Journal of
Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature:
Dynamics and Advances

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Journal Information
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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 word 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:

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

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 word, 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, generally classified under *Pure Literature*, do not comply with the policies of *JALDA*:

1. The starting point of the research is based on a piece of literary work rather than a problem in the outside world.
2. The rationale and justification of the study is theory-driven rather than effect-driven.
3. The study commits itself exclusively to the tradition of literary studies without any attempt to invoke insights from other disciplines.
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.
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 be included in *Applied Literature*. The list is not exhaustive; *JALDA* encourages initiatives and innovations in this regard:

- Therapeutic value of literature
- Trauma studies in literature
- Literature and ethical development
- Literature and science
- Literature and environment
- Literature for professional training
- Literary literacy education
- 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 encourages 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.

- The role of literature in language teaching
- The role of Literature in language teacher education
- The role of Literature in language assessment
- The role of Literature in Language teaching curriculum
- 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 7th style with some adaptations specific to *JALDA*. Contributing authors are advised to download and read *JALDA's Concise Guide for APA's 7th Edition Manual*. Please consult the *Paper Submission Template to JALDA* for submission instructions, guidelines, and contact information of the journal's editors.

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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

As a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), JALDA is committed to maintaining the highest standards of publication ethics and supporting ethical research practices.

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 the 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.

J*ALDA's* Commitment Form

JALDA's Commitment Form for Publication Ethics Observance, Assignment of the Financial Rights, Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest and Introduction of Authors can be downloaded in *MS Word Format* or *PDF Format* on *JALDA*'s website. The form includes the following 4 sections:

1. Commitment to scholarly publication ethics and introduction of the corresponding author
2. Assignment of the financial rights to publish an article
3. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
4. Introducing the authors, their order of appearance, and their contribution

Please read the terms of this agreement, use the Word file or PDF file of the Commitment Form, fill in and sign it, and send the document as one of the required files upon submission.

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 8,000 words (including the abstract and references). *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 five files including the Main File of the article (anonymous), Title Page (containing authors' names, affilliations, email and ORCID), Authorship Form (containing all authors' short biographies and Photo), Authorship and Conflict of Interest Form and Supplementary Persian Abstract.

JALDA (previously *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.

JALDA

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<u>EDITORIAL</u>

Bahram Behin

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Dear *JALDA* reader

I came across this hypothetical exchange on the Net the other day: "Q: Why is linguistics important? / A: Linguistics helps us understand our world." With my personal interest in the significance of everyday life and the real world in our education, as a response to the exchange, I immediately started contemplating the meaning of the world, and especially of 'our world' in the exchange. "Do we have a common world to call it 'our world'"? "How big is this world?" "What aspects of it are we supposed to understand by means of linguistics?" "What is meant by 'understanding the world'?" My assumption is that those behind the hypothetical exchange should be ready to answer such questions, regardless of whether the answers are agreeable or not. But what matters in this regard is that such general statements as "Linguistics helps us understand our world" should be rendered in the direction of the concretization of findings so that all scientific endeavours may turn out to be fruitful in the context of our everyday lives in the real world.

Regardless of its huge contribution to 'knowledge' in its aftermath, linguistics in its Saussurean sense as the scientific study of language has been subject to criticism as well by, say, sociolinguists, applied linguists, language philosophers, and by almost every scholar that has had language to be dealt with as an element in their fields. One major problem with Saussurean linguistics, according to some of its critics, has been its de-contextualization of language by introducing the dichotomy of langue and parole. There is rather a consensus now that the dichotomy has been modelled upon the Cartesian distinction between mind and body, a way of approaching the notion of 'truth' that turns out to be the foundation of the earlier phases of the immense modern science resulting from the significance attributed to man's mental ability for conceptualization, mathematical thinking and analysis. The unreliable sources of knowledge including senses, feelings and emotions are dispensed with. One may call this 'Humanism on a logical base': the centrality of man armed with his analytic mind in the discovery of a mechanical universe. And the insignificance attributed to the body and sensual perceptions leads to an activity some would like to call 'armchair research,' looking for 'truth' while sitting in an

armchair, thinking, without moving a limb to come into contact with the material world, a shortcoming being compensated later by means of empiricism in science. One wonders how linguistics with such an attitude should help us 'understand our world.'

A critique of the Saussurean methodology lays on it the blame that it is a realization of abstractionism in the sense that linguistics, the scientific study of language, turns into an activity detached from the real world, especially by distinguishing la langue (underlying system of language) from la parole (actual use of language) and also tackling la langue as a mental logical construct. From such a perspective, then, the statement "Linguistics helps us understand our world" should give way to "Linguistics helps us impose a constructed 'reality' upon our world!"

