a positive point because, as Adaskou et al. (1990) argue, presenting language in contexts relevant to the language learners' own lives and culture can help them become more motivated to learn target language.

Also, more global perspective towards culture can be traced from *Vision 1* to *Vision 2* and *Vision 3*. *Vision 1* mainly features the Iranian culture through referring to elements such as "Iranian symbols" (e.g., endangered Iranian cheetah), "Iranian scientists" (e.g., *Avicenna*), and "Iranian historical attractions" (e.g., holy shrines in Qom). In *Vision 2*, even though one unit is dedicated to the Iranian art and culture, two units mainly feature the globally-shared cultural issues, such as "preserving and promoting languages" (i.e., preserving endangered languages) and "lifestyles" (e.g., having a healthy diet). *Vision 3* took a more global orientation towards culture than the other two textbooks by including topics such as "elderly care", and "using renewable energy". It seems that through these globally-shared cultural elements, the writers of such textbooks could gradually create mutual understanding, which can be a positive orientation in these textbooks. This orientation is supported by Menard-Warwick's (2009) claim that the one of the main aims of cultural teaching is to create mutual understanding and respect and develop responsive actions.

Despite this issue, the international culture generally received little attention in this series. It was poorly represented through reference to some famous characters and people's names (e.g., *Diego*), or some famous places in the world (e.g., the pyramids) in *Vision 1*, and through describing some main languages (e.g., French) in *Vision 2*. One justification for their low percentage might be the concern of the writers of such textbooks for the national culture. Besides, such textbooks do not target international students. Thus, international perspective has a low profile in this series. This finding is echoed in the conclusions of Tajeddin and Teimournezhad's (2014) study that local ELT textbooks published in Iran do not present sufficient references to EFL learners' international cultural elements. In closing, the above analysis provided a picture about the cultural perspectives adopted in the *Vision* series. However, the frequency of cultural representation did not provide sufficient information on how the series might help the EFL reader raise

cultural awareness and reflection. Further qualitative analysis could be at stake to make better deductions.

As for the second purpose of the study, content analysis was done to find out indexical and symbolic / iconic relationship between images and texts in the three textbooks. For instance, Unit 1 in *Vision 1* was titled “Saving Nature”. As displayed in Figure 1, the four photos on the left from Unit 1 are signs which stand as icons or symbols, because they do not refer to any specific text. As an example, the photo of the polar bear walking on a melting ice floe can be a signifier referring to the issue of global warming (i.e., signified notion). Presumably, the inclusion of the image is not just to reinforce the vocabulary or grammatical structure related to the unit focus, but it is paired with the task that prompts the reader to reflect upon the topic of saving the nature. That is, the task involves the EFL readers in sharing their ideas and beliefs on how to save the nature, a globally shared aspect of culture. In fact, the Iranian readers of *Vision 1* are asked to reflect on a globally shared aspect of culture through answering such questions: “Why have we had a little rain recently?”, “Why did the level of water decrease in rivers?”, “Why do people produce so much garbage?”, “How can we prevent producing so much garbage?”, and “Why is the earth getting warmer?”. Hence, such photos in the textbooks do not have a decorative purpose; rather, they contribute to meaning-construction and promote cultural learning. These photos are considered as icon signifiers and the interpretant i.e., what the audience or reader makes of the sign, can help cultural learning.

However, in the image on the right in Figure 1, the photos are signs which stand as indexes. The signifier (i.e., the pictures) signify the notion of deforestation and hurting animals. In each of these photos, the presence of the former (signifier) implies that the latter (signified) exists. The reader is required to match linguistic phrases or words, such as cutting tress (the signified), with the appropriate photos (the signifier). Therefore, the image and text are set into an indexical relation i.e., the photos (signs) point to their concepts such as hurting animals and putting out fire. This kind of relation focuses on the creation or reinforcement of lexical meaning, which has pedagogical purposes; that is, it is a supporting item to the linguistic content. However, this kind of relationship does **not provide** the enough opportunity for the reader to carefully reflect on the image and its cultural content. To use Pierce’s terminology, the interpretants here do not develop intercultural knowledge and reflection effectively.



Figure 1

Images from Vision 1 (Alavimoghaddam et al., 2016, p.17)

Like *Vision 1*, there were many instances of images in *Vision 2* which provided the required contexts for EFL students to raise their cultural awareness. However, they were related to the aspects of either the source culture or globally-shared culture, and they were not concerned with such differences as ethnic, religious, or racial diversities between the source (Iranian) and target cultures (English) to assure effectiveness in communication. Figure 2 shows two examples from *Vision 2*. The unit was titled “Art and Culture”. As the Figure 2 displays, these photos are used in the textbook without any textual support; that is, they can be freely interpreted by the EFL readers. Despite the fact that they make the readers think about such aspects of the local culture as calligraphy, they do not contribute to ICC development. The images on the left in Figure 2 are icons. On the positive side, most of such iconic relationships in *Vision 2* help Iranian readers create their own interpretation and provide the context for them to reflect on some locally and globally shared cultural aspects; on the negative side, they do not involve the readers in the process of active acceptance to communicate across cultural boundaries. For instance, in the task which is related to the pictures in Figure 2, the reader is asked to reflect more on the elements of the local culture through sharing his / her ideas through such reflective questions as “What skills are required for the calligraphy?”, “Are you familiar with the different styles of painting?”, “and “Which part of Iran is famous for the art of etching?”. In this way, cultural awareness takes place, but such awareness is limited to the aspects of the local culture and fails to lead to an understating of foreign language references and appreciation of cultural diversity.



Figure 2

Images from Vision 2 (Alavimoghaddam et al., 2017, pp. 82-83)

The image on the right in Figure 2 is linked indexically to the text complemented by a task which requires the reader to match the photos (i.e., signifiers) with the appropriate words (i.e., signified). Hence, the focus in such indexical relationships is on the vocabulary reinforcement, contributing to the process of learning English; however, the reader is not provided with the possibility to reflect upon the photos, used as indexes, to explore the cultural meaning potentials. To foster critical reflection, photos need to be presented in a way that require EFL learners' interpretation rather than being presented as a simple matching task. In sum, the images used as icons or symbols in *Vision 1* and *Vision 2* provide a better context for cultural reflection, though they do not involve the readers of such ELT textbooks to encounter cross-cultural differences between the local and target culture. This orientation was observed in *Vision 3*, too. This orientation is supported by the results of Razmjoo's (2007) study that ELT textbooks taught at state-run high schools in Iran largely lack cultural diversity. As he asserts, little attention is given to cross-cultural understanding of local and target culture and ICC development in many local EFL textbooks in Iran, in particular, and in L2 educational policy, in general.

The images in Figure 3 are taken from the Unit 1 in *Vision 3*, which is about the "Sense of Appreciation". Possibly they were included in the textbook to make Iranian readers familiar with the notions of helping charity, respecting parents, and taking care of elderly people. Pictures (signs) indicate iconic / symbolic

relationships. The Iranian readers are asked to look at the them and check appropriate behaviors. Thus, they can find the opportunity to explore the cultural meaning potentials in such iconic relationship while exploring different ways by which they can show their love to their parents / teachers, and discussing why old people or teachers are precious to us. Such kinds of iconic relationships can generate interpretants which provide a good context for cultural reflection. However, such reflections are mostly related to the aspects of source and globally-shared cultures, and do not deal with those aspects of local vs. target and international cultures and cultural diversities in depth.



Figure 3

Images from Vision 3 (Alavimoghaddam et al., 2018, p. 17)

The content analysis revealed that the percentage of indexical relationship was more than symbolic / iconic relationship in the series. A total of 65% of the semiotic relationships in the series (27%, 20%, and 18% in *Vision 1*, *Vision 2*, and *Vision 3*, respectively) were indexical. In contrast, about 35% of the semiotic relationships were symbolic / iconic (13.3%, 10.5%, and 11.2% in *Vision 1*, *Vision 2*, and *Vision 3*, respectively). Thus, the dominant semiotic relationship was indexical, making up

more than half (66%). Given that the indexical relationship generates the representations which can result in less cultural learning and developing intercultural awareness. This finding means that multimodality in the series, though they perform some pedagogical functions, do not provide serious challenges for Iranian EFL readers to experience cross-cultural differences to foster their ICC skills.

Conclusion and Implications

The results have demonstrated the representation of the four cultures (source, target, international, and globally-shared) in the *Vision* series. However, the dominant one is source culture, followed by globally-shared culture. More likely, the textbook writers and publishers intend to engage the readers in recognizing the values of Iranian and Islamic culture, and create mutual understanding and respect through stressing globally-shared cultural elements. Also, based on the results, the aspects of target and international cultures receive comparatively less attention, partly because the issue of cultural invasion is at stake in Iran and such ELT textbooks do not target international students. The findings partially support the claim put forward by other researchers such as Aliakbari (2004) and Borjian (2013) Razmjoo (2007) that insufficient attention is still given to ICC development in many local ELT textbooks taught in the educational system in Iran.

The results have demonstrated two positive points. First, various cultures are represented, almost catering for many Iranian EFL students' needs and tastes. Second, the textbook writers pay attention to the L1 culture and raised awareness to cultural aspects by providing contexts relevant to the Iranian EFL students' own lives and local culture. This can be motivating and may result in better cultural learning. However, as Shin et al. (2011) point out, domination of a single culture may not meet the interest of those students who learn an international language such as English and are desperate to develop skills to communicate with people from other cultures. By implication, the ELT textbook writers who cooperate with the Iranian ministry of education should incorporate sufficient cultural and intercultural content as well as effective pedagogical strategies into local ELT textbooks like the *Vision* series to enhance EFL students' ICC in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness. It is suggested that high school EFL teachers in Iran should be responsive and provide additional materials when they see the failure of local ELT textbooks in terms of cultural teaching / learning.

Based on the analytic visual data analysis, the cultural aspects in the *Vision* series are presented by visual content. Analyzing semiotic relationship between images and texts in these textbooks show that multimodality resources can, to some degree, provide the reader with the opportunity for critical cultural reflection, particularly in case of iconic / symbolic relationship. However, based on the results of this study, this issue is limited to the source and globally-shared cultures. By implication, the ELT material developers in the Iranian ministry of education should

incorporate more culturally appropriate and engaging visuals which relate them to texts and tasks and promote iconic / symbolic relationship. Also, they need to turned their attention to the interplay of aspects of local, target, and international cultures while incorporating visual materials into local ELT textbooks like the *Vision* series. EFL students should be both linguistically and interculturally competent. Based on the findings, multimodality in the *Vision* textbooks, though it is sometimes employed as the supporting item to the linguistic content, does not provide an adequate context for Iranian EFL readers to experience cross-cultural differences, cultivate curiosity, and cognitive flexibility. It is thus recommended that the ELT textbook writers in the ministry of education take this issue into account to adapt less culturally engaging visual materials and develop supplementary materials including activities and tasks on how to semiotically connect images with texts to engage students in meaning-making, critical discussions and ICC development.

The findings of the study can be interpreted with regard to several limitations. First, L2 instructional textbooks do not convey cultural messages in a fixed manner. They are a medium for the creation or recreation of cultural messages which can be achieved successfully through the interaction of teachers and students with textbooks. This study relied on just textbooks for data collection. Future research can include cultural informants such as EFL teachers and students to (in)validate the findings of this study. Second, just three ELT textbooks were investigated in this study. Future research can look into the topic in other local ELT textbooks to increase generalizability. Finally, this research drew on two frameworks: the modified version of Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) and Weninger and Kiss's (2013) frameworks. Future research can use other more recent frameworks for the analysis of culture and multimodality in textbook.

Acknowledgements

We wish to express our deep thanks to Dr. Alavimoghadam, Dr. Kheirabadi, Dr. Rahimi, and Dr. Davari whose permission to do this research on the *Vision* series was valuable to us. Without their help we would not have been able to complete this study.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

There is no conflict of interest

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Beneath the Surface of Turn-Taking and Interruptions in Intergenerational Conversations: The Case of Adult and Adolescent Females

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Abstract

Conversational turns have long snatched the attention of discourse analysts. Despite this fact, and to the best of the researchers' knowledge, intergenerational conversations made by females have never been investigated through the lens of turn-taking and interruptions. Accordingly, this study aimed at scrutinizing the differences between female Persian-speaking adults and adolescents engaged in casual conversations in terms of turn-taking organization, and interruption patterns. To this end, the casual Persian conversations of 5 adult and 5 adolescent females attending a private reunion were analyzed based upon the turn-taking model proposed by Sacks et al. (1974), along with interruption syntactic criteria introduced by West and Zimmerman (1983). The turn-taking model comprises two techniques (self-selection or selection by the next speaker) leading to gaining or allocating turns, and the interruption criteria emphasize deep intrusion of the last two or more syllables of the current speaker. The analysis of the recorded three-hour conversation revealed 1302 uses of the turn-taking techniques and 302 interruptions. The adults used approximately 86.01% of the turn-taking techniques while the counterpart group only used around 13.97%. Moreover, 93.37% of the interruptions were initiated by the adults compared with only 6.62 % initiated by the adolescents. Accordingly, the adult females were far more dominant speakers, adopted a much larger proportion of turn-taking techniques, and were considerably more inclined to use interruptions. The subsequent interview with the adolescents demonstrated that the dramatic between-group differences originated from some paralinguistic elements namely social, psychological, cultural, and power-related factors.

Keywords: casual conversation, conversation analysis, intergenerational conversation, interruption, turn-taking

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Sunday, May, 23, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27273.1320>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

The turn-taking system as an apparatus that allows speakers to aptly manipulate speech turns is an indispensable part of humans' interactions (Duncan, 1972). However, few scholars have claimed that no rational or empirical evidence can substantiate interactions are made up of turns (Cowley, 1998). Nevertheless, myriad investigations have corroborated the irrevocable presence of turn-taking in spoken discourse. Turn-taking mechanism has been in the spotlight for decades concerning turn-shift signals (Duncan & Niederehe, 1974), effect of age and gender on turns (West & Zimmerman, 1975, 1977), pauses between turns (Duez, 1982), turn-taking sequence of interviews (Reed et al., 1993), turn-taking of computer-mediated communications (Garcia & Jacobs, 1999), turns of political speeches (Wieczorek, 2015), deceitfully simple-looking turn-taking of service encounter interactions (Echeverri & Salomonson, 2017), and turns of supportive conversations (Bodie et al., 2020).

The conversational turn-taking as an interactive skill appears since early childhood (Casillas et al., 2016). This skill is so significant that it can be easily affected when adopted in L2 setting. In this case, it might result in reduced communication efficacy (Sorensen et al., 2020) originating from poor L2 interactional competence (Doehler & Pochen-Berger, 2015). Turn-taking in multi-party conversations is a highly sophisticated act which could get many times harder in an L2 context due to the underdeveloped language resources of L2 speakers (Garcia, 2021). These notions clearly show the paramount significance of speech turns in daily social interactions regardless of the interlocutors' age, and the spoken native or non-native language.

Furthermore, some researchers have been drawn to disruptions in conversations that lead to interruptions (Okamoto et al., 2002). This could pave the way for understanding the underlying reasons for exercising power, control, and identity (Kollock et al., 1985; Stets & Burke, 1996) while some believe interruptions are a hard and discourteous means to take conversational turns (Gnisci & Bakeman, 2007).

Despite the fact that there have been wide-ranging conversational studies, to the authors' knowledge, no study has examined the differences between participants from various generations but the same gender engaged in casual conversations in terms of turn-taking and interruption patterns. Hence, this study sifted the differences between female Persian-speaking adults and adolescents' informal talks, which are deemed to rule the formal conversations (Sacks et al., 1974), at an amicable and private gathering. Moreover, the current study took a deep dive into the chief reasons contributing to the mentioned differences. These underlying reasons have been barely unfolded by previous relevant studies. The study findings are expected to underscore the rather neglected importance of conversational turns and interruptions in intergenerational conversations, and the hidden factors behind them. The seemingly invisible factors might turn the

conversation flow in the favor of some interlocutors by granting them conversational dominance (Faramarzadeh & Amini, 2017).

Research Questions

Having established the gap, we formulated the following three research questions:

1. How do female Persian-speaking adults differ from adolescents in terms of turn-taking organization?
2. How do female Persian-speaking adults differ from adolescents in terms of interruption patterns?
3. What are the underlying reasons for the observed differences between the two groups?

Literature Review

Turn-taking is the sequencing of speakers' interactions moves which are dependent on the type of speech systems such as transactions, meetings, rituals, or debates (Sacks et al., 1974). Furthermore, turn-taking organization is perceived as speaking opportunities that underlie our social interactions without which the target of conversations would not be fulfilled (Schegloff, 2000).

Turn-taking dynamism has been divided into face-to-face and non-face-to-face hints of conversations accentuating verbal, visual, and prosodic properties of talks (Schaffer, 1983). It has been revealed that even people with hearing problems use turn-taking techniques. According to Adami and Swanwick's (2019) study, individuals with impaired hearing adopt semiotic resources to gain or assign turns. This finding can prove that all human beings have to utilize verbal or non-verbal turn-taking techniques to sustain their communications with people. As another non-verbal turn-taking technique, the eyebrow movements and voice frequency can be indicated. Rapid eyebrow movements have been observed to signal gaining or giving turns which can impact the frequency of the speaker's voice as well (Guaitella et al., 2009).

According to Weiss' (2018) research, it was revealed that interlocutors would gaze at each other as a sign for either selecting the next speaker or turning down the offer of accepting the turn given to them. Not only do staring looks give away turn transitions, but phonological patterns of utterances can also lead to unraveling changes in turns. Zellers (2016) has contended that prosodic cues (stress and intonation patterns) serve as indicators leading to transiting conversational turns.

Another remarkable point in the organization of turns is the timing and silence existing between the two consecutive turns. This can be impacted by cognitive and motivational factors such as pragmatic implications, the competitive atmosphere, the interlocutor's self-confidence, and the social status of the speakers (Wilson & Wilson, 2005). In line with the silence observed in conversations whose interlocutors come from various languages and cultures, it was indicated that Japanese students were deemed mostly silent by their Australian peers (Nakane, 2005). Moreover, the study illuminated the negative effect of speaking in place of

Japanese students following their silence, and the lack of response to the questions. This issue was deemed to encourage future silence, confusion, and delayed responses. The study outcomes consolidate the heavy toll which can be taken on foreign students when involved in academic milieu abroad.

Even the different parts of each turn can hold significance. By way of example, the beginning of a turn known as “turn-initial particle” (Garcia, 2021) has been substantiated to have various functions. They tend to vary across different contexts such as institutional, professional, or casual which are conducive to unraveling speakers’ stance, and how they form social interactions (Kantara, 2019).

Concerning the “cooperation” factor, Larrue and Trognon (1992) investigated turn-taking organization in a meeting. They concluded that turn-taking is a rule-governed notion and collaborative. In another sense, not only did turn-taking depend on the chair-man, but on every member who was present at the meeting. As a result, they perceived turn-taking as a cooperative concept which should not be deemed as a sole mechanism.

In light of the “culture” factor, it has been postulated that ethnicity and culture could impact the organization of turn-taking. Shimura (1988) corroborated that Chinese ESL learners took more turns, and adopted more self-selected turns when compared to their Japanese counterparts. This issue might be interlocked with cultural differences which are ubiquitous between various nations. These differences might lead to some misconstrues since people tend to retain their first language turn-taking habits in conversations with foreign speakers (Ward & Al Bayyari, 2010).

Regarding the “gender and power” factor, a critical analysis by Fishman (1978) demonstrated that women were ruthlessly suppressed by their male counterparts in workplace interactions since men found themselves superior and more powerful. Fishman observed that women were more active, asked more questions, and provided more support. Nonetheless, women were more rejected and deterred by men who did less work, were less active, and made fewer attempts. Most topics introduced by women were forsaken while the ones proposed by men were welcome. As a consequence, although women took turns and gained the opportunity of exchanging speech, they did far less attain their goals through interactions. In the view of Cannon et al. (2019), gender contributes to conversational inequality in group conversations.

The “predictability” factor has been corroborated to affect the organization of turns. Based upon the relevant culminations, supposing speakers predict their answers to questions, they are better able to take turns and smoothly sustain the conversation (Corps et al., 2018). Another intriguing study on kindergarten-aged children demonstrated that 3 to 5-year-olds are equally capable of regulating their turns by predicting the ending time of the current speaker’s turn (Lindsay et al., 2019). It has also been shown that children’s turn-taking skill development is longitudinal and gets most likely mastered by middle childhood (Cassillas et al., 2016).

In terms of the “social status and power” factor, one study examined conversations between lawyers and witnesses at courtrooms. Based upon Gnisci and Bakeman’s (2007) study, lawyers managed to exert an effect on inhibiting length and content facets of witness’s turns. According to the study, the role of lawyers’ power influences turn-taking and turn length. The role and power of institutional context should not be overlooked. It has been concluded that institutional settings can affect the turn-taking mechanism, fair distribution of turns, and creating opportunities for speakers to take the floor (Heath & Mondada, 2019).

According to Sacks et al. (1974), interlocutors might select themselves as the next speaker which leads to the formation of overlaps and interruptions. Henceforth, interruptions are a subset of the turn-taking construct. Another conversation analysis revealed that the majority of the conversations consisted of overlaps (Webster et al., 2020). Additionally, it has been proven that interlocutors use prosodic and lexical information of the talks to determine when to interrupt other speakers (Seals et al., 2021).

Culture, gender, age, and power have been proven to play significant roles in shaping conversation interruptions. Despite having been viewed as conversation-rules-defying and relatively discourteous, interruption patterns have been at the core of some studies. In this respect, Okamoto et al. (2002) unveiled that gender differences and cultural variations can influence speakers’ perceptions of interruptions either positively or negatively. One study has demonstrated that men hold a more positive attitude toward interruptions than women, and either gender conceives interruptions caused by their same sex more negatively than the ones caused by the opposite sex (Chambliss & Feeny, 1992). Moreover, interruptions can be utilized to unravel power relations, command, and identity (Kollock et al., 1985; Stets & Burke, 1996). West and Zimmerman (1975) realized that gender and age group play important roles in shaping and distributing conversation turns. From their standpoint, females and children are akin to one another in terms of interruption. In the scholars’ view, both groups are repeatedly interrupted or overlooked by male counterparts and parents. They perceived the interrupting males and parents who exercise power as “rude” and “authoritative”.

Method

Participants

The subjects of the study were 5 adult females aged 40-55 (age mean = 49) in addition to 5 adolescent females aged 12-19 (age mean = 15.8). The participants had been long-time friends and as a result, there was no stranger in their reunion. Three of the adults were working women while two of them were housewives. All the adolescent subjects were school students. The subjects had been chosen based upon volunteer sampling and the fact that their features fit the purpose of the study. They were native Persian-speaking females coming from various ages resulting in two groups with a considerable age gap. All the females had been dwelling in the same city (Tehran, Iran) in which they met up on the reunion day. Moreover, they had been intimate friends and as a consequence, there was no degree of formality among

them which could have affected the communication. Regarding the socioeconomic status, they all belonged to middle social class contributing to creating a homogenous circle of interlocutors. The only remarkable difference amongst the subjects was related to their age dividing them into two groups. Most importantly, the participants had agreed to joining in the study on the condition of keeping their personal information confidential, and having their voices merely used for research purposes. In the case of adolescents, their parents' consent had been taken in advance. The subjects had been assured that the files of their private talks would not be publicly published, or accessed by other individuals other than the researchers of the study.

Instruments

A high-quality audio recorder was implemented to record the three-hour conversations of the participants. The recorder was fixed in someplace close to the subjects to better record their talks. Nevertheless, it was placed among some other objects of the room to get it disguised and not distracting to the participants. Later on, the subjects stated that after a while, they had almost forgotten about the presence of the recorder at the room. In the final stage, a semi-structured interview with the adolescents was carried out to illuminate the root of the observed differences between the two groups.

Procedure

The subjects made the conversations and sustained the talks in their own way as they did in everyday communications. The main purpose was to gain natural casual talks of the subjects as much as possible. Accordingly, there was no intervention by the researchers during the participants' conversations. Subsequently, the recorded data were manually analyzed to address the first research question using the turn-taking techniques proposed by Sacks et al. (1974) as follows:

1. Current speaker chooses the next interlocutor
2. The next interlocutor self-selects

According to the model, turns can be simply one word in length, or as long as a full sentence. In the next stage, to answer the second research question, the interruption patterns of the interlocutors were scrutinized using West and Zimmerman's (1983) syntactic criteria positing that concomitant talk by the second speaker who has invaded the last two or more syllables of the current speaker gives rise to an interruption. Providing the next speaker invades the current speaker's speech before they have finished their very last syllable, this act is not judged an interruption but an overlap (West & Zimmerman, 1975). Accordingly, if the new speaker produces a minimal utterance such as "yeah", "mm", and "fine", or the two speakers say the same utterance to show agreement, no intrusion or interruption has occurred (Okamoto et al., 2002).

Supposing the second speaker intrudes the current speaker while the present interlocutor is in the middle of their utterance, this can be deemed as a deep

intrusion since the first speaker is interrupted when they are two or more syllables further from finishing their saying (Okamoto et al., 2002). Four possibilities were taken into consideration preceding the data analysis stage of the interruption patterns:

1. Adult females interrupt one another
2. Adolescent females interrupt one another
3. Adult females interrupt adolescent females
4. Adolescent females interrupt adult females

It should be mentioned that other models and criteria apart from those used by the present study, have been proposed so far. However, the one by Sacks et al. (1974), and by West and Zimmerman (1975) are the most apt for the current study purpose in contrast to others found in the forgone literature. Although the model and the criteria date back to some time ago, they are still deemed as pioneering and robust. Finally, in the last stage of the analysis, to respond to the third research question, an interview with the teenagers was conducted to clarify some obscure points, and shed light on the cause of the differences between the two groups.

Results

To answer the first research question concerned with the differences between adult and adolescent females regarding turn-taking, the corpus of the study was analyzed to unveil the turn-taking organization of the participants utilizing the turn-allocating techniques proposed by Sacks et al. (1974). Figure 1 demonstrates the pertinent findings.

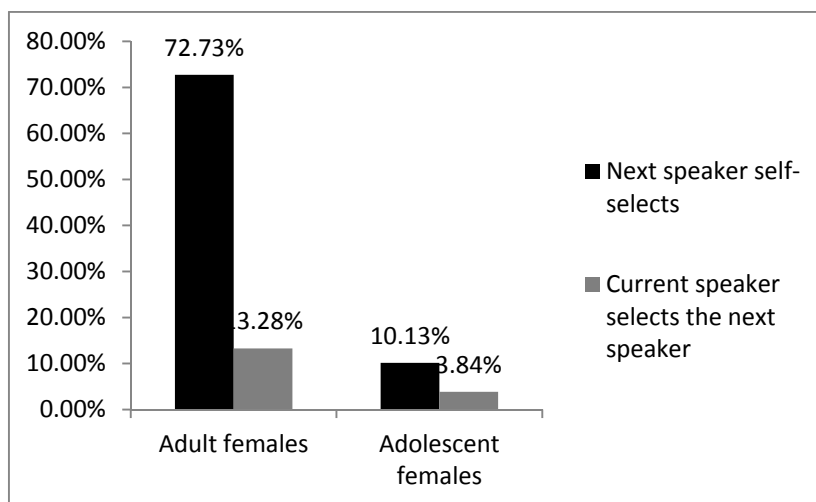


Figure 1

Turn-Allocating Techniques Used by Adult and Adolescent Female

As Figure 1 reveals, 82.86% of the techniques were attributed to self-selection, out of which 72.73% (947 uses) was obtained by the adult females while only 10.13% (132 uses) was achieved by the adolescent females. On the other hand, 17.12% of the turn-assigning techniques were ascribed to the selection of the next speaker by the current speaker. Out of this percentage, 13.28% (173 uses) belonged to the adults whereas 3.84% (50 uses) was utilized by the adolescents. Henceforth, either group was noticeably inclined to adopt self-selection. Nevertheless, the second technique was applied to a much less degree. On the whole, the adults held considerably a higher proportion of turn-allocating techniques which indicated their prominent role in snatching and assigning the turns.

In the next phase, to respond to the second research question pivoting around the between-group differences stemming from interruptions, the interruption patterns were examined using West and Zimmerman's (1983) syntactic criteria. Table 2 provides the pertinent results.

Table 1

Interruption Patterns of Adult and Adolescent Females

Interruption pattern	Adult females interrupt one another	Adolescent females interrupt one another	Adult females interrupt adolescent females	Adolescent females interrupt adult females
Occurrence	82.45%	2.64%	10.92%	3.97%

According to Table 1, the largest interruption occurrence was made by the adult females interrupting one another while the smallest one was gained by the adolescent females interrupting one another. All in all, the adults showed much more interest in using interruptions when compared to their counterparts. In another sense, not only were adults more disposed to implement turn-allocating techniques, but they also made much more intrusive utterances.

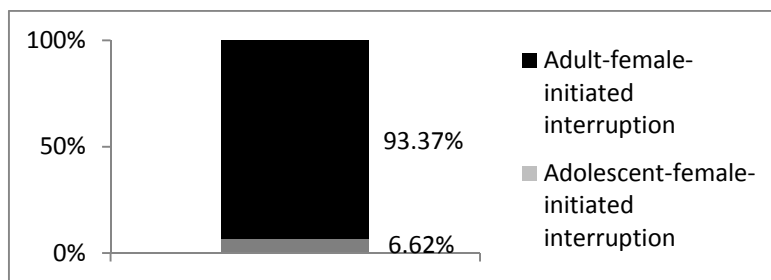


Figure 2

Representation of the Interruptions Initiated by Adult and Adolescent Females

As shown in Figure 2, 93.37% (282 interruptions) of the interruptions were commenced by the adult participants while only 6.62% (20 interruptions) of the interruptions were initiated by the adolescents. Subsequent examples elucidate the interruptions made by the participants.

The sign $\left\{ \right.$ represents an interruption. The sign was set by Sacks et al. (1974) as a convention showing interruptions in transcripts. The English equivalents are provided below the dialogues.

Adult Females Interrupt Each Other

Excerpt 1

Speaker2 (adult): *Goft X Khanoom?* $\left\{ \right.$ *Bale bale Ma roozenamzadimoonbood.*

Speaker1 (adult): *Shoma Esfahan boodin.*

Speaker2 (adult): Did lady X say so? Yes yes. It was our engagement day.

Speaker1 (adult): You were in Isfahan.

Excerpt 2

Speaker2 (adult): $\left\{ \right.$ *Donmoghe Mohsen koochikbood.*

Speaker1 (adult): $\left[\right.$ *Valienghadrsarehalealan.*

Speaker2 (adult): Mohsen was a child at that time.

Speaker1 (adult): But he is so energetic now.

In the above examples from the corpus of the study, speaker1 who was an adult female interrupted the current speaker who was an adult, as well.

Adolescent Females Interrupt Each Other

Excerpt 3

Speaker8 (adolescent): *Gorga* $\left[\right.$ *nakhoranet?*

Speaker10 (adolescent): $\left[\right.$ *Na. Sag daran.*

Speaker8 (adolescent): Will wolves eat you?

Speaker10 (adolescent): No. They've got a dog.

Excerpt 4

Speaker10 (adolescent): $\left\{ \right.$ *Bebinaslan ye vazibood man behetmigam.*

Speaker8 (adolescent): $\left[\right.$ *Pas chera man hichvaghtnadidam?*

Speaker10 (adolescent): It was a mess I'm telling you.

Speaker8 (adolescent): Why have I never seen it?

According to the example above, speaker10 who was an adolescent participant interrupted speaker8 who was another adolescent. However, in the latter example, speaker8 interrupted speaker10.

Adult Females Interrupt Adolescent Females

Excerpt 5

Speaker8 (adolescent): *Man Dooghkheili doostdaram.*

Speaker3 (adult): *Ye labaniati hast sarekhoone ma.*

Speaker8 (adolescent): I like Doogh too much.

Speaker3 (adult): There's a dairy store near our place.

Excerpt 6

Speaker6 (adolescent): *Vali miganaslannakhorin.*

Speaker3 (adult): *Rastmige. Too radio goft.*

Speaker6 (adolescent): It's said not to eat it at all.

Speaker3 (adult): She's right. It was said on radio.

The two provided extracts are instances displaying that not only did the adults interrupt one another, but they also interrupted the adolescents, as well. In the first instance, speaker3 who was one of the adult members of the group interrupted speaker8 (an adolescent) in the middle of her speech. The same pattern occurred to speaker6 (another adolescent) when she got interrupted by speaker3 who was one of the adult females.

Adolescent Females Interrupt Adult Females

Excerpt 7

Speaker4 (adult): *Ye khanoomi somadeboodneshasteboodoonja.*

Speaker6 (adolescent): *Valirastmige, migannakhorin.*

Speaker4 (adult): A lady came in and sat there.

Speaker6 (adolescent): But she's right, it's said not to eat it.

Speaker5 (adult): *Ye kisegozashteboodjoloshenghadkisebood, ye pirzane.*

Speaker8 (adolescent): *Mastekiseyiboode.*

Speaker5 (adult): An old lady put a bag in front of her it was this size.

Speaker8 (adolescent): It was strained yogurt.

Through analyzing the study corpus, it was unveiled that a limited proportion (3.97%) of the interruptions were attributed to the adolescents interrupting the adults. Based upon the preceding extracts, speaker6 (an adolescent)

interrupted speaker4 who was an adult. Next, the same pattern was observed for speaker8 (an adolescent) who interrupted speaker5 (an adult).

Other Interruption Patterns

Via analyzing the conversations, we noticed that in some cases, the current speakers got interrupted in the middle of their speech, and due to having been interrupted, they left their utterance unfinished. This issue was merely observed in adult-adult interactions. The following example sheds light on the mentioned issue.

Excerpt 8

Speaker1 (adult): *Vagheanmajlesgarmkoneharja kemiribahasho...*
Speaker4 (adult): *Ham zanesh ham khodesh.*
sarehalo shade.

Speaker1 (adult): Wherever you go with him, he is the life and soul of the party and...

Speaker4 (adult): He and his wife are full of beans.

In the above example, when speaker4 invaded speaker1's utterance, the current speaker (speaker1) abandoned her speech and left it unfinished while the interrupter finished her remarks.

Excerpt 9

Speaker2 (adult): *Oonofahmidam.* *Oonke...*
Speaker1 (adult): *Ahsant. Oonamboodesh.*

Speaker2 (adult): I understood that. That...

Speaker1 (adult): Good job! She was there, too.

The same pattern can be observed in the preceding example in which speaker2 quit the conversation, and her utterance was left incomplete since she had been interrupted by speaker1 who was another adult.

Moreover, it was disclosed that there were instances in which the second speaker interrupted the current speaker, stopped after saying few words, let the current speaker finish her turn, and subsequently continued her previously unfinished utterance. It should be pointed out that the mentioned issue was solely recorded in adult-adult communication. The below example clarifies the indicated pattern.

Excerpt 10

Speaker1 (adult): *Oonamkhoob boode. Shomaaz bas ziaditamizin.*
Speaker3 (adult): *Khoobboodeziadi....*
Speaker3 (adult): *Kamnamakmikhorim.*

Speaker1 (adult): That was fine, too. You are meticulous about hygiene.

Speaker3 (adult): It was good we overly...

Speaker3 (adult): We eat low-salt food.

In the provided example, speaker3 intended to interrupt the current speaker (speaker1) and after saying few words, she stopped and allowed the current speaker to finish her turn. Subsequently, speaker3 got back on the track to complete her abandoned utterance.

Additionally, in some parts of the conversations, back-to-back interruptions by the adults were observed. In other words, more than two adult speakers got involved in a number of connected interruptions taking place in a row. The following example depicts the successive interruptions.

Excerpt 11

Speaker1 (adult): *Gooshtetazeeste fademikonan.*

Speaker4 (adult): *Waghtikeyfiyateghazabalabasheshoogh
mishedige.*

Speaker3 (adult): *Shooghbood.*

Speaker1 (adult): They use fresh meat.

Speaker4 (adult): When the quality of food is high, it gets crowded.

Speaker3 (adult): It was crowded.

Regarding the instance derived from the corpus, speaker 4 interrupted the current speaker who was speaker1. Subsequent to this first interruption, speaker3 interrupted speaker4 which resulted in two interruptions in succession.

In the following and ultimate phase of the data analysis, the interview with the five adolescents was analyzed so that the chief reasons for the prominent differences between the two groups in terms of turn-taking techniques and interruption patterns could be unraveled. In other words, the interview interpretations paved the way for discerning the points which were rather latent in the participants' recorded conversations. Overall, the interview results demonstrated that the main reasons for the adolescent females' low level of engagement in the conversations leading to much fewer turns and initiated interruptions could be summarized as uninteresting conversation topics mostly raised by the adults, the considerable age gap between the two groups, and the parenting technique which constantly highlights the fact that younger people should mostly stay silent when they are in the company of older individuals as a sign of politeness.

Discussion

Following the analysis of the conversations, the differences between adult and adolescent females in terms of turn-taking and interruptions got unfolded. It was

revealed that how conversations made by participants with remarkable age gaps can yield dramatic differences. In other words, intergenerational conversations can lead to different turn-taking organizations and interruption patterns. It turned out that the adult females possessed the largest proportion of the turns to the extent that 72.73% of the turn-assigning techniques were seized by the adults through selecting themselves as the next speaker. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the adult group members were a great deal more talkative than adolescents, and they took the floor to a considerable degree chiefly by self-selection technique. Accordingly, not only were the adult females remarkably chattier, but they also adopted a much higher percentage of the used turn-assigning techniques. Moreover, it was observed that the speakers selected the next turn holder by asking questions to elicit information leading to signaling who the next speaker would be. The same occurrence was recorded by Sacks et al. (1974), as well.

Considering turn transitions (where one turn ends and the next one starts), it was observed that the transitions ended in overlaps (when another speaker intrudes the very last syllable of the current speaker), interruptions (when the second speaker invades the current speaker's talk while they are two or more syllables away from finishing their turn), or one of the two mentioned turn-allocating techniques (either the next speaker self-selects or the current speaker selects the next speaker). Overlaps were observed in Sacks et al. (1974) study on conversational turns, as well. Based upon the scholars' culminations, conversation overlaps constitute a large proportion of turn transitions.

In consonance with Schegloff's (2000) inquiry, overlaps and interruptions comprise a large proportion of talks. In the present study, the overlaps observed in the middle of the current speaker's speech were made as short feedbacks displaying agreement and upholding the current speaker's sayings. Furthermore, according to the upshots of the current investigation, the interruptions and overlaps stemmed from a self-selection pattern pertinent to turn-allocating techniques. On the whole, the self-selection pattern of the turn-taking model comprises overlaps, interruptions, and pure self-selections devoid of any overlaps or interruptions.

To put it another way, the notion of turn-taking organization and the techniques employed by the interlocutors were observed to be interlocked with the ensuing overlaps and interruptions which altogether constitute the smooth flow of conversations. Regarding interruptions, the adult females comprised a tremendous fraction of the interruptions in the sense that 93.37% of the interruptions were initiated by the adults.

In some cases, when an adult interlocutor faced an interruption caused by the second adult speaker, the current interlocutor paused, and stopped sustaining and finishing their speech so that the second speaker could finish their utterances. Apart from that, there were occurrences in which the second speaker interrupted the current speaker, stopped after saying few words or even a single word, allowed the current speaker to finish their saying and then, got back on the speaking track, and continued completing their abandoned utterances.

Sacks et al. (1974) observed the same cases, too. According to the mentioned researchers, if one speaker finds themselves interrupting another speaker or even being interrupted, either interrupter or interrupted interlocutor might stop to repair the conversational inconvenience caused during the interaction. The same repair mechanism was called peremptory by Wilson and Wilson's study (2005) in which interruptions are viewed as conversation violations that need to be remedied via implementing a repair mechanism.

Additionally, it was easily spotted that the adolescent females seemed subordinate to the adult ones. The former group owned much fewer turns, implemented a much smaller number of turn-allocating techniques, and initiated much fewer interruptions. During the interview, the adolescent females were asked about the main reasons for their considerably low level of participation in the talks which led to a much smaller number of turns and interruptions. It was unveiled that one of the reasons was tied to the fact that the adolescents did not find the topics of the conversations mainly raised by the adults fascinating and relevant enough to their personal lives.

Getting back to the content of the conversations, it turned out that the adults who mentioned a vast number of the conversation topics were mostly inclined to speak of cooking recipes, knitting, sewing, the youth's future, rejuvenating esthetic procedures, healthy diets, house chores, financial issues, and distant sweet memories. Nevertheless, according to the interview findings, the adolescent counterpart was eager to have conversations about fashion, makeup, school studies, job prospects, university admissions, entertainment, intimate friends, social media, and their future goals.

Moreover, the adolescents unfolded: "we did not feel happy and excited being in adults' company. They were on average 20 years older than us, and we preferred to be around individuals of our own age group". Their desire to spend time with other teenagers could be justified by the fact that adolescents need more peers' approval than adults' approval (Scales, 2010) which fosters them to be more drawn to other teenagers. In other words, this issue can be traced back to the undeniable psychological differences between the two groups with a considerable age gap.

Another attention-grabbing issue mentioned by the adolescent females was intertwined with the upbringing matter. Based upon their remarks: "our parents would normally remind us of being an elegant courteous girl who does not appear garrulous or interruptive when she is in a circle of much older individuals". In another sense, their parents always urged them to be polite in adults' and older individuals' company, and their uncommunicativeness partly resulted from politeness.

According to former investigations and relevant literature, there could be a relationship between politeness and silence. Regarding Sifianou's (1995) study, individuals would rather be talkative or silent under different circumstances, and the degree of volubility or reticence is differently labeled in various situations and across various cultures. By way of example, in Persian culture, if a young person is

considerably loud-mouthed and interruptive when he or she is in much older people's company, the speaker is branded as somewhat cheeky or impolite. Moreover, Sifianou (1995) asserted that uncommunicativeness and silence might sometimes indicate psychological factors. This statement endorses our study adolescents' claims concerned with their lack of interest in getting engaged in conversation topics brought up by the adults, and their preference to spend time with girls of their own age range. The interviewees' sayings accentuate the irrevocable psychological differences between people from various age groups. This fact stopped teenagers from enjoying much older adults' company.

As a result, it can be concluded that the story behind the adolescent girls' considerable reticence boiled down to the irrelevant insipid conversation topics, the significant age gap between the two groups, and the nurturing technique applied by their parents. The traditional upbringing technique underscores the fact that good girls ought not to be loud-mouthed and interruptive when they are in adults' company so that they can be judged well-behaved, well-bred, and polite. It should be noted that people acquire politeness and polite behavior through socialization (SalmaniNodoushan, 2019). Evidently, this socialization process is tremendously shaped and impacted by parents. The present study illuminated how adolescent girls were influenced by their parents regarding socially appropriate behavior.

The mentioned upbringing issue accentuates the undeniable role of culture and society norms in shaping and steering people's attitudes which irrefutably manifest through their discourse. The function of culture, the framework imposed by society, and their huge impact on discursive structure have been studied and corroborated by a large number of forgone inquiries. Such studies mostly concentrate on cultural misperceptions observed in interactions between individuals coming from various cultural backgrounds. To give an instance, the study by Nakane (2005) clearly revealed how East Asian students were misjudged as taciturn by Western students while their uncommunicativeness stemmed from the cultural differences related to classroom conduct.

Based upon the previous relevant studies, conversational interactions can display the interconnectedness between language, dominance, and power (Farina & Holzberg, 1968; Hadley & Jacob, 1973; Mishler & Waxler, 1968; Obeng, 2020). From a critical perspective, significantly more adult-initiated-interruptions in comparison to those of the adolescents would be justified by power relations and power exercising as many researchers have meshed interruptions with wielding power (Okamoto et al., 2002). In Persian culture, older individuals possess a much higher social status. Self-evidently, higher social status brings about greater power. As a result, dominating the conversation floor by the adult participants must have had underlying power relation reason. The older the speakers, the more they are given the right of taking the conversation floor through interruptions or other means by which one can snatch the conversation turns. From a dominance perspective, greater power and higher social status can affect conversational control, and result in taking more speech turns and using more interruptions (Famarzadeh & Amini, 2017).

The power relations and dominance in face-to-face communication have been observed in adults-children interactions (West & Zimmerman, 1977), as well. As a consequence, it can be inferred that the same power relation and hegemony could be generalized to adults-adolescents interactions as corroborated by the current inquiry. In a word, conversation turns and interruptions would be shaped and impacted by the topic of conversations, the status of speakers in groups (Burns & Joyce, 1997), and the fact that discourse could be mirrored and reconstructed by power relations existing between interlocutors (Paltridge, 2012). “Deal dialogue” which is not influenced by wielding power is far from reality, and the power factor is hidden in casual conversations (Wang, 2006).

The findings of this study can be rewarding for people monitoring group conversations such as classroom teachers, meeting chairmen, or individuals supervising group therapy sessions. Monitoring conversations made in groups whose participants have significant age differences are of paramount importance. These mentioned conversations are different from group conversations whose members are of the same age group. When group members come from various age ranges, then psychological, social, cultural, and power-related factors will come into play. Providing we are aware of these factors, we will be better able to manage and steer intergenerational conversations, and have a higher chance of gaining advantageous results out of group conversations. As a consequence, such conversations will bring about far more fulfilling outcomes for their group members. Another point that should not be discounted is the notion of dominance in group interactions. This issue gets better manifested when interlocutors have different social status and power. According to the foregone literature and our study, interlocutors, who have higher social status and greater power, enjoy more dominance over other speakers. Accordingly, it is up to people monitoring group conversations to neutralize this dominance. Regarding cross-cultural institutional contexts, specifically classrooms and workplaces, individuals should consider cultural differences among students or employees. By way of example, at classrooms in which there are Persian and Western students, teachers should not ascribe Persian students’ low engagement to their uncommunicativeness. Their reticence might arise from the respect that they hold for much older students leading them to give the floor to the older ones.

While the current study put the spotlight on mixed-groups in terms of age, future studies can consider mixed-groups in terms of gender. Moreover, further studies are needed to investigate speech turns and interruptions of other types of discourse such as the classroom or institutional discourse. Interestingly, non-verbal aspects of communications giving way to earning or assigning turns can be taken into account.

Conclusion

The current study unraveled the hidden casual conversation differences between speakers from various age groups and generations, but from the same gender. To the best of our knowledge, no discourse analysis has filled this gap. In light of casual communications, it has been postulated that despite their seemingly trifling content,

casual talks are highly structured activities that serve as a critical site to discuss crucial facets of life (Eggins & Slade, 1997). Moreover, the turn-taking systems of different settings such as meetings, interviews, and ceremonies differ from one another, and turn-taking system of informal conversations governs that of formal conversations (Sacks et al., 1974). This fact undoubtedly endorses the importance of casual talks.

How conversation turns are organized can affect the smooth flow of talks. This can contribute to successful interactions between interlocutors to the extent that failures in sustaining successful communications would be attributed to poor turn-taking procedure (Cutler & Pearson, 1985). Accordingly, it can be deduced that turn-taking is an integral part of humans' daily interactions (Duncan, 1972). Interestingly, it has been bolstered that the study of turn-taking is the potential to illuminate the process of linguistic and cognitive development of human beings (Lindsay et al., 2019). This can reinforce the eminence of investigating conversation turns.

From another standpoint, allocating and seizing turns might lead to conversation disruptions or in other words, conversation interruptions. This has grabbed some scholars' attention in the field (Okamoto et al., 2002). Nonetheless, some skeptics have deemed interruptions as impolite (Gnisci & Bakeman, 2007), and necessitated repair mechanisms by the parties involved (Sacks et al., 1974).

Having established the gap, the current scrutiny determined to disclose the probable differences between adult and adolescent females in terms of turn-allocating techniques accentuating how conversation turns are managed and assigned, and the interruption patterns embedded in turn-taking system. More importantly, the study hoped to demonstrate the root of the mentioned differences through scratching beneath the surface, and transcending what is obvious regarding individuals' casual talks.

Based upon the outcomes, it was unveiled that the adult females were a great deal more dominant speakers and could dwarf the adolescent ones through gaining a huge part of the turn-allocating techniques including self-selection which led to interruptions. To put it another way, the adult females were observed to be far more talkative, own much more turns, and be more interruptive speakers.

The follow-up interview with the teenagers revealed that the overpowering feature of the adult interlocutors could be traced back to the fact that most of the conversation topics largely brought up by the adults, seemed tedious and unrelated to the teenagers' tastes and lives. Additionally, the adolescents preferred to spend time with girls of their own age with whom they had much more in common.

From another angle, the adolescents posited that the acceptable social frame of a cultured girl is someone who barely talks when she is in the company of a group of adults who are much older than her. In other words, they had always been reminded not to be loud-mouthed and not to interrupt adults. As a consequence, the upbringing style which is deeply rooted in the cultural norms and society was another main reason why the adolescent females appeared to be significantly

uncommunicative and detached from the adults. Apart from that, in Persian society, older people are given higher social status which brings them more power. Through gaining the advantage of this power, they earn this right to take the conversation floor by utilizing turn-taking techniques, and interruptions originating from self-selection.

It can be explicitly inferred that how people take turns, and how they intend to co-construct their communication can all be affected by some underpinning factors which might be unperceivable from the surface. The ulterior factors might be pertinent to exercising power, control, identity, and conversational dominance which can be substantiated through sifting conversation turns and interruptions (Faramarzadeh & Amini, 2017; Kollock et al., 1985; Stets & Burke, 1996).

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Translation of Poetry From a Hermeneutical Perspective: A Case Study of Rumi

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Abstract

Works of poetry are characterized by specific elements (e.g. symbols, images, concepts) that help interpret and thematize such works. The principle of “holism” in hermeneutics is concerned with analyzing how part-whole relationships are established in a text and how they may give rise to a particular reading of it. A problem, however, is analytical frameworks / models are rarely used for hermeneutic textual analysis and most studies are very subjective / abstract in this area. This study explores the English translations of Rumi’s prelude to his masterpiece *Masnavi* to analyze how they represent the “mystical” reading of the work. The study draws on a hermeneutical model of poetry translation, which is regulated by two sub-components: cultural-linguistic complexity rate and hermeneutical complexity rate. To identify the characterizing elements, the study considers the keywords in the original and tries to analyze how they are rendered into English by focusing on holistic relationships between the sub-components of the model. The study then compares the choices and suggests which ones could thematically contribute to the mystical reading. Besides confirming the practicality of the model, the findings show that the mystical reading is scattered across the translations and no single one tries to reflect the mystical interpretation.

Keywords: hermeneutics, *The Song of the Reed*, literary translation, poetry, holism

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Thursday, April, 27, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27231.1306>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

Translating poetry has been regarded as one of the most challenging tasks in the history of translation. Some scholars have even asserted that poetry translation might be even impossible, while some believe that only poets can practice poetry translation. These perceived difficulties associated with poetry translation make this sub-genre of literary translation very interesting, because it can help reveal a variety of underlying mechanisms and processes shaping understanding (O’Keeffe, 2018). There are some questions that can guide research into poetry translation: What are the factors that contribute to the difficulty of poetry translation? How can such discrete factors be analyzed as parts of the whole body of a poem?

Poetry translation, like many other modes of translation, must be viewed as a communication of both lingual signs and cultural symbols. Poetic form and a large set of devices structuring poetic articulation can render this linguistic mode very ambiguous and recondite. In some cases, the ideas are not presented through conventional signs and symbols, as there might be codes (e.g., keywords) peculiar to a poet. In such cases even an average native speaker will need extensive reading experience to be able to make an interpretation of the poem in question. Meanwhile, apart from these internal textual-aesthetic aspects, the impact of literary criticism and interpretive traditions cannot be ignored. Such sources establish “meta-textual” connections with the poem and even sometimes “appropriate” it (Kharmandar, 2018b).

A combination of all of these factors suggests that poetry translation is a highly “complex” lingual phenomenon. The translator, of course, can mitigate complexity by gaining knowledge about the factors in the original text, although such knowledge could only be helpful when it is relatively systematic and structured. The principle of holism in hermeneutics suggests that the meaning of a text is constructed through part-whole relationships that govern the elements in the text. Yet, which elements should be given priority in hermeneutic poetry analysis? A framework of poetic analysis is a holistic, interpretive system regulated by some (sub)dimensions. Such a framework has already been proposed by Kharmandar and Karimnia (2013), although it needs to be tested on many corpora to show how it contributes to poetry translation.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the English translations of Rumi’s prelude to *Masnavi, The Song of the Reed*, at both textual and meta-textual levels based on Kharmandar and Karimnia’s (2013) hermeneutic framework of poetry translation and its re-version. This framework relies on two complexity-related packages: cultural-linguistic complexity rate (CLCR) and hermeneutic complexity rate (HCR). The first eighteen verses of Rumi’s *Masnavi Manavi*, Book I, called *The Song of the Reed*, as the essence of the whole six-volume book, represents an extensively interpreted piece of literature. Guided by the framework, the study focuses on the central keywords as the parts in the poem that may shape the mystical reading (the whole) in the translations.

Theoretical Foundations

Poetry and Translation

A poem is a work of art, a composition, a work of verse, which may be in rhyme or may be blank verse or a combination of the two (Cudden, 1976). Nair (1991) believes that poetry provides a reflection of the poet's feelings and experiences, and King (1998) points out the rare or striking ways words are used in poetic language. King further explores the process through which word selection takes place in poetry, stating that in poems, we “choose words for their meanings, for the emotions they create, and for the sound they make” (King, 1998, p. 16).

Many scholars believe that poetry can never be adequately rendered into another language. For instance, Frost (1969) calls poetry a memorable speech which is lost in translation. Expressive and aesthetic values, for instance, are among the complexities that a translator cannot easily tackle. That is why some believe that poetry translation is not only a difficult task, but sometimes even an impossible one. Different aspects of a single poem cannot all be rendered in a single translation. Language structure and sound, the cultural and historical context behind the poem, its relation to specific words, references, sounds, or literary systems, differ so much from one language and cultural context to another.

Moreover, when we talk about poetry, we talk about emotions, feelings, thoughts, and ideas. These elements cannot be rendered into another culture as conveniently as it may seem. For instance, in cases where there is a lack of cultural symmetry between the texts, the translator has to try specific strategies to somehow overcome the complexity. Thus, when translators practice poetry translation, they must try to choose words meticulously to transfer aesthetic values as well as the effects crafted in the source text. These specifications make the impression that, after all, poets might have a better understanding of poetry translation (Raffel, 2010).

Considering these problems, one can simply conclude that deciding upon choices in poetry translation is a difficult job to fulfill. Even if it is possible and the concepts exist cross-culturally, no one can guarantee that the translation produces the same poetic values in the target text readers. To understand these issues more systematically, one can rely on models that help evaluate poetry translation. A line of related research can specifically focus on the source text's keywords and the output of its translation(s). For example, why did the poet use a specific word? What was his / her intention behind choosing a specific word? Answering questions like these can help the translator make conscious decisions about the interpretation of meaning and literary values in the process.

There is a plethora of scholarly views, theories, and models that have addressed the notion of poetry translation. Wilss (1982), for instance, argues that aesthetic reproductions, as opposed to informative ones, are more challenging to translate. Some scholars even believe translating poetry is impossible. For example, Landers (2001, p. 97) argues that “[t]ranslating poetry well is so difficult as to be called impossible by most experts If literary translation is itself a leap of faith,

poetic translation puts that faith to the severest of all tests.” Similarly, Burnshaw et al. (1995) assert that recreating the formal arrangement of words in one language may never have the same impact in another language.

Arberry (1964, p. 257), one of the most important practitioners of poetic translation, observes that, “[s]ometimes the images are so novel and so alien to our experience that the translator stands almost helpless before his model, at a loss how to depict so much exotic beauty upon so small a canvas.” Arberry is among the translators who have called poetry translation some sort of “failure” or “disaster.” Other practitioners of poetry translation, such as Nicholson (1950), Whinfield (1887) and Redhouse (1881), have all admitted that their renditions of Persian poetry into English were difficult tasks and could only be judged as “partially successful.”

Even from a theoretical perspective, Jakobson (1959) argues that poetry is untranslatable and some creative rendition may be possible. Newmark (1988) believes that translating a poem may lead to the formation of a whole new poetic expression in the target language. Frost (as cited in Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990) suggests that poetry is *lost* through translation. Venuti (2004, p. 154) argues that “only rarely can one reproduce both content and form in a translation, and hence in general the form is usually sacrificed for the sake of the content.”

In contrast to such not totally favorable views, there are some who do not simply acknowledge the impossibility of poetry translation. Dryden (as cited in Frost, 1969) emphasized that poetry is translatable but the one who should translate poetry must be a poet. Benjamin (1968) also highlighted potential “gains” in translation through a re-birth of a text in a second language. Nida (1984) argues that achieving a mode of total translation is possible across languages. Wittgenstein (as cited in Robinson, 2010) observes that poetry is translatable, like other textual genres. The conflict between these two sets of scholars could be mitigated by a method that rests on a strong philosophy and provides, as far as possible, a concrete instrument. This study rests on a hermeneutic framework that is not concerned with (im)possibility of poetry translation, but rather it focuses on how problematic elements have been translated and shaped the understanding of a poem over time.

Hermeneutics and Translation

Background

Some believe that translation, like any other mode of understanding, is an interpretive act (Kharmandar, 2018a; Stozle et al., 2015). Among the various sub-disciplines of philosophy, hermeneutics has been thus far the most versatile and active one, while hermeneutic theories of translation have been recently revisiting and reconstructing their foundations (Kharmandar, 2018b). Hermeneutics is broadly defined as the science and method of interpreting texts. The fundamental figures that have expanded and developed modern hermeneutics, besides Friedrich Schleiermacher, are Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida, and Jürgen Habermas.

Despite the historical convergence between translation and hermeneutics, modern translation theory has been so expanded that the former methods of hermeneutics have been challenged. There are some major criticisms against hermeneutics in translation, although they seem to be applicable to other philosophies of translation too. For instance, why are the theories so obsessed with abstraction? This problem could make it very difficult to conduct translation quality assessment on translation following hermeneutic, or philosophical, conceptions.

In this regard, House (2001) believes that neo-hermeneutic models of translation cannot contribute to translation assessment due to their subjectivity of meaning and their relativization of form (the lack of an analytic lingual model). New contributions to the hermeneutics of translation, however, have recently responded to the criticisms. Kharmandar (2018a) observes that there is a new line of expansive hermeneutic translation theory that has been taking shape in the second decade of the twenty-first century. This theoretical and practical stream, called *translational hermeneutics*, is open to empirical research and cognitive science. In the light of these developments, Kharmandar (2018a) believes that the history of translation and hermeneutics has undergone a major change in the twenty-first century.

If there is indeed a new line of hermeneutics and translation research, what are its contributions? Stolze et al. (2015) provide an important foundation for at least laying out the major concerns of translational hermeneutics. A hermeneutic theory of translation rests on several principles, which could be summarized as follows (see Cerel et al., 2015, pp. 21-35): (a) the translator is a subject whose perception is bound to the historical period in which s / he lives; (b) understanding represents a dialogical exchange with other people and traditions that have conventionalized meanings; (c) understanding is a holistic process which is accomplished through part-whole relations; a text is sphere in which every element gains its meaning through an interaction with all other elements; (d) translation is a critical enterprise which requires self-criticism and an attempt to break with the limitations of understanding; and (e) a text, depending on its potential, may be rendered in several ways which differ in terms of quality. “Holistic process” is particularly interesting in studies that focus on part-whole relationships in a text, such as the individual elements that constitute a poetic work.

A Hermeneutic Model of Poetry Translation

Kharmandar and Karimnia (2013) have proposed the sketch of a hermeneutic model that specifically addresses poetry translation. Although the work involves important notions and a seemingly coherent whole, it is in need of refinement and clarity. Kharmandar (2016), acknowledging the shortcomings, has tried to provide a better version of the model in an online article. The major proposition in the model is that works of poetry, especially canonized ones, are interpreted within literary traditions, such as literary criticism and commentaries, which value and make sense of such works. Translations, too, are very likely to construct or synthesize meaning and values based on such traditions, bringing about innovations in some cases.

The primary framework is regulated by the notion of “complexity”, which could be understood as any source of difficulty that perplexes the interpretation of meaning. Less challenging sources of meaning are conveniently determined when decision is made about complicated ones; meanwhile, smaller units of meaning (e.g., words) are more substantially perceived and better interpreted when the entirety of the text (e.g., a poem) is sufficiently read. This process is called “circularity” in hermeneutics. As a result, a keyword analysis (as used in this study) focuses on how single elements contribute to the whole and shape a particular reading (e.g. a mystical reading).

As O’Keeffe (2018, p. 40) explains, “[i]nterpretation deals with each part, and then culminates in an understanding of the meaning of the whole.” He argues that a poetic word is a “plurished word”, an entity with an abundance of meaning or function. The cross-referencing of every important word, or keyword, ultimately helps the translator to figure out how to create a particular reading. Concentrating on part-whole relationships, Kharmandar, (2018b) explains, “The meaning of an item (such as a sign, a symbol, a single word) is decided through a measure of interaction that the item has with the entirety of the items that are perceived to influence it” (p. 97).

The central analytic instruments that help the translator detect problematic pieces of text are CLCR and HCR. CLCR is further divided into three sub-components: culture-specific elements (CSE), rhetoric and figures of speech (RFS), and poet-specific terms (PST). The problem of culture, as assumed in CSE, is not new in TS. Literary scholars, such as Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), have significantly contributed to the cultural understanding of translation. Kharmandar and Karimnia (2013), however, rely on a hermeneutic understanding of culture based on Gadamer’s notion of “fusion of horizons.”

This notion implies that culture is sustained through history and explores how a people approach their history, values, rituals, and symbols. In other words, the notion of culture in the source language is not static and is normally subject to re-reading in translation. Dying traditions, the ever-changing sphere of cross-cultural communication, and the expansive exposure of societies to each other suggest that cultures are dynamically shaped and that the symbolic reservoirs of a community are constantly reproduced (Kharmandar, 2015). For instance, *jaras* (جرس), an image used in Persian poetry, was a small hollow object making a ringing sound and was usually attached to animals; in Hafez’s poetry it is used to symbolize *departure*, but interpreting this idea would be difficult even to a native Iranian speaker. Arberry (1964) reframed this image as “the bell doth cry” in his English translation of Hafez’s poetry (Kharmandar, 2018b). The horizon of cultural understanding, then, must be decided in the translation process, because even cultural objects may be represented differently in translation.

RFS is the element that deals with any difficulty that formal aesthetics or play on words can impose on interpretation. Needless to say, literature, especially poetry, heavily relies on rhetorical devices to achieve innovation and create unconventional modes of communication. Finally, PST is concerned with the

innovations characterizing the original poet’s work, as perceived by source language literary critics. Apparently, this “level of complexity carries the most difficult problems for the translator to tackle, mostly because the poet-specific words are semantically idiosyncratic, and can be even difficult for the average source language speakers to make sense of” (Kharmandar, 2016, p. 13).

Along with CLCR, there is also another system of interpretation, called HCR, which tries to answer another set of complicated questions that the translator usually encounters in poetry translation. The classic problem of “authorial intention”, as one of the mainstream topics of modern and philosophical hermeneutics, is addressed in HCR. What does the poet intend to communicate through his / her poem? In a study which could be regarded as a substantial exploration of HCR, Kharmandar (2018b) relies on critical readings (e.g. meta-textual and inter-textual relations) that could shape interpretive traditions representing a major literary work.

Investigating the works of Iranian literary critics, Kharmandar (2018b) observes that there are five traditions conceptualizing *The Divan* of Hafez: mystical, Khayyamian, historical-political, romantic, and anti-hypocritical. The study reveals how words in a poem shape a narrative, which may in turn thematize the poem. As he explains, “... in the English translations [...] a semiotic entity such as *saghi* (Saki, line 1) is rendered as ‘O beautiful wine-bearer’ [...] in one translation and ‘Boy’ [...] in another” (Kharmandar, 2018b, p. 14). HCR implies that the selection of words and their relations in a work of literature depend on the system (tradition) in which the work is interpreted. The idea of meta-textuality reveals how a translation, too, may be positioned in a specific mainstream reading, usually based on source language systems. Yet, the translator may follow a specific system entirely, construct a new reading, or synthesize mainstream readings in the target text. Figure 1 illustrates the general structure of the framework used.

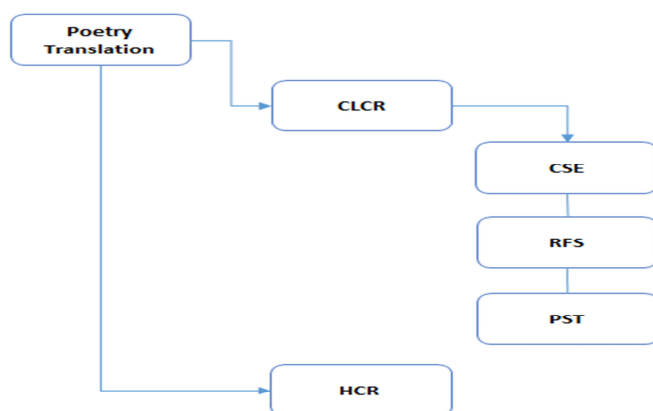


Figure 1

The Outline of the Hermeneutical Poetry Translation Framework Used (Kharmandar, 2018b)

The poem under study

This study analyzes the first 18 verses of Rumi's *Masnavi*, Book I, called *The Song of the Reed*, along with the work's twenty-three existing English translations from 1772 to 2015. In light of the notion of HCR, to decide about the history of the work and its mainstream interpretive system in the Persian literature, two different Persian *Masnavi* interpretations by Zamani (1993) and Forouzanfar (1982) are incorporated into the analysis, and any other useful source (e.g. dictionaries) are taken into account.

This study involves a keyword analysis that tries to investigate how, among others, the mainstream mystical reading of Rumi's *The Song of the Reed* might have taken shape in its English translations. The central keywords studied here were selected based on the works of renowned Persian literary scholars, Forouzanfar (1982) and Zamani (1993). As a result, 10 keywords are explored here: *beshno* (listen), *jodayee* (separation), *neyestaan* (bed of the flute), *asle khish* (his origin), *jamiat* (population), *ser* (secret), *naale* (lamentation), *nist baad* (no wind), *nist baad* (may it never exist) and *harif* (companion). Then, the keywords are used as input and inserted into Kharmandar and Karimnia's (2013) model to determine the types of their complexity. Then, the renditions of the keywords are extracted from the body of each translation.

Sample of textual analysis

In this section, a sample of the textual analysis is provided. This sample exemplifies both CLCR (and its sub-components) and HCR, totally covering four possible complexity factors found in the progression of the text.

Beshno (بشنو) or Listen

The poem starts with *beshno* (بشنو) or *listen to*. Why does Rumi begin his masterpiece with this invitation? The speaker in the poem, disappointed with the worldly life, tries to share his / her tales of separation with others, revealing mysteries of human divine creation. The idea of *beshno*, as simple as it may appear, requires the interpreter to position the idea within the Persian mystical interpretive system. As a result, decision about this ambiguity has to rely on HCR in the model. Below is an example of the translation of *beshno* (بشنو) or *hear* by Jones (1772):

Hear, how yon reed in sadly pleasing tales
Departed bliss and present woe be

As shown in Table 1, the word *listen* has been frequently used, although contrary to the above observation, a mystical reading can be best found in *hearken*. According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (2015) and Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2015), *hearken* means "to listen with your heart." Whinfield's (1887) and Nicholson's (1950) choice, then, represents the mystical interpretive system better than the other choices.

Table 1

The Word Choice Suggested by Different Translators for Beshno

Translator	Word choice	Translator	Word choice
Jones, 1772	Hear	Shahriari, 1998	Pay Heed
Redhouse, 1881	Hear	Nasr, 2000	Listen
Whinfield, 1887	Hearken	Gamard, 2000	Listen
Nicholson, 1926	Listen	Lewis, 2000	Listen
Nicholson, 1950	Hearken	Legenhausen, 2002	Listen
Arberry, 1964	Listen	Tamdgidi, 2003	Listen
Turkman, 1992	Listen	Tillinghast and Shafak, 2003	Listen
Barks, 2004	Listen	Mojaddedi, 2004	Listen
Türkman, 1996	Listen	Williams, 2006	Listen
Star, 1997	Listen	Holbrook, 2010	Listen
Gupta, 1997	Hear	Sadri, Sadri	Listen
Helminski, 1998	Listen		

Jodayee* (جدایی) or *Separation

What does *jodayee* (جدایی) or *separation* mean? In an interpretation by Zamani (1993), an alienation from the origin and *spiritual* world has been cited. The word *jodayee* (جدایی) or *separation* conveys a special meaning in Persian literature. It is not just a simple separation. The root of this word is in Persian culture and it is a mystical notion. Being detached from Divinity and the “return” to the source of creation are commonly expressed beliefs in Persian literature and culture. This understanding arises from CSE, as a sub-category of CLCR. Here is an example of *jodayee* (جدایی) or *absence* translated by Redhouse (1881) in poetic form:

From reed-flute hear what tale it tells
 What plaint it makes of *absence* ill

Table 2 demonstrates that the word “separation” is the dominant word choice. Based on Merriam–Webster’s Dictionary (2015) and Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary (2015), the word *separation* can convey the interpretive expectations underlying the notion of *jodayee* (جدایی) in the Persian ST.

Table 2

The Word Choice Suggested by Different Translators for Jodayee

Translator	Word choice	Translator	Word choice
Jones, 1772	Departed	Shahriari, 1998	Separations
Redhouse, 1881	Absence	Nasr, 2000	The Separations
Whinfield, 1887	Banishment	Gamard, 2000	Separations
Nicholson, 1926	Separations	Lewis, 2000	Separations
Nicholson, 1950	Separations	Legenhausen, 2002	Separations
Arberry, 1964	Separation	Tamdgidi, 2003	Estrangement
Turkman, 1992	Separation	Tillinghast and Shafak, 2003	Being Apart
Barks, 2004	Being Separated	Mojaddedi, 2004	Separations
Türkman, 1996	The Story Of Separation	Williams, 2006	Separations
Star, 1997	Separation	Holbrook, 2010	Separations
Gupta, 1997	Being Separated	Sadri, Sadri	Separations
Helminski, 1998	Separation		

Naale (نالاه) or lament

Based on Zamani's (1993, p. 5) interpretation, *naale* (نالاه) is identified with Rumi's poem itself. Understanding this meaning entails a perception of its Persian interpretation which is highly difficult and challenging for the translator. This special instance is a case of PST; that is the keyword particularly characterized in Rumi's narrative, which is about a Reed detached from its origins. Therefore, there must be a musical quality and a sense that depicts resentment in the Reed's song. The following is a translation of the whole verse in which *naale* appears (Star, 1997):

My secret is found in my lament
But an eye or ear without light cannot know it

Table 3

The Word Choice Suggested by Different Translators for Naale

Translator	Word choice	Translator	Word choice
Jones, 1772	Strains and Sorrows	Shahriari, 1998	Grief
Redhouse, 1881	Throes and Moans	Nasr, 2000	Lament
Whinfield, 1887	Plaintive Notes	Gamard, 2000	Lament
Nicholson, 1926	Plaint	Lewis, 2000	Cry
Nicholson, 1950	Song	Legenhausen, 2002	This Lament You Hear
Arberry, 1964	Lament	Tamdgidi, 2003	Cry
Turkman, 1992	Cries	Tillinghast and Shafak, 2003	Cry
Barks, 2004	Notes	Mojaddedi, 2004	This Song
Türkman, 1996	Moaning Cries	Williams, 2006	Lament
Star, 1997	Lament	Holbrook, 2010	Cry
Gupta, 1997	Cries	Sadri, Sadri	Wailing Plight
Helminski, 1998	Lament		

Given the difficulty in interpreting this poet-specific word, most of the choices fail to fabricate the concept behind the idea. Most of the choices portray a depressive idea, while basically ignoring the musicality of the Reed's singing. *Plaintive notes* is the only choice that foregrounds an image of music and a sense of resentment.

Nist baad* (نیست باد) or *not wind

In line 9, there are two instances of *nist baad* and *nist baad*, which are homophonous, but convey very different meanings. The first one very simply means "it is no wind", referring to the song produced by the Reed. The second one, however, is an evil prayer for those who lack Fire (passion) in their existence. This play on words is an instance of RFS. The following is a full example by Gupta (1997):

The sound of the flute is the fire born of love; *it is not merely wind and vapor*

Anyone who is devoid of this fire is veritably dead to this sound and cannot figure it out

Table 4

The Word Choice Suggested by Different Translators for nist baad

Translator	Word choice	Translator	Word choice
Jones, 1772	-----	Shahriari, 1998	Extinct
Redhouse, 1881	Doom Him Death	Nasr, 2000	May He Be Naught
Whinfield, 1887	Accounted Dead	Gamard, 2000	May He Be Nothing
Nicholson, 1926	May He Be Naught	Lewis, 2000	Blown Away
Nicholson, 1950	May He Be Naught	Legenhausen, 2002	Let There Be No One
Arberry, 1964	Let Him Be Naught	Tamdgidi, 2003	Is Lost Entire
Turkman, 1992	May He Become Non-Existent	Tillinghast and Shafak, 2003	Let Him Disappear
Barks, 2004	Be That Empty	Mojaddedi, 2004	Should Die
Türkman, 1996	Let Him Die and Let Him Go	Williams, 2006	Be Gone
Star, 1997	-----	Holbrook, 2010	Won't Live on
Gupta, 1997	Is Veritably Dead	Sadri, 2015	May He Expire
Helminski, 1998	Would Not Exist		

In a way or another, all of the translators detected the pun. Yet, considering the existential grounds of this idea, *may he be naught* and *would not exist* seem to be closer readings.

Findings

Table 5 demonstrates the summary of the findings as a result of the keyword analysis on the original poem and the translations. The important point is that a column in Table 5 represents the factors of complexity for each of the keywords.

Table 5

Original Keywords, Select Choices, and Their Complexity Type

Original keyword	Translated choice	Translator(s)	Complexity type
<i>bashno</i>	hearken	Whinfield, 1887; Nicholson, 1950	HCR

<i>jodayee</i>	separation	<i>Marjory of translators</i>	CSE
<i>neyestaan</i>	native banks; original ground	Jones, 1772; Türkman, 1996	CSE
<i>asle khish</i>	His home; his source; his root;	<i>several translators</i>	CSE
<i>jamiat</i>	company; gathering		HCR
<i>ser</i>	secret	<i>all of the translators</i>	---
<i>naaleh</i>	plaintive Notes	Whinfield, 1887	PST
<i>nist baad - nist baad</i>	may he be naught; would not exist	Nicholson, 1926; Helminski, 1998	RFS
<i>harif</i>	companion; friend	<i>several translators</i>	HCR

As can be seen, the majority of the concepts emerged from a complexity factor that helped interpret meaning. The mystical reading is also scattered across the translations and no single one can be picked as being fundamentally aware of the importance of word choice in the formation of the mystical interpretation. Yet, generally speaking, the mystical reading heavily depends on Persian and Islamic cultural elements. There are, of course, some cases that at first look do not seem to pose any cross-cultural difficulty; *harif* (حريف) or “friend” and *jamiat* (جمعيت) or “crowd” are not complex notions but the problem is that their meanings have undergone changes since Rumi’s time. The instrument in the text analysis of the model that can explain such a historical change of meaning is HCR (through finding inter-textual relations between texts). Another issue, based on the findings, is that a keyword analysis may not necessarily include instances that pose a high degree of complexity on interpretation. For instance, the word *ser* (سر) meaning *secret*, represents an item that does not need in-depth investigation.

Discussion

This study relied on the factors identified in a hermeneutic framework of poetry translation to inspect how the elements in the English translations of Rumi’s *The Song of the Reed* reflect its mystical interpretation. The study traced the roots of a conflict between these two sets of scholars who defended the possibility or

impossibility of poetry translation. By focusing on a historical line of translations of *The Song of the Reed*, this study highlighted that meaning is a result of extensive re-reading over time through process called *traditionality* (Kharmandar, 2018b). This process helps to evaluate previous translations and even suggest more effective choices particularly for minima items.

As Aqili and Samakar (2008) observe, there may be some crucial factors in a poem that complicate the translation of specific words, and even a *small change* in one of the aspects may bring greater change in the shades of meaning of the word. In Kharmandar and Karimnia's (2013) model, emphasis has been put on complexity because complex elements finally influence the overall understanding (part-whole structure) of the text and can even decide the meaning of simpler items. As a result, in the case of *secret*, one can assume that this meaning is not ready-made but is decided as a consequence of rigorous understanding of complex elements.

In this section, a comparison is made between the findings of this study and those of some other similar studies. Different scholars have investigated poetry translation in the works of Hafez, Sadi, Khayyam, and Rumi. But they have only compared a poem with its English translations on the basis of proper translation without any specific framework. For example, in their study, Aqili and Samakar (2008) observed that the translator could not transfer the image of the original poem and failed to render cultural specific terms. They also observed that whenever the translator failed to consider the crucial factors in a poem, poor poetic style and misinterpretation were resulted. Anushiravani and Atashi (2012) observed that the translator failed to depict a thorough representation of the concept(s) behind the words in the original poem and consequently the reader in the source language inevitably recognizes the poet, Hafiz, as an under-evaluated, secular and sensuous person.

Moghaddam and Madani (2014) found that the translator was not able to convey the whole meaning behind culture-bound words of the poem. To put it in a nut shell, he failed to transfer the hidden connotative meanings and few elements were rendered correctly. Moreover, Dastjerdi (2004) mentions that translating poems of Sadi, Hafez, and Rumi, which are filled with ambiguities and mystical language, make translators face even more obstacles.

Contrary to these observations, this study employed a hermeneutic approach with a specific framework for determining and sources of ambiguities, where possible. The study emphasized the fact that readings and even assessments are only possible when works of poetry are positioned within an interpretive system and background. It should also be noted that complexity sub-systems were not discrete and seemed to be internally related. In fact, the function of the framework seems to be more strategic than categorical; when a source of complexity is identified, the translator can more readily look for a solution to overcome the problem, such as structured datasets (e.g. dictionaries or encyclopedias), literary reviews, resources on cultural symbolism, and literary books that provide knowledge about rhetoric and figures of speech.

The framework also suggests that the attempt to identify sources of difficulty and find the most representative word choices emphasize how newer hermeneutic approaches try to overcome relativism. House (2001) truly criticizes some former approaches, although what the data analysis unfolded in this study would not be simply solved with reference to discourse analysis or many linguistically based theories of translation. There are many choices and there is deep subjectivity in framing the renditions. For instance, in the case of *Naale* (نالہ) or *lament*, only literary criticism (HCR) could help the translator find or suggest a good representation (e.g. Whinfield's (1887) *Plaintive Notes*).

One of the most important contributions of the framework to the practice of literary translation is the emphasis that it puts on HCR and the meta-texts (e.g. literary reviews or commentaries) that explore an original work of literature. If translators tried to determine the interpretative tradition under which they would render the poem, they would be more likely to produce more holistically coherent poems in translation.

Conclusion

This study presented a comparative evaluation of twenty-three translations of the prelude to Rumi's *Masnavi*, using a hermeneutic framework. Based on one of the assumptions of the model, every reading of poetry, especially in the case of canonized works, is positioned within an interpretive tradition that decides the meaning of the parts against the whole of the text. Considering this assumption, this study tried to evaluate the translations in the light of the mainstream mystical reading of Rumi's work in the original language's system to find out how such a mystical reading had taken shape in the English translations. Broadly speaking, the results demonstrated the applicability of the model and its predictions of complexity. The textual analysis, too, revealed that there was no unified mystical reading specifically fabricated by any of the translations, but the word choice reflecting a mystical reading was mostly scattered across the translations. Relying on the model, as the findings showed, could considerably guide literary translators in their practice, although the model could be furthered strengthened and developed.

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Wrestling With Gender: Gender and Gender-Neutrality in the Mirror of the History of Scholarship

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Abstract

The history of feminism and gender studies is fraught with constant struggles to find applicable definitions for sex, gender, and sexuality, and understand their relationships and differences. This paper attempts to go through various theories in this regard, tracing their variations and evolutions through time, with a particular focus on gender elimination and discrimination. Some important issues explored in this research include experimentation with language, scientific investigations, and sociological research in the hope of defining and combating gender. Moreover, some manifestation of gender-neutrality patterns in literary works throughout ages and among nations have been represented in various degrees. The survey at hand, drawing on Foucault and Butler's theories on power and gender performativity, asserts the relative independence of sex, sexuality, and gender from each other as well as the nonessential role of them in the game of discrimination, relegating this role instead to power relations and personal perceptions. Literature, with its vast imaginative capacities and persuasive force, has been introduced as the site where all these intellectual endeavors of various fields about gender have converged, creating metaphors for a possible discrimination-free world, and effecting inevitable changes in the perceptions of their readers.

Keywords: discrimination, feminism, gender-neutrality, Judith Butler, Michael Foucault

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Wednesday, December, 2, 2020

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27039.1236>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

Looking at the history of feminism, sex therapy, and linguistics, one can see many definitions for gender, sex, and sexuality in various scales, while, in actuality no firmly applicable definitions have ever been proposed for these concepts. This brings about some theoretical questions with regard to sex and its subsequent variations. What makes coming up with a definition for sex and sexuality so impossible? Is sex based on or related to gender, sexuality, and their subsequent performativity? Or is it the inborn sex? In other words, are the sex, gender, desire, and sexual functions dependent on each other? And how have gender ambiguity and gender neutrality been approached in theoretical and literary worlds? How longer can gender-based discriminations be tolerated and what steps have been taken to remove them? The paper at hand aims to explore the questions above through inspecting some major sex and gender theories, proposed by some major theoreticians, and some literary works which highlight gender issues to maintain where we stand today with regard to our understanding of gender and gender neutrality and how far we have gone in combatting gender discriminations, after all these intellectual and artistic endeavors in the course of human history.

Theoretical Realm

If we were to count in every single variation of sexuality, sexual desires, and assigned sex at birth, we would run out of words to name or explain all the dissimilar types. The scope of this issue is so vast and expanded that many schools and activists have attended to the subject at some point, and they have had different views on the subject of gender in general and non-binary gender in particular. In what follows, the concerns and issues of this research will be woven into the philosophical, critical, scientific, and literary trends on gender and non-binary gender, with the aim of clarifying the conceptions about gender-ambiguity and gender-neutrality as found in various fields.

As language can be claimed to be the main medium for humans' connections and thoughts, the discourses on sex and gender shall be the prior matter to attend to. The famous saying of poststructuralist philosopher, René Descartes "Je Pense Donc Je Suis" (I think, therefore I am) comes to one's mind. And it is language that makes the process of thinking possible. Descartes differentiates between the soul and the body. For him "the union between the soul and the body, the affective body, is what defines the human person" (Ong-Van-Cung, 2010, p. 44). In Descartes' view, the body is the sexed material, and the soul is the sexless metaphysic that thinks. Consequently, "I think, therefore I am" is a reference to a soul that thinks with its body. Kim Sang Ong-Van-Cung refers to these ideas, saying it is "a way of being in the world. Being a body-subject is not an '*I think*' but an '*I can*.' It is the grasp we have upon the world" (Ong-Van-Cung, 2010, p. 44). Yet, in another view, the phenomenologists relate everything to conceptual experiences; in parallel with Simone Weil who uses "I can, therefore I am" (Rozelle-Stone & Davis, 2018) instead of, *I think*. Through Phenomenological perspective, sexuality is the experience of the conception and understanding of the surroundings which is

possible only through the physical body that Descartes calls sexed. To put it briefly, body and soul are two individual factors but inseparable at the same time and sexuality is intertwined with thinking and forming conceptions through language.

Apparently, the role of language catches our attention not only in the definitions of sex and gender, but also in relation to the actual cases of gender discriminations. In this regard, one can pose the following questions: Does all the discrimination among genders come from language? Could men and women become equal social inhabitants if there were no such words to separate them in their language? Conversely, could they become more liberated with a word and definition for every variation and gender?

The above-mentioned questions are all important ones to be answered and this article tries to address them. However, starting with the last question in relation to the possibility of less discrimination with more possibilities for gender designations provided by language, we can make a comparison between the languages with binary pronouns and those with neutral ones. Countries in which the national languages make no distinctions between masculine and feminine nouns, such as Iran (Persian), Turkey (Turkish), or Korea (Korean), still show gender discrimination equally if not more than countries using masculine and feminine nouns and pronouns such as England (English), France (French), and Germany (German). Different feminist critics, and especially those who hold the French Poststructuralist linguistic perspective, have talked about the significance of this concept in language; unlike Irigaray, for Wittig, “language is an instrument or tool that is in no way misogynist in its structures, but only in its applications” (Butler, 2007, p. 36). If we take note of the feminists' views, the countries' developments and Foucault's ideas about power, sex and social rules, based on which sex is not as much in discourse, that it is in power and its subsequent social rules (Foucault, 1990; see also Falzon et al, 2013) and principles brought upon every feature of men and women, it could be concluded that each society's power and cultural elements have the upper hand against the utilized language in applying gender discrimination.

Therefore, what needs deconstruction or reconstruction is not the language primarily, but the social rules. Adding Butler's (2007) ideas, another deduction interprets gender to be a social performativity that is more based on nurture than nature. Birth sex, sexuality and desire, on the other hand, are more dependent on innate and mental factors. Among the numerous proposals for eliminating gender discrimination, the main ideas follow Foucault's path and post-structuralist approach by focusing on linguistics, which declare sex to “serve to reveal two critical, interrelated frameworks that shape these very discourses – truth and power” (Falzon et al, 2013, p. 157). Respectively, most critics and linguists prefer creating new gender and coining new words for each to eliminate the strict binary opposition.

A reason for coining new words is perhaps related to making the minor groups recognized and their needs answered in the society and law. This method had earned feminists large measures of success for needs that already existed but could not be expressed by the ones needing them – women. Of such words we can refer to “sexual harassment”, for which, there are various definitions and categories and as

well as laws and punishments now. Coining this word made the expression of many subjects possible for women, but still language lacks many vocabularies and pronouns to address minorities and their concerns, leaving them inarticulate and limiting them into the predefined binary categories, again as the means to serve the socio-political ends.

Inventing new words is not without repercussions either, since it might also bring more discrimination along that attention. Because, the more people learn about a fact, the more will be the judgment they would aim towards it. As Bersani has interpreted *Foucault's History of Sexuality* in his book *Homos* about power's function in our societies, "not by repressing spontaneous sexual drives but by producing multiple sexualities, and that through the classification, distribution, and moral rating of those sexualities, the individuals practicing them can be approved, treated, marginalized, sequestered, disciplined, or normalized" (Foucault, 1978 as cited in Bersani, 1996, p. 81). With such considerations, if there were no frames or expected performativity, would there still be as many people to change their bodies and go through the long-lasting and painful transformation to fit into the social definitions of normal?

Some critics presume sexual identity to be a result of social regulation, denying the need for any physical change under free self-expressions. Some other critics believe in the effects of genetics and biology in making a person a homosexual or transgender, claiming that freedom of performance would not suffice, and a transgender would have to gain the correct physical body in accordance with the mentality. Likewise, sexual desire for Foucault has a direct influence on the sexual identity of the subject and consequently their "sex" that categorizes and regulates their identity (Butler, 2007, p.130). Still some other critics limit this view solely to women and give the freedom of choice to men since it has always been believed that women seek out more and more masculinity within their own self. The basis for this statement is the Freudian ideas of phallus and pallocentrism that put phallus as the central basis of sexuality and order, which women lack and seek out of envy. Plus, the phallogocentric theory of Derrida, supported by French school of *Écriture feminine*, states that men and/or phallus have the privilege over women in discourse (Holland, 2010). This theory also accounts for women's absence in society and their marginalization. The result is that the general social view would see power as parallel to masculinity and weakness to femininity.

Luce Irigaray defies women to be sexed bodies or subjects declaring that there is one single masculine gender, eliminating women as a separate gender, turned into a category outside sex and marginalized into an imagination and representation under the phallogocentric totality (Irigaray, 1985). Monique Wittig restricts sex and gender into two binary man and woman categories and proposes lesbianism as a way against sexism (Wittig, 1975). The binary division is for political reasons with the aim of serving the heterosexual society and economical purposes, and only those who submit to that are categorized as men or women, while others that defy the binary relations of the society such as homosexuals have no

categories to fall into. The same is apparent in Ong-Van-Cung's essay that indicates "The sexed being and sexual difference are historical products of an aesthetic and ethical character. Desire is represented by selected fragments or elements: gait, gaze and voice" (Ong-Van-Cung, 2010, p. 46). Judith Butler, on the other hand, claims in her book *Gender Trouble* that while sex might be restricted to the physical body, each sexed body can take on many genders (Butler, 2007). Gender is neither limited nor relevant to sex, but it is gained through actions that can go beyond the binary gender definitions and rules. Following Foucault, we could relate all the gender differences and discriminations to the outer power force and hierarchy that require such categories for their own sake. "Later he questions whether the notion of a true sex is necessary at all" (Butler, 2007, p. 127).

Mustering all the ideas brings some light to the mind with regard to sex and gender. While like Butler, we can call for a third gender to address lesbians (Butler, 2007, p. 26), we might also go further by applying this to every single person. As the personal psychology and identity of every individual is unique to themselves, so is their gender identity as a sub-category of their personal identity. This idea is compatible with the views of many third-wave feminists, who are more committed to "openness, diversity and plurality" (Dean, 2009, p. 336) in comparison with the second-wave feminists. The third-wave feminists, in their poststructuralist bending, question "the insistence on certain forms of knowledge as truth" and opt for encouraging individuality and agency in defining one's identity (Hardin & Whiteside, 2013, p. 13). Thus, it can be claimed that there are as many gender identities in the world as the number of individuals, which goes the same for their sexuality, desires, and sex, a claim also supported by some poststructuralist theories. Therefore, instead of claiming new sexes for all discriminated groups such as women, lesbians, and gays, even supposedly superior straight men, we could avoid categorizing all these variations altogether by giving every individual their own unique sexual identity that is peerless in the outer world - like their names - and eventually avoid the consequential political discrimination and oppression of the minority. Based on this, another theory that can be proposed would be erasing all the names and gender labels totally, leaving no such name as gender. As another substitute, gender could be regarded as a style inspired by sex and sexual preferences. In fact, gender, sex, and desire may not be dependent as closely on one another as it has always been believed, and that being gender-neutral cannot simply be applied to physical features of an individual, neither is it a causal or consequential factor for sexuality and sexual desire, but a mental issue and related to the inner psychology of every individual.

When discussing the total destruction of all cliché binaries, we refer to gender neutral persons who defy any gender labels of man, woman, male or female. These people have an inner struggle in adjusting to the traditional gender definitions and find themselves acting differently from the sex they are born with or the opposite one. However, few words such as pronouns and names are available for them to express their true natures and feelings. If their acquaintances do not regard them as he or she, they would have to use the only neutral pronoun in English language "it", causing discomfort or insult as this pronoun is applied to animals and

objects. Due to the scarcity of knowledge about the nature of non-binary humans, more than often, all gender and sexual minorities are considered under the same umbrella of gay or double gendered. The problem does not remain among the critics only. Even people who identify themselves as gender-neutral or agender have different understandings of their own gender identity. Jasmine Xie (2015) points out that the internet websites like *Tumblr* have become the main platform for non-binary people to learn about and express themselves. Allie Sarfaty, in her study, interviewed some of these people receiving different responses from each: “Casey described being agender as a ‘rejection of gender itself’ while Max described genderfluid as, ‘float[ing] around the masculine and feminine spectrum’” (Sarfaty, 2016, p. 20). Even from a scientific point of view, there are no specific groups named gender-neutral under research and all the aforementioned groups are called non-binary or queer, developing a tendency among all groups to name themselves as queer for the sake of a more tangible self-expression. Although recent studies have started to differentiate those groups from one another and acknowledged their existence independently, they are not immune to controversy.

The main limitation of this subject lies in the view that the study is related to that of women studies and feminist attitudes, so much so that that the sub-category of homosexuals has been solely related to lesbians, eliminating the gay men, while, quite contrarily, it was the start of the talks about the lesbianism, homosexuality, and queer gender that brought about recognition upon the gay men. All these bring us to the very initial question about gender: where do the differences come from? Mustering the peer expressions, it appears plausible to consider that there is a close relationship between the sexual arousal and the exposed part of the female body. For instance, in the Muslim countries where women cover up fully, more body parts are considered as sexual attractions to men than that of Europeans who have light clothing in their daily lives. This issue likewise has been pointed out by Bertrand Russell (2009), in his book *Our Knowledge of the External World*. It has always been taught to Muslim women that covering hair, neck, neckline, and body is a necessity to protect innocence, while no similar claim is made about men. Therefore, perhaps it could be claimed that sexual and gender discrimination is partly dependent on visual appearances. Adding the assumption that the first impression comes to man by visual observation, we would like to argue that physical appearance has a bigger role in bringing gender discrimination into existence. Meanwhile, in Foucault’s idea, it was during a specific time in history that sex was inserted in our discourse: “that it is a discursive fact, i.e., a set of knowledge about sex, which are produced within the framework of the technologies of power; “sex” therefore contributes to the formation of a matrix of knowledge-power” (Ong-Van-Cung, 2010, p. 43). For instance, in case of cross-dressing simply by changing the looks, a woman is perceived as a man and therefore is presented with power and liberty in the same society that was limiting her so far.

Gender studies and gender ambiguity do not remain in the world of theories, and they are also present in practical scientific studies. The physical studies of the body have depicted irregularities in the gender identifications of individuals that they are born with. By this we mean to refer to a study by Dr. David C. Page

regarding the chromosomes of men and women, in which 10% of the collected DNAs were in contrast with the normal expectation of XX = Female and XY = male (Page, 1987). That said, the irregularities revealed themselves in the genitals and hormones of the volunteers, and the name dysgenetic was given to them. If sexual identities were as easy to determine, it would have been futile to conduct any studies over genes and DNA for a mere cliché of predetermined and solid unwavering physical sex. That being said, we could conclude that being deprived of gender could not only be a possible lab experiment but also it can happen in real life through chromosome irregularity or artificial manipulation. Interestingly enough, the theory is proposed by the IEET organization active in the field of postgenderism, which seeks the elimination of gender in every sense such as physical, psychological, and social (Dvorsky & Hughes, 2008).

Their essay proposes using biotechnology and neuroscience to fully eliminate the binary gender and create a complete new singular gender, and the possibility of gender-neutral humans in future. It presents complete gender-neutral body physics as a plausible matter in today's world, crashing down all the predetermined roles and definitions of sex and gender and depriving people of any enforced sexual identity, which is not free of manipulation either, for its implication of a society of cyborg humans as utopia. In this new world, Lacan's childhood stages (Nebus, 2013), Freudian ideas of sexuality and the pre-Oedipal or Oedipal stages would not exist, since there is no sex among the members of a family to relate to. We should not turn a blind eye on the massive change in the childbirth. There will no longer be a mother or father for a child; mothering in particular will be eliminated, but every cyborg-human will be able to father a child. We say cyborg-humans, for its similarity to Donna Haraway's cyborg theories and cyborg feminism (Haraway, 1991). Another extremity of this world is virtual satisfaction of sexuality as a means to reduce the sexist perspective arising from sexual relationships. The postgenderists are sacrificing both genders and losing a natural process for the sake of equality. We could call it a move for women but also against them simultaneously. This future world does not sound utopian, neither is it appealing in the eyes of the modern human, not to mention its concern with the binary straight relationship, turning blind eyes on queer groups as asexual, pansexual, and homosexual. On a brighter side, similar to other feminist groups, the group suggests removing the masculine and feminine pronouns as well as sexual definitions and categories, replacing them by genderless ones like "'ve', 'vis' and 'ver'" (Hulme, 1986).

The postgenderists' proposed elimination would have been a future possibility if the conditions changed in favor of the minority, and removed their need for explaining themselves to the heterosexual surroundings and discriminators. But as long as the elements leading to hierarchy exist, so does the need for new words and better expressions. Furthermore, eliminating gender would require more than the literal meaning of removing it in the biological sense, which, alone requires a great devotion from scientists and critics to become even possible prior to being understandable and tangible yet. An interpretation of this stance could be that a child possesses every expression specific to all genders and sexualities, but grows out of

them through conditionalization and gaining the male or female performativity gender roles. For that matter, we would like to agree with eliminating any label and sexual pronouns, since equality is gained through eliminating differences and not focusing on them. Through our lens, studying and verbalizing sexual types is more for the sake of our own understanding and means of satisfying our curiosity, rather than being the signs of our caring. The human nature requires us to put names and labels on every variety and deviation to be able to define and understand its nature with no guarantee for the subsequent reactions

One significant movement influenced by postgenderism is in psychology through the new theory proposed by the American feminist psychologist Sandra Ruth Lipsitz Bem, named Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), which tries to show masculinity and femininity as dimensions that all human beings possess at different degrees, and she admires gender-neutral and androgynous natures as complete humans (Bem, 1977). The test is advocating the point proposed by Helen Cixous about the third body or the other bisexuality - bisexuality for everyone - delineated as going beyond fixed binary masculine or feminine binary gender in individuals who have both features of male and female regardless of their birth sex (Bray, 2004). Repetition of the Bem Sex Role Inventory test during the years indicates that women have faced a great reduction in the scores of the feminine features, while men have stayed about the same. This could refer to the social changes of feminine definitions or the advancement the female gender has had in breaking the stereotype expectations. By advancement we mean the mustered courage of women throughout the years, mainly after the Second World War, when women had to take charge of all the social activities and masculine works with their men away in the front lines. Another possibility could be the increasing attention to the androgynous nature and consequential appearance of more gender-neutral people in society.

Even though Bem Sex Inventory survey indicates a decrease in discrimination, discrimination still remains in every society due to the centralization of phallus, affecting transgenders among others, who are indisputable victims of discriminations in more patriarchal societies. The most famous transgenders of Iran – Ms. Tarane Aram and Mr. Saman Arastu – both of whom have a successful post-surgery physical and mental adaptation to their new identities, in their interview, agree on the fact that turning from a man into a woman is more difficult and less accepted by the society (Tvpluss, 2014). The reason, Ms. Aram believes, is the phallogocentrism shadowing the society, which makes the people more willing to accept the women who seek it, than the men who move away from it. Therefore, even if the transformation is supported by the law and governments accept the new identity, the society would still refrain from accepting the new person, because of the inherent patriarchal patterns. This problem has resonance with the views of radical feminists who see patriarchy as the root of all inequalities in society and seek to dismantle patriarchy rather than adjusting to it. As Robert Jensen (2017) in his book *The End of Patriarchy: Radical Feminism for Men*, puts,

It may be that in the long run, patriarchy has not been a successful adaptation and will lead to the extinction of the species. As we look around the world at the threats to the ecosphere from unsustainable human systems deeply rooted in patriarchy's domination/subordination dynamic, that's not only plausible but increasingly likely. That suggests that patriarchy is an evolutionary dead-end. (p.108)

Lack of understanding from society has also made the expression of thought and therefore the life of non-binary people extremely difficult; consequently, it seems to be more proper for these minorities and victims of discrimination to have words and ways to express their need, for the sake of gaining more understanding. Yet, questions remain if we can call the transgenders who changed from being a woman or to being a woman as androgynous or even genderless. One thing for sure is that the perception of sexuality is dependent on different factors and is relative and conditional. It is an individualized embodiment based on situations, era, geographical traditions, cultures, and even the industrial development of that country. It is an acquired identity rather than a natural possession. The relative perception is also under the influence of social and legal conditions, as well as taboos, traditions, and religious beliefs. David Hester expresses his interesting insight on intersex bodies in his essay as: "There is no such thing as gender, it is all *sex*. And lots of it" (Hester, 2010, p. 220).

To clarify the point above, the example of Herculim Barbin would be the most expressive explanation. She is presented as a "happy limbo of a non-identity" (Foucault, 1980, p. xiii). With the birth name of Alexina, she was assigned as female but grew to realize her masculine body features during her twenties. Judith Butler purposefully uses the pronoun "'h/er' and 's/he'" (Butler, 2007, p. 133), about her in *Gender Trouble*. Morgan Holmes quotes Gilbert Herdt in her essay "Locating Third Sexes" who calls Barbin as a non-female and non-male, identifying with neither of the two sexes (Herdt, as cited in Holmes, 2004, p.6). Virginia Woolf and Jeffrey Eugenides use the inspiration to represent gender ambiguous heroes in their novels respectively entitled, *Orlando: A biography* (1945) and *Middlesex* (2002).

Numerous individuals suffer from similar struggles as Barbin due to their bodily features or psychology, or as Butler defines it, some sort of metaphysical homelessness (Butler, 1990, p. 134). Critics also have different approaches towards the source of gender and sexual identity, with one group believing sexual identity to be based on genes and another approaching it from social and psychological view. Dr. Siamak Zarifkar asserts that gender ambiguity and the feelings of wrong body have not been considered disorders as of the year 2015 (BBC Persian, 2016). Nevertheless, the most important point about gender, perhaps, is knowledge. Children who do not feel right with their assigned sex or have trouble performing the assigned roles do not have the insight into their sex and gender; therefore, what can bring a person to question their sexual and gender identity might be the expected behaviors of the parents and environment. But then again, referring to mustered data and the existence of homosexual transgenders, we might again shed doubt on the sole effect of nurture on this identity development.

Literature Realm

Many literary figures along with other women have fought for equal rights in their own era, and their endeavors occupy the concerns of this paper hereafter. While some women fight for positions in economic fields and others in education, writers have the double role of fighting for equality in their own field and spreading the views about equality among common people. Literature and fiction's history goes as far as the emergence of language, simultaneously earning the attention of all philosophers and critics of history from Plato to Gilles Deleuze, with ideas about language converging or diverging from one another. Many contemporary critics believe that fictional works have a positive impact on the readers' ethical conceptions and perceptions of their surroundings and the world in general. As Nietzsche believes, literature's function is deconstructing: "it complicates, it confuses, it splinters; it confronts us with the alien and the unknown, and tends to undermine rather than refine our perception of the world" (O'Leary, 2009, p. 138). Foucault, also, follows Nietzsche's view favoring literature, particularly during the 1960s, when literature had taken a revolt attitude towards language, politics, and the socio-economic conditions of the era. Since literary works, in many cases, reflect the beliefs of the society in the most direct way, we can have a close realization of the common trends of thought in each era, through literary works.

What postgenderists proposed for the future of humanity has long been portrayed in fictional worlds created by writers and the gender-neutral language has been practiced by the fictional characters ahead of being theorized in the real world. Unlike reality, the only limit for writers is the expanse of their imagination. Fantasy can go as wild and as vast as desired, while reality is imprisoned by physicality and conditional relations. Through our lenses, not matching with the social definitions of the assigned sex drowns victims in a kind of mental-sexual abyss that can be interpreted as neutrality. However, this androgynous condition has been appreciated in literature and mythology throughout history for its complementary feature. Maybe for that reason, among gender ambiguity subjects, androgyny is the one with the longest history.

Aristophanes' story, as is told in Plato's *Symposium*, declares that originally, there were three sexes, not two, and we were doubly formed, not individual: male and male, female and female, and male and female. Zeus split the spherical creatures in two as punishment for their arrogance, causing each to experience the loss of the other – a loss that we long to redeem through sexual union. (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 2)

Greek mythology has had an immaculate play on gods and goddesses, like Aphrodite and Hermes' pretty son, Hermaphroditus who turns intersex after showering in a cursed river. His name became the source name for the later intersexed physics in biology both in humans and animals that can function as male and female simultaneously. Another more famous example is Tiresias, also mentioned in *The Waste Land* (1922) of T.S Eliot, the priest who gets cursed to have a female body for seven years. Tiresias as a woman, gets married, bears children and is even believed to be an infamous prostitute. Tiresias has a key role in the third part

of *The Waste Land* (1922), entitled *The Fire Sermon*, as the main narrator, because for Eliot, experiencing the life both as a woman and man is what makes Tiresias complete and enables him to see the world fully and completely: “I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives, / Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see . . .” (Eliot, 1922). Therefore, he narrates the story in the most neutral way and with the utmost wisdom required, while any other narrator with the perspective of only a man or a woman would not only be insufficient for a complete perception but also could add judgments to events and meanings. The point is that being androgynous in the previous works have been received differently both by the characters, the writer and reader. In case of the mythology, Hermaphroditus disliked his female and male body and wished that anyone showering in the same river face the same transformation he underwent. Tiresias, however, highly praised his own gender ambiguity. In a more recent work, *Orlando: A Biography* by Virginia Woolf, a man changes into the body of a woman and lives for 300 years without aging. The novel depicts other non-binary characters such as the androgynous Archduke Harry and Orlando’s last husband. Woolf’s *Orlando* praises gender ambiguity as a means for taking attention into gender matters, which has attracted the attention of feminists for the most part. Like Tiresias, Orlando grows to like the advantages of being a woman, “Praise God that I’m a woman” (Woolf, 1928, p. 96).

Cross dressing as the means of neutralizing and adding ambiguity of the gender had been utilized as frequently in literature as in the real life. The method has been used by many women in history to gain more freedom, from George Eliot who used a male pseudonym partly to sell her works to people actually disguising as a member of the other sex. Most talented young girls enthusiastic about the world would disguise as men to attend school, learn science, and even buy books and carry out chores that are considered forbidden, shameful or too difficult for the same person clothed as the woman she is. Compared with the Western literature, cross dressing has a bigger role in Eastern works. For instance, the Chinese legend of Mulan portrays a woman dressing as a man, and she has many things in common with the visual character of Éowyn in the series, *The Lord of The Rings*, since both girls dress up as men to help their fathers so that they cannot be prevented from joining the army because of their gender. A similar story has been written in Persian national epic poem, *Shahname*, about Gordafarid, a young girl who fights against one of *Shahname*’s heroes, Sohrab and delays his army from reaching her country. Among the works of western literature, perhaps the most familiar cross-dressing character is Portia in Shakespeare’s famous play, *Merchant of Venice*. Portia along with her waiting maid disguise themselves as a doctor of the law and a clerk respectively to be able to enter the court and save the main protagonist, Antonio. Perhaps this change of social roles gained by these characters, simply through changing clothes, is the best proof for the performativity and social constructed nature of gender roles.

Considering the fact that society considers anything outside the realm of straight men and women dangerous, and any agency for women a threat, many writers point that sometimes non-binary gender performativity arises from the oppressions and searching for liberty and equality, rather than biology. In this

regard, in mid-20th century, the matter of homosexuality and queer gender made its way more emphatically into the works of literature. For instance, many of Sylvia Plath's works are in relation to gender and the oppressed life of women, among which we can refer to the poem "Lesbos" which directly attends to the matter of homosexuality, showing the affair with another woman as a way to move out of the imposed oppressed role (Plath, 2015), to gain liberty and agency and reclaim the lost power inside women:

I should sit on a rock off Cornwall and comb my hair.
I should wear tiger pants, I should have an affair.
We should meet in another life, we should meet in air,
Me and you. (Plath, 2015, pp. 29-32)

Still, in general, the concept of androgyny is considered a gain for women in patriarchal societies, since gaining a masculine side in this form will help them not to have the lacks and limitations of female sex as Freud believed. On the other hand, it is a disadvantage for men, descending on the stairs of hierarchy, and giving up on the privileges of masculinity in a phallogocentric world. It could be concluded that this new gender is used mostly by feminists and it is equally received better by female readers. In line with the feminist movement of the 20th century, the world of literature has focused on sexuality matters in late 90s, concentrating on homosexuals, lesbians, and transgender people, calling for lesbianism as a method to eliminate gender or to add extra gender types to the binary male / female tradition.

The most iconoclastic genre to follow this trend has been Science fiction works and female writers that attended the matter more abundantly and profoundly. Theodore Sturgeon's *Venus Plus-X* (1960) explores a completely new society in the future of earth. The book is very similar to Ursula Le Guin's (1977) novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Both of those novels attend to the matter of gender-neutrality and gradually develops from the confusion of such gender ambiguity towards the appreciation of it by the main character. In this regard, the narrator of *The Left Hand of Darkness* explains that, "Our entire pattern of socio-sexual interaction is nonexistent here. They cannot play the game. They do not see one another as men or women" (Le Guin, 1977, p. 49). Another book, in the same style is *Ancillary Justice* (2013) by Ann Leckie that is usually compared to that of Le Guin's for the dissent language and conflicting pronouns. A point worth mentioning is the imaginations of mutual use of unisex future as a utopia, which again lies in the hands of complementary dualist elements, delineated as light and darkness in *The Left Hand of Darkness*.

Light is the left hand of darkness
And darkness the right hand of light.
Two are one, life and death, lying
Together like lovers in kemmer,
Like hands joined together,
Like the end and the way. (Le Guin, 1977, p. 153)

Conclusion

All said, in our modern/postmodern world, the last judgments are left to the receivers of the texts, whether they are readers, viewers or downloaders, to decide on the message and nature of the presented gender neutrality, ambiguity and androgyny. For, as the phenomenologists believe, the meaning lies in the conception and perception, which will never be the same from one person to another, as all individuals connect differently with their surroundings (including the texts they read) and perceive everything in a unique way to themselves, eventually developing as unique a meaning and understanding as their perceptions, yet leave with everlasting changes and personality revolutions.

From this review of the developments in the gender studies, we can also conclude that sex, gender, and sexuality are physical and mental functions that might affect each other, yet they do not define one another. Discrimination, per se, does not arise from gender but as a subsequent of all discriminations, it arises from lack of knowledge and cultural bugs that are under the power systems of societies, as Foucault has proposed. This is not to underestimate the impacts of literary works and other cultural products in this endeavor, as they have consistently been the primary sources of insight into the lived experience of discriminations, including gender discriminations. Of course, the fictional texts have the additional advantage of bringing the readers inside the story and earning their sympathy and relying on the imaginations of the readers for the part of visualizing the characters flavored with emotional bounds, and, with imagination being boundless, such texts are the best vehicles for representing gender ambiguous characters, who normally defy conventional visualizations of body.

This article attempted to go through many noteworthy views of the scholars of different fields on the concept of gender with a particular emphasis on gender neutrality and the ensuing discriminations. Some of the views which were reviewed were attempts for defining gender, some for defying gender, and some for fighting against gender discriminations. As concluding notes, and as related to the particular emphasis of this article, here we would like to highlight Judith Butler's (2007) views on gender as trouble, postgenderists' views and of course the works of literature which have any bearing on the subject of gender. Taking note of Butler's theory, we can claim that gender discrimination explicitly can be reduced if people pay more attention to the nonessentiality and constructedness of gender. The postgenderists' ideas might seem farfetched and controversial for the extreme changes and manipulations of natural life that they propose, but their views can be applied more usefully to the real world if we can think of the actualization of their dreams of complete equality of genders as metaphors applicable to the human mind instead of the body. The same can go with the literary works that let us imagine characters who do not identify with the conventional genders. What postgenderists have proposed in the physical sense and what the writers and artists have defined in their gender-neutral worlds could be metaphors for a possible real world in which gender discrimination is considerably reduced, and instead of body of the inhabitants, the perspectives of its citizens have genderless and gender neutral. All in all, there is a long way for actualization of the dream of acceptance of all varieties of gender

orientation in societies, but the incessant struggles of the people in the realm of intellect for this purpose, whether philosophers, critics, scientists, and writers, along with many grass root activities such as changes in the parenting styles, can make us think that the dream of being at ease with one's gender is perhaps not an impossible one to materialize. This study can further be expanded outside of literature studies by relating the gender-neutral concept to social studies of queer-gender and non-gender people living in the real society around us, challenging the traditional negative views about them

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the team of reviewers of this article for their assistance in enhancing the quality of this paper. We would also like to appreciate Dr. Lale Massiha for providing us with insightful comments during the process of the completion of this article.

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Human Voice Becomes the Voice of Non-Human: Oliverian Green Project

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Abstract

There have always been many controversies with regards to the existing gaps between human beings and Nature, most of which have come into notice in particular at the current age of fragmentation and uncertainty. While we postmodern individuals take pride in our access to better means of living through technological advances, there have been times we have not been able to live a concordant life on this vast planet. However, postmodernism's backing up the issue of decentralization has come in handy in literary studies on the one hand and has been influential in Nature-oriented studies on the other. That said, the present paper aims to examine the selected poems chosen out of Mary Oliver's *Truro Bear and Other Adventures: Poems and Essays* in order to show the significant role of the poetic language in bringing about some sort of ecological symbiosis, made possible through enriching the internal bond between the speaking human agents and non-speaking, non-human individuals.

Keywords: ecopoetry, green dialog, harmony, Mary Oliver, non-human, poetic language

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Thursday, Sunday, 14, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27133.1266>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

Introduction

With the emergence of postmodernism, the once-believed-in notions about the foundations of human life were shaken to the core. One such transformation occurred with regards to the role of Nature in man's life on Earth, accordingly, giving birth to further extension of the existing rifts between the alienated individuals and Nature. However, change for the better is not always considered futile in as much as it can lead to a much more productive life. This being said, postmodernism's challenging any kind of dogmatism has not been ineffective considering that it has paved the way for a much more critical and at the same time coherent way of thinking about our sense of belonging to the planet Earth and its non-human members. Similarly, its rejection of the notions of man's integrated self and coherent identity (Hutcheon, 1988, p. xii) is the main factor that runs parallel to ecocriticism, for ecological studies promote a non-hierarchical relationship between human beings and Nature. As Heise (2008) has stated, Nature-oriented studies, i. e. ecocriticism, "differed sharply from other forms of 'postmodern' thought in that they sought to redefine the human subject not so much in relation to the human others that subjecthood had traditionally excluded as in relation to the nonhuman world" (p. 507). Adding a new side to the discussion of human-Nature issues with regards to the erosion of the centrality of the age-old foundations of beliefs goes in line with Nature-oriented approaches to literature, which stand against any one-sided mode of thinking with regards to human beings and Nature. However, relying on postmodernism per se does not meet the requirements of Nature-informed examinations owing to the fact that postmodernism relies on "visual representation"; thus, it falls short of "a full appreciation of just how *different* a world the real world has become" (Philips, 1996, p. 206).

Since the aim of this research is to offer a practical solution to the fractures underlying human and Nature relationship, the researchers believe that examining the chosen eco-poems of Mary Oliver (1935-2019) in the light of an ecocentric-ecopoetic based approach can fulfill the aim of this short study and grant us a more unified insight in the end, for egocentrism helps us live in harmony with the non-human agents and eco-poetry provides us with a cohesive insight on human-Nature union. To reach that end, this paper intends to examine some selected poems of Mary Oliver (1935-2019) to indicate that Oliver's eco-poems demonstrate the call to an ecocentric mode of life in which all the constitutive individuals, ranging from the smallest insects to the largest animals and human beings inhabiting this huge planet, co-exist in an anti-dogmatic status, functioning as a cure to the postmodern ailment of estrangement and crisis of unified self. The reason for relying on eco-poetry is, thus, due to the fact that it renegotiates "meaningful forms of dwelling within environments" (Müller & Pusse, 2017, p. 7) and invites the readers "to action in new ways" (Bryson, 2005, p. 1). Likewise, the choice of Oliver's selected eco-poems is an effort to offer a fresh mode of reading on the basis of an ecocentric-ecopoetic based analysis which results in witnessing the intermingling of the speaker-poet's voice with that of the non-human and the ecological revival of the eco-poet and her readers in the end. Thus, the research questions underlying this study include:

1. How does Oliver's green language work in communion with Nature?

2. How can Oliver's green project offer a curative to the rift between human beings and Nature?

Method

This research is qualitative and based on library research and authentic Internet sources such as books, e-books, articles, etc. Likewise, it will be descriptive since after all the aim of the research is to cast light on the significant role of an ecocentric-ecopoetic-informed approach in developing a harmonious bond between man and Nature in Oliver's selected poems, originating from the combination of Oliverian green language with the unheard voice of the non-human.

Review of the Related Literature

Eagleton (1996) has aptly defined postmodernism as, "a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation" (p. vii). Postmodernism's parting with dogmatism and centralization has also given rise to the formation of fractured identities in the present epoch. Among the issues put forward in postmodern studies, the way it treats the notion of self is of great importance in this research in that it has "sounded the death knell" for the "modernist notion of the self as unitary, stable, and transparent" (Powell, 1997, p. 1483). Similarly, its distortion of the binary mode of thinking, inherited from the bourgeois hegemony, has come in handy on the one hand and gone to extremes on the other hand. While postmodernists advocate the notion of fluid self, they fail to find a viable solution to the dualistic view of their modernist predecessors; as a result, the man / Nature conflict has remained untouched. The lack of a firm ground observed in postmodernism, thus, justifies the fact that it is "a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges" (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 3), in which Nature is replaced by "commodified representation" (Glotfelty, as cited in Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996, p. xxx). It can, therefore, be inferred that in order to find a logical answer to the man / Nature opposition attention must be turned to ecocriticism as it diverts the emphasis on ruptures to "the relational nature of individuality, the link that incites a dissolving of hierarchical oppositions between self and the natural/human other as well as instigates an ecologically inspired responsibility" (Ragaišienė, 2007, p. 111). Moreover, ecocriticism's emphasis on the interconnections between Nature and culture and its offering the most workable solution to the man / Nature dualism paves the way for the inauguration of an ecocentric awareness that is traceable in a thorough investigation of the significance of ecopoetry and its anti-totalitarian nature.

The concepts of ecopoetry and ecocentrism and their emphasis on a concordant bond between human beings and Nature have gained much importance since the advent of ecocriticism in the 1980s. Alternatively called "The environmental approach to literature" (Slovic, Rangarajan, & Sarveswaran, 2019, p.

3), ecocriticism develops “as an explicit critical response” to the unheard dialog between “the text and the environmental surroundings” in order to “raise it to a higher level of human consciousness” (Love, 2003, p. 16). One effective strategy to reach that end is relying on the inherent power of ecopoetry and its emphasis on “maintaining an ecocentric perspective” (Bryson, 2002, p. 6). As Clark (2019) has stated, “The most forceful ecopoetry would surely be one that managed to retain great accessibility and clarity while at the same time being formally and technically inventive” (p. 77). Oliver’s ecopoetry stands out in this regard, which is the main reason for conducting the following research. Similar to other contemporary ecopoets whose works have been examined through the lens of ecocriticism, Oliver’s ecopoetry has been the target of several researchers, among whom Bonds (1992), Christensen (2002), Davis (2009), and Zona (2011) have been discussed here. Christensen (2002) has stressed the common ground between ecology and postmodern theory to bridge the gap between the two and has argued that we can view them as complimentary movements whose main aim is to grant us the insight to benefit from the works of such “ecologically informed authors” as Oliver and replace the age-old notion about human independence with “an ecological tale of inclusion in a community of interrelated presences” (p. 135). Davis (2009) has also argued that Oliver’s “vocation consists of attending to the world”. Following the concept of “incarnation,” he has mentioned that Oliver’s poetry is “a quest toward different ways of knowing, seeking...a journey or progression toward ways of understanding or accepting the unknowable” (pp. 505-7). Bonds (1992) has, on the other hand, shed light on Oliver’s difference from other male Romantic poets, believing that she employs “an interruptive, interrogatory style that disrupts poetic convention and notions of propriety” (p. 13). Last but not least, Zona’s describing Oliver’s style of composition as “writing-as-mindfulness,” (2011, p. 123) casts light on the way she uses her ecopoems to enclose the gaps between self and the other, achieved through her devotion to and love of Nature. With that in mind, the researchers believe that by tracing the intermingling of the voice of the speaker-poet with that of the non-human in the light of the chosen approach, the present research can serve as a complement to the above-mentioned studies and give us a new insight into comprehending the ecocentric interlinkage between the speaking-human subject and the non-speaking, non-human agents, which puts an end to the otherness attributed to Nature ultimately.

Discussion

Among all the characteristics of Oliver’s ecopoems, the speaker-poet’s calling the readers into action is the foremost issue that can offer a key to the othering of Nature and clarify our main intention in the present research for having chosen Mary Oliver and the ecopoems taken out of her collection, namely *The Truro Bear and Other Adventures: Poems and Essays* (Oliver, 2008), as the object of further analysis. In an effort to justify such choice we agree that:

Ecopoets do not valorize the completed poem as modernist product, ready for a green museum of art; instead they want the poem to challenge and reconfigure the reader’s perceptions so to put the book down and live life more fully in all possible dimensions of the moment of firsthand experience

within nature's supportive second skin and to become more responsible about that necessary second skin. (Scigaj, 1999, p. 41)

Scigaj's stressing the reader's engagement with Nature to benefit from the sense of first hand experiences with it is echoed in "The Chance to Love Everything," which opens *The Truro Bear and Other Adventures: Poems and Essays* collection as such:

All summer I made friends
with the creatures nearby—
they flowed through the fields
and under the tent walls,
or padded through the door,
grinning through their many teeth,
looking for seeds (Oliver, 2008, p. 1)

The images employed masterfully in the above-mentioned ecopoem invite the reader to take part in the moment of the speaker-poet's union with the natural environment. During this sensual experience, Oliver sets out to see whether she is dreaming or not, saying:

in the night I heard a sound
outside the door, the canvas
bulged slightly—something
was pressing inward at eye level.
I watched, trembling, sure I had heard
the click of claws, the smack of lips
outside my gauzy house— (Oliver, 2008, p. 1)

Though apparently frightening, she does not easily set back. Rather she keeps going, albeit in doubt, and finishes this incident as follows:

Did I actually reach out my arms
toward it, toward paradise falling, like
the fading of the dearest, wildest hope—
the dark heart of the story that is all
the reason for its telling? (Oliver, 2008, p. 2)

The uncertainty observed here serves as a good justification for the belief that "The ecopoem is a momentary pause for a reconfiguration of perception, for the altering of the Eye" (Scigaj, 1999, p. 41). The alteration of our way of seeing the natural surroundings requires us to create a one-to-one relationship with Nature through which we can see the complication of the "distinction between self and other" with the help of ecology (Christensen, 2002, p. 136). In her poem "Toad," Oliver participates in a harmonious bond with a toad, which seems quite comfortable with the presence of a human being very close to him. There she writes:

I was walking by. He was sitting there.
It was full morning, so the heat was heavy on his sand-colored
head and his webbed feet. I squatted beside him, at the edge

of the path. He didn't move.

.....
He might have been Buddha—did not move, blink, or frown,
not a tear fell from those gold-rimmed eyes as the refined
anguish of language passed over him. (Oliver, 2008, p. 5)

Though the toad is not provided with the gift of language, it seems that it and Oliver succeed in communicating through a meaningful silence. The silence here serves as the communicable utterance between Oliver and the toad, as a “way of singing oneself into contact with others and with the cosmos—a way of bridging the silence between oneself and another person” (Abram, 2011, n. p.). Such method of communication is Oliver’s phenomenal act of writing which Zona (2011) has described as, “a means of experiencing most fully her interbeing with the observable world *and* of rehearsing the provisional distance between self and the other upon which this sensation of merging depends” (p. 123). Besides Oliver’s inviting the reader into action and experiencing direct sensual encounters with Nature, the second noticeable characteristic that can offer an ecological solution to the man / Nature dichotomy is the speaker-poet’s immersing into the body of Nature that is in the foreground of most of her eco-poems.

The ability to absorb into the body of another enables Oliver’s speaker-poet to blur the borderline between self and the non-human, which is transparent in “One Hundred White-sided Dolphins on a Summer Day”. The aftermath of such encounter is so influential in that it leads Oliver (2008) to say:

I don't know—either
unbearable tons
or the pale, bearable hand
of salvation
on my neck,
lifting me
from the boat's plain plank seat
into the world's
unspeakable kindness.
It is my sixty-third summer on earth
and, for a moment, I have almost vanished
into the body of the dolphin,
into the moon-eye of God,
into the white fan that lies at the bottom of the sea
with everything
that ever was, or ever will be. (pp. 7-8)

Whatever this experience is called, it drives Oliver to recount it as a “cheerful day” (p. 6) in the end, bearing witness to the fact that the loss of the human self and dissolving into the body of the dolphin provides the speaker-poet with the chance to go beyond the boundaries of human self and undergo the paradoxical “selfless practice of full presence” (Zona, 2011, p. 123). The selfless presence of the speaker-

poet in communion with Nature acts as the transformative factor that grants the speaker-poet and the reader the ecological insight and creates an influential context for resolving the dichotomous categorization of postmodernism (Ragaišienė, 2007, p. 109).

To some of us, the vivid simplicity inherent in Oliver's language might seem unusual; however, it is another notable characteristic of Oliver's ecopoetry that paves the way for the speaker-poet to form an ecological dialog with the non-human, an aim which is mostly achieved through "acute attention and its spawn, awareness" in Oliver's ecopoetry (Zona, 2011, p. 123). What Oliver strives to do is to counter the belief that "Nature is silent in our culture (and in literate societies generally) in the sense that the status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative" (Manes, 1996, p. 15). In contrast, what we witness in Oliver's ecopoems is, in fact, her wonderful ability in transgressing the boundaries of self and Nature, the result of which is the incident in "The Kitten," where Oliver (2008) writes:

More amazed than anything
I took the perfectly black
stillborn kitten
with the one large eye
in the center of its small forehead
from the house cat's bed
and buried it in a field
behind the house. (p. 9)

Wondering whether or not she has made the right decision, she finishes the same poem as such, "I think I did right to go out alone / and give it back peacefully, and cover the place / with the reckless blossoms of weeds" (Oliver, 2008, p. 9). Though no real verbal communication occurs between the poet and the kitten, she is successful in her endeavor, proving the point her "environmental poetry can be personal and emotive" (Pickford, 2009, p. 12). Likewise, Oliver's (2008) investigations into the depth of the elements of Nature is an attempt to address and redress the imbalance inherent in human-Nature interactions. As such in the fifth part of her ecopoem "Ghosts" Oliver beautifully mentions, "Said the old-timers: / the tongue / is the sweetest meat" (p.11). Such is the tongue as far as it empowers Oliver to start a green dialog with Nature and the non-human. In other words, it should be mentioned that in Oliver's ecopoems, the need for the integrity between the human and non-human agents derives from the proposition that "the Earth's inhabitants, regardless of their national and cultural differences, are bound together by a global ecosystem whose functioning transcends humanmade borders" (Heise, 2008, p. 25). For Oliver, doing away with the limitations of self is a chance to withdraw into the arms of Nature as her source of inspiration. Her reliance on language as a means to help her give voice to her feelings, as seen above, is not separable from the power Nature and its elements grant them. As Scigaj (1999) has aptly explained, "creative writers and literary critics" cannot "ignore the environment by ensconcing themselves in claustal searches for the authentic human

voice where they focus primarily on the logic of linguistic systems” (p. 6). When it comes to such ecopoets as Oliver, this issue gains more importance in that her ecopoetry “cries out for an appreciation of the authentic nature that grounds language and supports every human instant of aesthetic as well as ordinary consciousness” (Scigaj, 1999, p. 6). Accordingly, Oliver’s (2008) speaker-poet absorbs our attention to the “brief physical lives” of the moles, commonly going unnoticed in contrast to beetles, hares, and bats, with each the moles have something in common as such:

Under the leaves, under
the first loose
levels of earth
they’re there—quick
as beetles, blind
as bats, shy
as hares but seen
less than these— (p. 34)

Yet, they welcome their lives the way it is and hunt for food, “spring flowers”, “among the pale girders / of appleroot, / rockshelf, nests / of insects” (Oliver, 2008, p. 34). Though their traces get blurred with the single drops of rain, “even this frail / hint of them”, they are “so willing to continue / generation after generation” to accomplish “their brief physical lives” (Oliver, 2008, pp. 34-5). To these little creatures, “pushing and shoving / with their stubborn muzzles against / the whole earth,” is “delicious” (Oliver, 2008, p. 35). Despite the simplicity seen in the lives of the moles, Oliver’s poetic language is the mediator that expresses “imagination, to embody — give body to — thought” about such incidents (Bonds, 1992, p. 3). Her thought-provoking ecopoems and her striking environment-oriented images, as Bonds (1992) has argued in detail, stand against “Western male-dominant thinking about language and nature” denying such power to women (p. 3). In her ecopoem, “The Snow Cricket”, Oliver (2008) draws our attention to the singing of this creature as such:

and by singing I mean, in this instance,
not just the work of the little mouth-cave,
but of every enfoldment of the body—
a singing that has no words (p. 36)

The cricket’s singing is devoid of any human words; however, the speaker-poet is capable of noticing what the cricket is trying to say. Its song is “built of loneliness;” yet, its “consequences” are “longing” and “hope” (Oliver, 2008, p. 36). Apparently, what Oliver is trying to say here goes in line with Abram’s (1997) saying, which reads as “We still *need* that which is other than ourselves and our own creations” that leads to the renewal of “our acquaintance with the sensuous world” (p. 9). For such an ecological-minded poet as Oliver revitalizing the ruptured tie between the world of the human and the non-human takes place in close company of Nature and its non-human, non-speaking members, whose inability to communicate in human

language has turned into a profit and promoted the inauguration of the green conversation among all the inhabitants of the planet Earth, moving beyond postmodernism's belief in indeterminacy of human language accordingly.

To the human eyes, the lilies' standing "on their calm, cob feet, / each in the ease / of a single, waxy body" may sound pitiful; however, they are "breathing contentedly in the chill night air," leading the "I" speaker of the poem to look into "the theater of their perfect faces / that frozen, bottomless glare" (Oliver, 2008, p. 37) in awe and encouraging the reader to ponder the possibility of this strange-looking harmony. In order to be able to share in the joy of such harmony, the human observer needs to let go of the boundaries of the human self to reach the recognition that "No one is saved until we are all saved," where the word one includes both human and non-human (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 77). Such is when Oliver writes about whelks, driving her "every morning" to:

... look for the whelks, whose edges
have rubbed so long against the world
they have snapped and crumbled—
they have almost vanished,
with the last relinquishing
of their unrepeatable energy,
back into everything else. (Oliver, 2008, p. 38)

In keeping with this transition, the speaker-poet is willing to undergo the process of self-realization as soon as she finds one whelk and holds it in her hand. The moment she touches the whelk, she proclaims, "yes, I am willing to be / that wild darkness, / that long, blue body of light" (Oliver, 2008, p. 39). This intuition casts light on the notion of equality that shows the interrelation between all the organisms whose intrinsic value is all the same (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 67). Being a human or a non-human does not matter here. What is at issue is that experiencing psychic and social transformations does not rely on human forces per se, rather we need the help of all the other planes and non-human forces (Berry, 2015, p. 42). Probably Oliver's reference to the power of "fire" in this eco-poem pertains to "a radical change in our mode of consciousness" (p. 42), the outcome of which is creating a new language and sense of being a human (Berry, 2015, p. 42) that avoids the mere representation of the world of the non-human and summons us into a deep and attentive presence with the world around us (Abram, 2011, n. p.).

Oliver (2008) is affected so much by such incidents that in "A Meeting" she longs for being given the chance, as she says, "to live my life all over again, to begin again, / to be utterly / wild" (p. 41); wild in the sense that she can free herself from human boundaries and unite with Nature. Thus, this eco-poem is a call for putting an end to the "dualistic view of human and nature as separate and different" to show "that humans are intimately *a part* of the natural environment: they and nature are *one*" (Pepper, 1996, p. 17).

Closely related to this argument is Oliver's attempt in a "quest toward different ways of knowing" (Davis, 2009, p. 605), made possible through her

reliance on the power of perception of the non-human agents and the green poetic language, leading to the ecological awakening of the speaker-poet and her readers in the end. Her ecopoetry is “a confession of faith” (Oliver, 1994, p. 122); faith not only in the power of human subject, but also in the power of the natural elements. In other words, Oliver “chooses not to elevate humans as the sole possessor of the soul;” a belief that “continually carries out her out the door and into the sacrament of the world’s wild beauty” (Davis, 2009, p. 606). Oliver’s regarding a poem as “an attitude, and a prayer,” singing “on the page” and singing “itself off the page,” shows that her ecopoetry “lives through genius *and* technique” (Oliver, 1994, p. 114). The combination of the poet’s genius and technique results in the creation of ecopoems which she herself likens to “songs” running through her mind. To explain it more, the poet writes, “I say a song because it passes musically, but it is really just words, a thought that is neither strange nor complex” (Oliver, 1994, p. 114). Thereby, she concludes in “Flow”, “how strange it would be *not* to think it—not to have such music inside one’s head and body, on such an afternoon” (Oliver, 2004, p. 9). To create her ecopoems she journeys “deep into the forest in order to open her arms to both the known and unknowable” (Davis, 2009, p. 607). In the wake of “the green / and purple weeds,” she proclaims:

I waded, I reached
my hands
in that most human
of gestures—to find,
to see,
to hold whatever it is
that’s there— (Oliver, 2008, p. 50)

This adventure into the heart of the unknown “requires a drastic change in human conceptions of nature,” whereby the speaker-poet carries out her mission of establishing a green conversation with Nature (Nolan, 2010, p. 6). The part the speaker of the poem is talking about opening her hand to set the pipefish free, she calls it “a promise” and mentions, “I would keep my whole life / and have— / and let it go” (Oliver, 2008, p. 51). This short union between the speaker-poet and the pipefish is, in fact, a search for the “ecocentric existence” in which the poet and the reader “can view nature accurately” (Nolan, 2010, p. 6). The poet, hence, says:

I tell you this
in case you have yet to wade
into the green
and purple shallows
where the diminutive
pipefish
wants to go on living.
I tell you this
against everything you are—
your human heart,
your hands passing over the world,
gathering and closing,
so dry and slow. (Oliver, 2008, pp. 51-2)

The reference to the word human in this excerpt sheds light on Oliver's concern with ecocentrism "as a call to fellow humans to recognize the intractable, like-it-or-not interdependence that subsists between the human and the nonhuman" (Buell, 2005, p. 102), the result of which is thinking "against anthropocentrism" (Buell, 2005, p. 105) and all modes of oppositional thinking. Rising against anthropocentrism in favor of symbiosis is not only limited to human subjects; rather, it has to do with both sides of this equation, i. e. human beings and non-human individuals. No matter how this goal is achieved, the result remains the same, cultivating the seeds of consciousness within one's mind and heart.

In "This Too" the poet brings the disheartening scene of a dead fawn before our eyes to shed light on another form of harmony observed in Nature. The fawn's "succulent mouth" and its "pink, extruded tongue" show "the smell of change", "which is stink" (Oliver, 2008, p. 53). Though the scene in this ecopoem is at odds with the ones in Oliver's previous ecopoems, its message is profound and thought-provoking. Among all the creatures present there, it is only the speaker's dog that is capable of "reading the silence, / like a book" (Oliver, 2008, p. 53). The poet's skillful juxtaposition of "the terrible excitement / of the flies" (Oliver, 2008, p. 53), indicates that in spite of the young deer's death, the harmony between natural elements runs throughout Nature nonstop. To the ordinary human observer, the nasty-looking scene of death may sound unpleasant. However, flies, as Meeker (1996) argues, "are heroic individuals who make their homes where no one else wants to live, and their lives lead the way toward challenging and dangerous horizons" (p. 161). Accordingly, such creatures as the fawn are "the loners of the natural world, the tragic heroes who sacrifice themselves in satisfaction of mysterious inner commands which they alone can hear" (Meeker, 1996, p. 161). Although the fawn dies, the flies still share in the enjoyment of feeding themselves on the corpse of the young deer. This "physical death is actually a reunion with the earth" (Bazregarzadeh, 2018, p. 38). Likewise, "through the process of decomposition," the fawn's body "changes into mould which shows her union with the natural rhythms of life" (Bazregarzadeh, 2018, p. 38).

Probably, for the speaker-poet this event serves as some sort of redemption as the speaker is astonished to see "No one spoke, not the Creator, not the Preserver, / not the Destroyer" (Oliver, 2008, p. 53). Yet, the merry gathering of the flies, accompanied by the prevailing silence, is the harbinger of the harmony between the human-observer and the non-human creatures. Such sense of closeness to Nature is also evident in "How Turtles Come to Spend the Winter in the Aquarium," in which the poet's rushing to save it ignites the flames of self-satisfaction in the poet's heart in the end. The sickly-looking sea turtle with "its motionless flippers" and "slowly beating heart" is a hard nut to crack for the speaker-poet. Yet, the "stillness" of the sea turtle drives the speaker forth to continue proceeding to the sea bed, walking "ankle-deep in the sand" (Oliver, 2008, pp. 61-2) to finish her mission of saving the sea turtle by releasing it in warm sea water. Touched by this event, upon noticing the turtle raising "its head" and "looking around," the speaker-poet states, "Today, who could deny it, I am an important person" (Oliver, 2008, p. 62). Being important not in the sense that the speaker feels superior to the sea turtle, rather this insightful

experience paves the way for some sort of ecological awareness that comes by close attention and keen awareness that is the result of a face-to-face encounter with Nature as in “The Poet Goes to Indiana,” which reads as follows:

and she put her face against my face,
put her muzzle, her nostrils, soft as violets,
against my mouth and my nose, and breathed me,
to see who I was,
a long quiet minute—minutes—
then she stamped feet and whisked tail
and danced deliciously into the grass away, and came back. (Oliver, 2008,
p. 64)

The horse’s melodious dance in Nature and its coming back hilariously intensify the fact that the speaker-poet is able to bridge the gap between the self and the other (Zona, 2011, pp. 126-7). To invite the reader to take part in such union, she starts her ecopoem “The Summer Day” by asking, “Who made the world? / Who made the swan, and the black bear? / Who made the grasshopper?” (Oliver, 2008, p. 65). Then she continues with a more detailed reference:

This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes. (Oliver,
2008, p. 65)

Spending some time with the grasshopper inspires Oliver to come to terms with her inability in not knowing “how to pay attention, how to fall down / into the grass, how to kneel in the grass, / how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields” (Oliver, 2008, p. 65). The grasshopper is there to open her eyes to the temporality of daily life and small things to which human beings are indifferent. Thus, pleased with her action, she asks:

Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life? (Oliver, 2008, p. 65)

By tracking “the cycles of life through the land as well as her memory,” Oliver “wants to subordinate her own projects to the reality around her, to enter into a world that baffles or even repels her, so that she can in turn bear witness to a reality beyond her own concentric orders” (Elder, 1996, p. 222). Such absorption into the heart of a baffling world and the concordant reality it creates is crucial as it shows we humans “are no longer merely favored by a divine power” (Christensen, 2002, p. 137). More accurately, it is Nature that speaks within Oliver and leads her to recall seeing a little mink “the gift of the winter”. However, this goes beyond mere pantheism, which is “an attractive theory” (Christensen, 2002, p. 139) in her

ecopoems; it can “induce an actual transformation in how readers engage the world” (Christensen, 2002, p. 139). Her choice of the phrase “the terrible, gleaming / loneliness” after the mink’s leaving that area leads her to end the ecopoem as such:

... It took me, I suppose,
something like six more weeks to reach
finally a patch of green, I paused so often
to be glad, and grateful, and even then carefully across
the vast, deep woods I kept looking back. (Oliver, 2008,
p. 67)

Conclusion

In short, as mentioned at the beginning of this short study, postmodernism’s dismantling the hierarchical mode of analysis and ecocriticism’s stressing the symbiotic bond between man and Nature have proved that the ruptures inflicted upon human self and the otherness ascribed to Nature have not only extended the gap between the two, but have also brought about further alienation. As a result, postmodernism’s advocacy of the motif of the intersectional self on the one hand and its declining the notions of individual wholeness and centralization on the other hand have diverted the attention from the autonomous human self to the ecocentric synthesis and integration in ecological studies. That said, the need to look back on Nature and form a green dialog with the non-human was the focal point traced in almost all the ecopoems discussed above. Likewise, it was shown that Oliver’s close interaction with some present animals, insects, or plants was the door to the ultimate closure of the gaps between the speaking subject and the silent non-human agent. Through Oliver’s poetic language, the speaker-poet formed a green dialog with the non-human and experienced an ecological rebirth, showing that the speaking human beings are not the measure of all insights and meanings. To be more precise, in the above-examined ecopoems, what came to notice more is the fact that Oliver’s reunion with Nature has denied man’s dominating Nature or the other way round. The substantial consequence of employing a green conversation with the non-human is, thus, the education it brings home to the human soul and readers, shedding light on Oliver’s skillful application of this green conversation throughout her ecopoems. Last but not least, the three important poetic techniques highlighted throughout the research, namely, the speaker-poet’s encouraging the reader to encounter the sensual moments in communion with Nature, her dissolving into the body of the non-human agents, and the plain poetic language were the key factors that cast more light on Oliver’s outstanding achievement as an ecopoet. The main findings of the study, therefore, show that the application of the ecocentric-ecopoetic approach to Oliver’s ecopoetry has given rise to an ecocentric attitude that can reform the present inconsistencies and dualisms witnessed in postmodern studies, reform man’s ruptured identity, and put an end to the otherness of Nature, all of which result in strengthening the green bond between human beings and the non-humans.

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**Book Review: Jian Tao and Xuesong (Andy) Gao, *Language Teacher Agency*,
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 2021, 176 pages.
ISBN 978-1108932769 (Paperback)**

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Second language (L2) teacher education has witnessed a substantial shift of attention and orientation with regard to the way it looks at teaching, teachers, and various teacher-related factors. This consequential drift began to occur in the 1970s, a decade branded by Freeman (2002) as the *decade of change* where teacher education was in the van of the quest for a cognitive paradigm, in lieu of the behaviorist tradition, in which the mental lives of teachers were also taken into account. The shift has continued in an evolutionary fashion, and teachers, couched within the new tradition, are deemed to be both cognitive actors and reflective practitioners. As a reflective being, a teacher is also viewed as “an agentic social ‘subject’: individuals with identities, knowledges, and experiences who are themselves engaged in an evolving trajectory of professional development” (Cross, 2020, p. 38). As a corollary of this teacher repositioning, the notions of agency and, by implication, language teacher agency (LTA) have become a regular fixture of inquiry in both mainstream and L2 teacher education. To be sure, in terms of theorization, the construct is still in need of clarification as there is no univocal consensus on what exactly constitutes agency (Mansouri, et al., 2021). Moreover, it is sensible to consider whether agency is merely another fashionable concept in the language teaching enterprise with no positive and useful contribution to the realities of the teaching practice, or whether teachers’ involvement with agency will lead to the betterment of their professional development practices.

Language Teacher Agency is a well-timed publication making a crucial contribution to these concerns. There are seven sections to this well-written, carefully-structured book. The Introduction section is indeed a judicious opening as

ARTICLE INFO

Book Review

Received: Monday, October 4, 2021

Accepted: Sunday, November 7, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Wednesday, 15, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.14334>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x

it aptly and briefly traces the driving forces behind the emergence of agency in the discussions of

teacher education. The authors, then, refer to the growing sophistication, in both theorization and research, surrounding the notion of agency, with a view to paving the way for presenting the main objectives of the book: elaborating on the what and why of agency, delineating the intersection of agency and other teacher-related constructs such as autonomy and identity, introducing ways of promoting and boosting teachers' agency, depicting the notion of collective agency, and offering a 'trans-perspective' to function as a guide in this stream of research in L2 teacher education.

Section 2 starts with an important distinction made between 'agency' and 'autonomy' which are sometimes used synonymously in the literature. The authors point out that while there are some commonalities between the two constructs, they are unconnected to each other in many ways. In the light of a comprehensive comparison of the two notions, the authors posit that agency is a more general notion embodying the construct of autonomy; in addition, they believe, agency is more closely bound up with the construct of identity than autonomy. The authors exercise caution to avoid presenting a unified definition of agency. They clearly see the elusiveness of agency lying in its being defined from a myriad of perspectives rather than its being a complex notion to define. Viewing agency as a dynamic construct, the authors then proceed to provide a fourfold typography of prisms that frame the notion of agency as reflected in the literature: social-cognitive theory (agency as a premeditated undertaking), sociocultural theory of mind (agency as a mediated act on both social and psychological planes), the post-structuralist perspective (agency as *doing*), and an ecological standpoint (agency as a *discursive practice*). The authors very briefly elucidate how self-efficacy is assumed to reflect agency in the social cognitive tradition. They also lament the scarcity of research pertaining to the application of this theory to agency investigations. After explicating agency as it is conceptualized in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the authors provide illustrative studies inspired by this conceptualization of agency and provide language teachers with ways of benefiting from the sociocultural tools they have at their disposal, a case in point being translingual practice, to improve their sense of agency. The authors then refer to the ecological perspective which has tried to advance a paradigm shift in the way agency is conceived of by leveling criticism against the sociocultural conceptualization of agency and, instead, looking at teacher agency as a matter of both sociocultural (contextual) and individual (i.e., intentional undertaking rooted in one's life history) capacity. The authors then analyze the post-structuralist conceptualization of agency where it is seen as a *discursive practice* which, in its own right, is epitomized in positioning theory. In this view, the assumption is that individuals will not embark on agentic acts unless they are entrusted with the due position to do so.

In the third section, the authors take the Douglas Fir Group's (2016) framework as their point of departure to elaborate on why agency really counts. In so doing, they underscore the importance of agency at three levels: individual (agency in constantly learning to teach), institutional (agency in fulfilling policies), and social (agency in promoting social justice). The authors advance a fourth level, i.e., chronological, which is concerned with agency in continuous professional development. The section concludes with the proposition that the multilingual and multicultural nature of the language teaching context brings to the fore the importance of boosting a sense of LTA in particular.

Section 4 of the book deals with the relations between LTA and other major concepts in language teacher education. The connections have focused around teacher identity, emotion, belief, and knowledge. An illustrative study by the authors (Tao & Gao, 2017), lays the foundation for the discussions in this section. The main objective of the study centers on research engagement among language teachers at Chinese universities. The authors conclude that language teachers' identity commitment heavily influenced the type of agentic acts they opted for. The findings also indicate that emotion played a key role in shaping LTA particularly as it regarded agency in policy making. As for the link between teacher agency and teacher belief, the study reveals that language teachers' sense of agency was boosted as their belief systems squared with that of the professional discourse community. At the end of the section, the authors assert that little is known about the connection between teacher agency and teacher knowledge. However, the extant literature, on the whole, bears witness to the fact that improved teacher pedagogical content knowledge is a source of agency improvement.

In Section 5, we see more focus on practice. The authors suggest two routes to promote LTA: altering contextual circumstances and enhancing teacher growth. An exemplar of the former is establishing communities of teachers which are of different sizes. This way, language teachers can pick up a good deal of expertise in different areas via the bolstering community network they have built. Additionally, their sense of agency can be enhanced by building and attending a larger teacher community, hence downplaying the repercussions of a top-down system imposed on their practice. To boost their sense of agency through growth, the authors offer, language teachers can capitalize on critical reflective practice through multimodal narratives. This reflective practice can be paired with introducing heterogeneous discourses in various modes so that agentic teachers can question their presumptions about different aspects of a typical language teaching practice, including the controversial issue of native-speakerism.

Section 6 of the book is concerned with the proposition that individual teachers do not display agency-driven behavior in an entirely separate fashion. Lamenting collective agency being under-explored and under-theorized in language teacher education, the authors turn our attention to the social and relational nature of LTA. To map language teacher collective agency, the authors examine social

cognitive, sociocultural, and ecological perspectives in terms of their investigative attention to the collective dimension of LTA, with the sociocultural paradigm considering this type of agency as one of its central pursuits, and the ecological framework having the least share of the contribution to this aspect of the construct.

In Section 7, the authors put forward the idea of a *trans*-perspective on LTA with the purpose of unraveling the intricate nature of the concept such that a more unifying understanding of it will be very likely in both theory and practice. A shortcoming of this proposal is that the very idea of a ‘unified *trans*-perspective’ is an oxymoron. This point has been echoed by the authors in Section 2 where they state “using a single definition of agency also goes against the call for a *trans*-perspective proposed at the end of the Element” (p. 4). That said, setting this *trans*-perspective as the point of reference for upcoming scholarship on the construct, the authors then put forth a research agenda to guide the general trend of future research in this area. Consequently, they invite interested researchers to use data triangulation and employ more untouched research methods such as multimodal narratives and the social network methodology as a way to uncover additional dimensions of LTA.

The book, as a philosophy-of-agency statement, does much to advance our insights into the world of LTA. Interested teachers, theoreticians, and researchers will certainly find the book having a demystifying function such that the construct of LTA being enshrouded in obfuscations is properly illuminated. Moreover, the construct, in its totality, is scrutinized from different angles, and the authors, due to their experience in carrying out research on LTA, succeed in pinpointing and dealing with the vexed issues encircling LTA. However, aside from the ‘unified *trans*-perspective’ oxymoron discussed above, it seems that what the authors are arguing for in terms of conceptual diversity in their discussions is more a matter of terminology than discrepancy and reality. Take, for instance, the additional level of continuous professional development the authors have added to the Douglas Fir Group’s framework when they try to stress the significance of agency. This *chronological* level could have been simply subsumed under the first level of the framework, i.e., agency in constantly learning to teach, since learning to teach can be regarded as a constituent component of reflective practice which, in its own right, entails constant professional development, or learning to teach for that matter, as an important dimension of its cognitive element (Akbari, et al., 2010).

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Persian Abstracts:

بررسی عوامل آغازگر امنیت معلمان زبان انگلیسی ایرانی با استفاده از روش تحقیق آمیخته

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چکیده

این حقیقت بارها تأیید شده است که معلمان انگلیسی به عنوان یک زبان خارجی و در این شغل با عوامل استرس زای مختلف روبرو هستند. در حالیکه آنها دائماً در حال تجربه کردن اختلالات هستند، امنیت نقش یک سپر را بازی میکند و به معلمان اجازه میدهد که رفتاری حرفه‌ای در محیط کلاس داشته باشند و در طول دوران کاریشان از لحاظ احساسی یا روانشناسی درست رفتار کنند (ثلن، ۲۰۰۵). تحقیق کنونی از یک روش آمیخته استفاده کرده است برای بررسی توزیع انواع مختلف امنیت در میان شرکت کنندگان و همچنین بررسی وقایع بی ثبات گر که امنیت را در معلمان زبان انگلیسی ایرانی آغاز میکند. برای رسیدن به این هدف، ۲۰۴ معلم زبان انگلیسی ایرانی از دو استان اصفهان و چهارمحال و بختیاری در این تحقیق شرکت کرده اند. برای جمع آوری داده ها، پرسشنامه امنیت معلمان زبان (هایور، ۲۰۱۶)، واقعه نویسی تفکری و مصاحبه به کارگرفته شد. داده‌های بدست آمده از پرسش نامه توسط تحلیل توصیفی و تحلیل خوشه‌ای و داده‌های کیفی توسط فرایند سه مرحله‌ای کدگذاری تئوری زمینه‌ای تجزیه و تحلیل شدند. نتایج تجزیه و تحلیل کمی سه نوع گروه امنیت یافته سودمند، امنیت یافته ناهنجار و مظنون امنیتی شناسایی کرد که در این میان معلمان با امنیت ناهنجار بیشترین توزیع را دارا بودند. یافته‌های تحقیق ۳ مجموعه آموزشی، سازمانی و شخصی و ۱۴ زیر مجموعه برای آغازگران امنیت در بین معلمان زبان ایرانی شناسایی کرد. نتایج این تحقیق کاربردهای زیادی برای معلمان، مسئولان و سیاست گذاران دارد و به معلمان کمک میکند امنیتشان را تقویت کنند و از خستگی و فرسودگی روانی آنها جلوگیری میکنند.

واژگان کلیدی: امنیت معلمان زبان انگلیسی، توزیع امنیت، آغازگران امنیت، معلمان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی به عنوان یک زبان خارجی، انواع امنیتی معلمان

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: شنبه، ۲۴ بهمن ۱۳۹۹

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27130.1265

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چکیده

این مطالعه قصد داشت تا تاثیر انواع هویت بر میزان درگیری با یادگیری، درک، و نمرات فراگیران زبان انگلیسی را از طریق پرسشنامه معتبر چهار قطبی تیلور (۲۰۱۰)، در محیط انگلیسی بعنوان زبان خارجی در ایران و در میان فراگیران بزرگسال زبان انگلیسی بررسی کند. بدین منظور ۱۷۰ شرکت کننده شامل ۶۹ زن و ۱۰۱ مرد از روش نمونه گیری آسان انتخاب شدند. اطلاعات کسب شده از روش تحلیل واریانس چند متغیره مورد تحلیل قرار گرفت. بررسی رابطه‌ی بین ۴ ساخت اصلی مدل و ۲ ساخت فرعی یعنی درگیری با یادگیری و درک، رابطه‌ی معنا دار و میانجی گرایانه‌ای بین این فاکتورها و نمرات پایانی نشان داد. علاوه براین، نتایج تحقیق نشان داد که فراگیران با سطح بالایی از «خود عمومی» و «خود تحمیل شده»، سطح پایینی از «خود شخصی» دارند. همچنین زیر ساخت‌ها تحت تاثیر عوال دیگری از جمله سن و سال‌های یادگیری زبان، قرار می‌گیرند. هویت در زنان نیز وابستگی بیشتری نسبت به عوامل زیرساخت مدل از خود نشان داد.

واژگان کلیدی: هویت، یادگیری زبان، درگیری، پرسشنامه معتبر چهار قطبی، انگلیسی بعنوان زبان خارجی

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: دوشنبه، ۹ فروردین ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه ۲۴ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27193.1288

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳-شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱x-۲۳۸۳

نگرش معلمان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی درباره تفکر انتقادی و نقش آن در آموزش زبان خارجی

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چکیده

در تحقیق کیفی حاضر، برداشت معلمان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی در خصوص تفکر انتقادی و نقش آن در آموزش زبان خارجی مورد مطالعه و بررسی قرار گرفت. ۳۶ نفر از معلمان زبان انگلیسی بواسطه نمونه آماری هدفمند بعنوان شرکت کنندگان در تحقیق انتخاب شدند. با هدف جمع آوری داده ها، سه نوع ابزار متفاوت؛ مصاحبه‌های دقیق ژرفکاوانه، مصاحبه‌های متمرکز روایت معلمان بکار گرفته شدند. جهت حصول اطمینان از صحت ارتباط بین این سه منبع جمع آوری داده ها، چندین مقیاس در نظر گرفته شد. نگارنده اول مصاحبه‌ها انجام داده و روایات معلمان را استخراج کردند. کلیه مصاحبه‌ها به زبان فارسی انجام گرفت و کل فرایند ضبط صوتی گردید. همه داده‌ها کلمه به کلمه پس از بررسی نفر به نفر با شرکت کنندگان به انگلیسی ترجمه شدند. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها از مدل ثماتیک آنالیز (براون و کلارک ۲۰۰۶) استفاده گردید. جهت حصول اطمینان از اعتبار بین کد بندیها، رمزگذاری داده‌ها توسط مولفین دوم و سوم هر کدام بطور مستقل انجام گردید. مولفین سوم و چهارم در یافتن موضوعات و زیر گروه‌های بالقوه آنها انجام وظیفه کردند. سرانجام پنج مولفه موضوعی تحت عناوین: شایستگی، ذکاوت، تغییر، توفیق و ابتکار در جریان تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها حاصل شدند. این تحقیق می‌تواند در مسائل آموزش زبان، تربیت معلم و در عرصه خط و مشی گذاری مورد استفاده قرار گیرد.

کلمات کلیدی: تفکر انتقادی، معلمان آموزش و پرورش، تربیت معلم، آموزش زبان

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: یکشنبه، ۵ اردیبهشت ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27228.1303

شایای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳ شایای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸۳

بررسی رابطه درک شنیداری منظورشناسی زبان با بسندگی زبانی، یادگیری خودتنظیم در گوش دادن و تمایل به برقراری ارتباط در میان زبان‌آموزان ایرانی

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چکیده

درک شنیداری منظورشناسی زبان (PLC) به عنوان یک فرایند پیچیده، تحت تأثیر انواع عوامل شناختی، روانشناختی، بافتی، اجتماعی، فرهنگی و زبانی قرار می‌گیرد. جهت درک نقش این عوامل در PLC، مطالعه حاضر به دنبال بررسی و یافتن ارتباط بسندگی زبانی، یادگیری خودتنظیم در گوش دادن (SRL) و تمایل به برقراری ارتباط (WTC) در PLC است. برای این منظور، گروهی متشکل از ۲۶۹ زبان‌آموز EFL ایرانی سطح متوسط به بالا و پیشرفته (۱۵۳ مرد و ۱۱۶ زن) با پاسخ دادن به ۴۰ آیتم چند گزینه‌ای درک کاربردی زبان (MDCT) و همچنین پرسشنامه‌های معتبر و قابل اعتماد از SRL و WTC در این مطالعه شرکت کردند. نتایج تجزیه و تحلیل همبستگی نشان داد که PLC به طور معنی‌دار و مثبتی با سطح بسندگی زبان، SRL و WTC ارتباط دارد. علاوه بر یافته‌های مربوط، مدل تجزیه و تحلیل نیز ترسیم شد. بر اساس نتایج بدست آمده، توانش زبانی، SRL و WTC پیش بینی کننده‌های مثبت قابل توجهی برای PLC بودند. بر اساس نتایج این پژوهش مفاهیم آموزشی مربوط با هدف افزایش علمی و عملی بحث به ذینفعان کلیدی آموزشی ارائه شده است.

واژه‌گان کلیدی: درک شنیداری منظورشناسی زبان (PLC)، بسندگی زبان، یادگیری خودتنظیمی در گوش دادن (SRL)، تمایل به برقراری ارتباط (WTC)، انگلیسی به عنوان زبان دوم / خارجی (EFL / ESL)

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: شنبه، ۱۴ فروردین ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27199.1292

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳-شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸۳

بررسی دیدگاه‌های معلمان زبان انگلیسی نسبت به نظارت بر معلمان در موسسات ایرانی آموزش زبان

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چکیده

اگرچه نظارت بر معلمان زبان بخش جدایی ناپذیری از تجربیات حرفه‌ای معلمان ایرانی آموزشی زبان انگلیسی است، مطالعه کافی در زمینه نظارت بر معلمان و در ارتباط با بررسی دیدگاه‌های معلمان زبان انگلیسی نسبت به نظارت بر معلمان ایرانی آموزش زبان انجام نشده است. هدف این تحقیق، بررسی دیدگاه‌های معلمان زبان انگلیسی در مورد نظارت بر معلمان در موسسات ایرانی آموزش زبان انگلیسی است. از این رو، محققان ۲۱۸ معلم ایرانی آموزش زبان انگلیسی را انتخاب کردند که دارای سابقه‌ی تدریس در آموزشگاه‌هایی باشند که ناظر کیفی دارد. سپس، شرکت کنندگان پرسشنامه‌ای (مرادی، سپهری فر، و خدیو، ۲۰۱۴) را با هدف اعلام دیدگاه‌ها، احساسات، و تجربیات خود نسبت به نظارت بر معلمان تکمیل نمودند. این پرسشنامه شامل پنج بخش است از جمله: ارزیابی معلمان از نظارت، دیدگاه‌های آنها در مورد نحوه نظارت بر معلمان، نقش نظارت بر رشد آنها، و فرآیندهایی که قبل، حین، و پس از نظارت صورت می‌گیرد. بر اساس نتایج این تحقیق، تعداد زیادی از شرکت کنندگان اظهار داشتند که نظارت بر معلمان برای آنان مفید، و برای معلمان تازه کار ضروری است. اما از سوی دیگر، بیشتر معلمان دیدگاه منفی نسبت به نظارت داشتند. آنها مدعی بودند که بازخورد ناظران کیفی، آنان را مضطرب ساخته، تحت فشار قرار داده، و اعتماد به نفس و انگیزه آنها را از بین می‌برد. بر اساس دیدگاه معلمان، بازخورد ناظران کیفی آنها رضایت بخش نبوده و بیشتر جنبه‌ی رفع تکلیف در اجرای قوانین آموزشگاه و کاغذ بازی‌های اداری را داشته است. معلمان به لزوم ایجاد معیارهای شفاف و مشخص در راستای بهبود فعالیت‌های نظارتی ناظران کیفی اشاره کردند و افزودند ناظران کیفی باید به مشاهده‌ی غیر منتظره و بدون هماهنگی کلاس‌های آنان خاتمه دهند.

واژه‌های کلیدی: معلمان آموزش زبان انگلیسی، موسسات زبان، ناظران کیفی موسسات آموزش زبان، نظارت،

نظارت بر معلمان زبان

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: شنبه، ۲۸ فروردین ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27221.1300

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳ شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸۳

نگرش زبان آموزان دانشگاهی نسبت به یادگیری مبتنی بر حل مسئله: جهشی به سوی دانشگاه‌های نسل چهارم

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چکیده

یادگیری مبتنی بر حل مسئله یکی از روشهای آموزشی است که مزایای زیادی داشته و می‌تواند خلا یادگیری سنتی را پر کند. در واقع روشی است که در آن زبان آموزان به جای اینکه مدرس اطلاعات در اختیارشان بگذارد یادگیری را با مطرح کردن یک مسئله شروع می‌کنند. مطالعه حاضر به بررسی عوامل مهم این روش از نقطه نظر زبان آموزان ایرانی پرداخته است. همینطور نگرش آنها را نسبت به عناصر مختلف این روش سنجیده است. اطلاعات از ۳۷۹ دانشجوی دانشگاه که شامل ۱۹۶ پسر و ۱۸۳ دختر بود و از رشته‌های مهندسی و علوم پایه و علوم انسانی و هنر بودند جمع آوری شد و نتیجه پایایی آن با روش آلفای کرونباخ ۰.۷۳ گزارش شد. نتایج تجزیه و تحلیل فاکتورهای اکتشافی ۴ فاکتور یادگیری مبتنی بر پروژه، یادگیری مشارکتی، استفاده از فناوری در یادگیری، و یادگیری خودمختار را نشان داد. به علاوه نتایج آمار توصیفی حاکی از آن بود که زبان آموزان دانشگاهی ایرانی نگرش مثبتی نسبت به روش یادگیری زبان مبتنی بر حل مسئله دارند و معتقدند به یادگیری زبانشان کمک می‌کند.

کلید واژه ها: یادگیری مبتنی بر حل مسئله، زبان آموزان دانشگاهی، نگرش زبان آموزان ایرانی، دانشگاه نسل چهارم

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: شنبه، ۲۵ اردیبهشت ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27258.1313

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۳۳ شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۳۳

رابطه بین نگرش جهانی و تمایل به برقراری ارتباط زبانی زبان آموزان ایرانی در دو سطح مهارت زبان ضعیف و قوی

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چکیده

تحقیق حاضر به بررسی ارتباط بین دیدگاه جهانی و تمایل به برقراری ارتباط دانشجویان مرد زبان انگلیسی در دو سطح توانایی زبانی انگلیسی ضعیف و قوی میپردازد. تحقیق بر روی یکصد و شش دانشجوی زبان از دانشگاههای آزاد اسلامی و پیام نور تبریز و سراب انجام گردید. دانشجویان بر اساس نمرات یک آزمون مهارت زبان انگلیسی استاندارد بنام پی ای تی به دو گروه ضعیف و قوی تقسیم بندی شدند و دادهها توسط دو پرسشنامه برگرفته از مک کروسکی (۱۹۹۲) و یاشیما (۲۰۰۲) جمع آوری و توسط روش آماری همبستگی پیرسون و روش تی گروههای مستقل تحلیل گردید. نتایج نشان دادند که ارتباط مثبت معنی داری بین دیدگاه جهانی و تمایل به برقراری ارتباط بین دانشجویان انگلیسی قوی وجود داشت و این ارتباط در میان دانشجویان ضعیف معنی دار نبود. همچنین نتایج نشان دادند که تفاوت معنی داری بین دانشجویان قوی و ضعیف هم از لحاظ دیدگاه جهانی و هم تمایل به ارتباط وجود داشت. یافتههای تحقیق حاضر توانستند پیامهای آموزشی مهمی برای معلمان و مولفین کتب درسی ارائه دهند.

واژگان کلیدی: دیدگاه جهانی، برقراری ارتباط زبانی، زبان آموزان ایرانی، همبستگی پیرسون

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: جمعه، ۱۵ اسفند ۱۳۹۹

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27167.1278

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳ شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸۳

تحلیل فرهنگ و محتوای چندنمایی در مجموعه کتاب‌های بومی آموزش انگلیسی

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چکیده

فرهنگ به عنوان بخشی از آموزش زبان انگلیسی در نظر گرفته می‌شود. علاوه بر این، کتاب‌های آموزش زبان انگلیسی از منابع اصلی آموزش و یادگیری بین فرهنگی در بیشتر محیط‌های یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به عنوان یک زبان خارجی هستند. بنابراین، ارائه محتوای فرهنگی و توسعه جنبه‌های بین فرهنگی موضوعات مهمی در کتاب‌های آموزش زبان انگلیسی، به خصوص در آموزش زبان خارجی هستند. پژوهش حاضر، نمود فرهنگ را در کتاب‌های ویژن بررسی می‌نماید که به تازگی منتشر شده و در دبیرستان‌های ایران تدریس می‌گردد. همچنین، این مساله که چگونه محتوای چندنمایی این کتاب‌های بومی بافت لازم را برای توسعه جنبه‌های بین فرهنگی فراهم کند، بررسی می‌شود. از طبقه بندی انطباق یافته کورتازی و جین (1999) در رابطه با انواع فرهنگ‌ها (مبدا، هدف، بین المللی، و مشترک جهانی) برای تحلیل محتوا استفاده شد تا مشخص شود کدام فرهنگ در این کتاب‌ها انعکاس یافته است. همچنین، از مدل تحلیلی نشانه‌شناسی کیس و وینگر (2013) برای بررسی رابطه بین عکس-متن استفاده شد تا بررسی شود که چگونه محتوای چندنمایی به محتوای فرهنگی این کتاب‌ها کمک کند. تحلیل محتوای این کتاب‌ها نشان داد که فرهنگ مبدا و فرهنگ مشترک جهانی بیشترین نمود را داشته اند و به فرهنگ‌های هدف و بین المللی توجه کمتری شده است. همچنین، منابع چندنمایی می‌تواند زمینه لازم را برای تعمق فرهنگی و انتقادی فراهم کند، اگرچه فقط به فرهنگ مبدا و مشترک جهانی در این کتاب‌ها محدود شدند. نتایج تحقیق حاکی از آن است که تهیه کنندگان مواد درسی آموزش زبان انگلیسی در ایران بایست مواد درسی بیشتر و مناسب و تصاویر جذاب فرهنگی را که در ارتباط با فرهنگ‌های گوناگون می‌باشد در کتاب‌های آموزشی زبان بومی استفاده نمایند، تا تعمق فرهنگی و در نتیجه توانش بین فرهنگی زبان آموزان انگلیسی در ایران را ارتقا بخشند.

کلمات کلیدی: فرهنگ، کتاب‌های آموزش زبان انگلیسی، توانش بین فرهنگی، کتاب‌های ویژن، نشانه‌شناسی

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: جمعه، ۶ فروردین ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27190.1287

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۲ شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸۲

لایه‌های زیرین نوبت گیری و قطع صحبت در مکالمات بین نسلی:

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چکیده

بررسی مکالمات از دیرباز مورد توجه محققین بوده است. با اینحال، مکالمات بین نسلی که توسط خانمها از گروه‌های سنی مختلف شکل گرفته تا به حال از منظر نوبت گیری و قطع مکالمات بررسی نشده است. به همین منظور، مکالمات فارسی روزمره خانمها در این مقاله مورد تحلیل قرار گرفت. برای بررسی نوبتها از مدل ساکس و برای قطع مکالمات از مدل وست و زیمرمن استفاده شد. مدل ساکس از دو نوع متد برای گرفتن و یا دادن نوبت استفاده می‌کند. مدل وست و زیمرمن قطع مکالمه در حداقل دو بخش پایانی جمله را قطع مکالمه واقعی می‌داند. آنالیز مکالمات نشان داد که خانمها ۱۳۰۲ بار از تکنیک نوبت‌گیری و ۳۰۲ بار از قطع مکالمات استفاده کردند. در نتیجه مشخص شد خانمهای بزرگسال بیشترین درصد تکنیک‌های نوبت‌گیری را استفاده کردند و بیشترین قطع مکالمات را شکل دادند. تفاوت‌های بین گروهی از عوامل اجتماعی روانشناسی فرهنگی و قدرت نشأت گرفته بوده است.

واژگان کلیدی: مکالمه روزمره، تحلیل مکالمه، مکالمه بین نسلی، قطع مکالمه، نوبت‌گیری در مکالمات

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: یکشنبه، ۲ خرداد ۱۳۹۹

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/jalda.2021.27273.1320

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳ شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸۳

ترجمه شعر از منظر هرمنوتیک: مطالعه موردی مولانا

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چکیده

آثار شعری به طور معمول با عناصری خاص (مانند نمادها، تصاویر، مفاهیم) مشخص می‌شوند که به تفسیر و موضوعات چنین آثاری کمک می‌کند. یکی از امور چالش برانگیز در ترجمه شعر این است که چنین عناصری را در زبان و فرهنگ دیگر بازنمایی کند. آثار شاعرانه‌ای که اغلب ترجمه می‌شوند، مبنای محکمی را برای تجزیه و تحلیل نحوه‌ی نمایش یک خوانش متعارف در ترجمه فراهم می‌کنند. این تحقیق ترجمه‌های انگلیسی مقدمه‌ی مولانا در مثنوی را بررسی می‌کند تا دریابد که چگونه "عرفانی" بودن اثر در ترجمه‌های انگلیسی نشان داده شده است. این مطالعه از مدل هرمنوتیکی ترجمه شعر ارایه شده توسط خرمندار و کریم‌نیا استفاده می‌کند که با دو زیر مولفه یعنی میزان پیچیدگی فرهنگی-زبانی و میزان پیچیدگی هرمنوتیکی به کار برده می‌شود. برای شناسایی عناصر، کلمات کلیدی متن مبدا مورد بررسی قرار می‌گیرد و سعی می‌شود چگونگی تبدیل آنها به انگلیسی در پرتو اجزای فرعی تحلیلی مدل مشخص شود. پس از تجزیه و تحلیل، انتخاب‌ها مقایسه می‌گردند و پیشنهاد می‌شود که کدام یک می‌تواند به صورت موضوعی خوانش عرفانی متن اصلی را ارایه کند.

واژگان کلیدی: هرمنوتیک، نی نامه، ترجمه ادبی، شعر، کل گرای

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: سه شنبه، ۷ اردیبهشت ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27231.1306

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳ شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸۳

چالش جنسیت: جنسیت و جنسیت خنثی در آینه تاریخ ذهن

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چکیده

در این مقاله به مقوله‌ی جنسیت، تعریف متفاوت و متناقض آن‌ها در طول تاریخ، عملکرد مضاعف و روابط آنها به عنوان وسیله‌ای جهت تحلیل موضوعات عمقی‌تر پرداخته شده است. در این مقاله به مباحث بین منتقدان در حیطه‌ی زبان و تعاریف و تفاوت‌های پایه‌های هویت فردی از طریق بررسی تئوری‌های منتقدان و آزمایشات علمی در این حیطه و نگاه به جنسیت‌های غیر معمول؛ بخصوص جنسیت خنثی پرداخته شده است. تمامی این نظریه‌ها در طول تاریخ با ادبیات ادغام و به شکل آثار ادبی درآمده اند، که در گذر زمان شفاف تر و روانشناسانه تر شده و در سال‌های اخیر به سرعت از طریق روش‌هایی در اختیار افراد قرار می‌گیرند. در این مقاله از تئوری‌های میشل فوکو و جودیت باتلر در خصوص قدرت و پرفورمیتیویته جنسیت برای جامع سازی این مطالعه و با هدف دریافت ارتباط بین نبود جنسیت، تبعیض و قدرت بود سنجیده شده است که به اولیت قدرت در تمامی جوامع و درک شخصی خوانندگان ختم می‌شود. بررسی احتمال وقوع جهان آینده آل عاری از مرد و زن در مقایسه با آثار ادبی، به درک بهتر اقدامات عملی در راستای حذف درونی جنسیت که از طریق حذف استعاری آن در ذهن خوانندگان و آیندگان میسر میگردد.

واژگان کلیدی: تبعیض، فمینیسم، جنسیت خنثی، جودیت باتلر، میشل فوکو

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: چهارشنبه، ۱۲ آذر ۱۳۹۹

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/jalda.2021.27039.1236

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳-شاپای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸

صدای انسان به صدای غیر انسان تبدیل می‌شود: پروژه‌ی سبز مری اولیور

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چکیده

همواره مناظرات جدلی در خصوص شکاف‌های موجود بین انسان و طبیعت وجود داشته است که اکثر آنها در عصر کنونی چند پارگی و عدم قطعیت، مورد توجه قرار گرفته است. در حالیکه ما انسان‌های عصر فرامدرن به دسترسی به ابزار بهتر زندگی بواسطه‌ی پیشرفت تکنولوژی مفتخریم، اما بعضی مواقع نتوانسته ایم زندگی متوازی را در این سیاره‌ی وسیع داشته باشیم. با این وجود حمایت نظریه‌ی فرامدرن از مرکز زدایی از یک سو در مطالعات ادبی و از سوی دیگر در مطالعات مرتبط با طبیعت به یاریمان شتافته است. به همین منظور، تحقیق کنونی بر آنست که به واکاوی اشعار برگزیده از مجموعه‌ی «خرس ترورو و دیگر اشعار ماجراجویی» مری اولیور به منظور نشان دادن نقش مهم زبان شاعرانه در ایجاد گونه‌ای همزیستی زیست محیطی که حاصل شکل‌گیری یک پیوند درونی بین انسان سخنران و طبیعت غیر انسانی فاقد قدرت سخن می‌باشد، بپردازد.

کلمات کلیدی: شعر زیست محیطی، مکالمه‌ی سبز، توازن، مری اولیور، غیر انسان، زبان شاعرانه

اطلاعات مقاله

مقاله پژوهشی

تاریخ دریافت: یکشنبه، ۲۶ بهمن ۱۳۹۹

تاریخ تصویب: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ انتشار: دوشنبه، ۲۴ آبان سال ۱۴۰۰

تاریخ آنلاین: شنبه، ۱ آبان ۱۴۰۰

شناسه دیجیتال مقاله: 10.22049/JALDA.2021.27133.1266

شابای الکترونیکی: ۲۴۶۰-۲۳۸۳ شابای چاپی: ۵۹۱۸-۲۳۸۳



دانشگاه شهید مدنی آذربایجان

دو فصلنامه مجله زبان‌شناسی کاربردی ادبیات کاربردی: پویش‌ها و پیشرفت‌ها

صاحب امتیاز:

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مدیر مسئول:

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تلفاکس:

۰۴۱-۳۴۳۲۷۵۵۹

کدبستی:

۵۳۷۵۱۷۱۳۷۹

آدرس سایت نشریه:

URL: <http://jalda.azaruniv.ac.ir>

شماره انتشار:

سال هشتم، شماره دوم.

تاریخ انتشار: پنجشنبه، ۲۵

دی ۱۳۹۹

بها: ۵۰۰۰۰ ریال

شمارگان: ۱۰۰ جلد

این دو فصلنامه با مجوز شماره ثبت ۹۱/۳۴۷۱۵ وزارت فرهنگ و ارشاد اسلامی چاپ و منتشر می‌شود.

شاپای الکترونیکی: ۲۳۸۳-۲۴۶۰

شاپای چاپی: ۲۳۸۳-۵۹۱۸



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دکتر فرهمن فرخی	استاد آموزش زبان انگلیسی	دانشگاه تبریز، ایران
دکتر لویس وان فلوتو	استاد مطالعات ترجمه	دانشگاه اتاوا، کانادا
دکتر پروین قاسمی	استاد بازنشسته ادبیات انگلیسی	گروه زبان‌های خارجی و زبان‌شناسی، دانشگاه شیراز، ایران
دکتر کاظم لطفی‌پور ساعدی	استاد بازنشسته زبان‌شناسی کاربردی	مرکز منابع و ارزیابی زبان اتاوا، کانادا
دکتر جایا ماکاندن	استاد انگلیسی بعنوان زبان خارجی	گروه زبان و آموزش علوم انسانی، دانشکده مطالعات آموزشی، دانشگاه پوترا ملایز
دکتر بیوک بهنام	دانشیار بازنشسته آموزش زبان انگلیسی	دانشگاه شهید مدنی آذربایجان، ایران
دکتر بهرام بهین	دانشیار آموزش زبان انگلیسی	دانشگاه شهید مدنی آذربایجان، ایران
دکتر رضا عبدی	دانشیار آموزش زبان انگلیسی	دانشگاه محقق اردبیلی، ایران
دکتر جواد غلامی	دانشیار آموزش زبان انگلیسی	دانشگاه ارومیه، ایران
دکتر سیما مدیر خامنه	دانشیار زبان‌شناسی کاربردی	دانشگاه ارومیه، ایران
دکتر احد مهروند	دانشیار ادبیات انگلیسی	دانشگاه شهید مدنی آذربایجان، ایران

ویراستار انگلیسی: دکتر ابوالفضل رضانی و دکتر رویا منصفی

مدیر تولید: آقای مهدی رضانی

صفحه‌آرا و حروف‌چین: مؤسسه آیشن کامپیوتر