The concept of 'reality' has undergone radical challenges throughout the twentieth century scholarship, and, strangely enough, the very Saussurean type theories of language and reality have had a leading role among the challenges. More elaboration on the discussion in this editorial can be undertaken through an understanding of the double function of Saussurean structuralist linguistics itself. Whereas Saussurean linguistics is regarded as detached from the real world, it, on the other hand, makes claims, theoretically speaking, to have shed light on the nature of 'reality.' From a rather revolutionary perspective, it regards the relationship between language and reality as an arbitrary one, which eventually leads to the notion that 'reality' for the speakers of a language is rather a linguistic construct. Whorf, another struclturalist linguist on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, puts the concept into very clear statements:

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds — and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way — an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees (Carroll, 1956, pp.212-14).

From a rather objective perspective, Saussurean linguistics, for its latter achievement, seems to be shedding light upon a spot in the darkness of the 'world' against its former loss, the forgetfulness of the 'real world' of parole. Rather philosophically speaking, Saussurean linguistics, therefore, is both a 'closure' and an 'openness.' It is a 'closure' because it blinds the view towards the real world by excluding la parole, and it is an 'openness' because it provides an understanding of 'reality,' which is, of course, of mental nature. On the basis of this, in this equation, the priority of la langue over la parole, therefore, makes the attempt to 'understand the world' rather as an intellectual phenomenon with the least contact with the 'real

world.' Linguistics in this sense, then, is, to borrow Stanley Fish's term, an 'interpretive community' whose members provide an interpretation of an object according to and within the framework of their assumptions, presuppositions and postulations. More recent philosophers of science find the generalization of such interpretations problematic. Rereadings of Martin Heidegger's notion of 'anti-Humanism' by postmodernists, for instance, make the claim that man is not the central agent in the world to be busy imposing meaning upon it; Dasein (being there, Heidegger's term for man) is the shepherd of the world and 'listening' to the world is of utmost significance for 'being there!' It seems that the Saussurean linguist does not listen to the world; s/he listens to either her/his own logical inner voice or the voices coming from the members of the discipline that are accepted to it for their academic achievements. For such linguists, theoretically speaking, the world out there, however, is left unattended and unheard! What may result from such a limited view of the study of language is, metaphorically speaking, the illumination of a spot while leaving the rest of the world in darkness. This is the problem whose solution has led to the emergence of such concepts as 'interdisciplinary studies' in academic contexts. Thus, there have been attempts in scientific circles to go beyond the 'disciplinary' limitations which are regarded as quite necessary in modern scientific philosophies. In the hands of 'circles,' elite groups, and 'scientific communities,' 'our world' may turn into a limited 'object / phenomenon.' And the issue is exactly this: What linguistics, any other discipline or any group might say about 'reality,' or whatever, should be seen as a limited notion, generalization of which is not recommended at all; any claim for 'truth' is a spotlight onto darkness illuminating only a spot while introducing the presence of the surrounding darkness, too. The darkness is not nil; it is possibility and limitless. Limitation lies rather with the spotlight. The questions "What is linguistics?", "What is meant by 'our world'?", "What is 'knowledge'?" should make more sense now because, from such a perspective, a concept such as 'our world' is both an 'openness' and a 'closure.'

I had the chance recently to teach Longman Academic Writing Series 1 to a group of undergraduate students majoring in TEFL. I found the book different and very practical for the reason that it could be regarded as in line with the general tendency to understanding the 'real world.' Books on writing in the past, when I was a student, were mostly collections of paragraph types with grammatical and stylistic explanations. The contents of the model paragraphs were generally topics not easily understandable to language learners with non-western cultural backgrounds. The model paragraphs, therefore, did not sound interesting enough to the learners and they did not have on them the impact they should. For instance, for an anecdote, I remember the paragraph describing a horrifying thing happening on the screen in a psychological movie by Roman Polansky, which is then revealed to be the burning of the film on the projector! That was a too abstract an example to be understood by Iranian undergraduate students of TEFL. The Longman book on paragraph comprises chapters, most of which revolve around the learner/writer of paragraphs. Also, and more importantly, an activity has been added to the imitation of model paragraphs: Learners are encouraged to have their journals, make entries in them and write as much and as often as they can. They should not worry about writing perfect

sentences. The entries are not formal compositions. A journal entry is like a message to a friend (p. 43). It can be argued that in this Longman book there is ma movement towards seeing the world from the learner's perspective, and what is more concrete 'reality' than the learner's? According to (Fuery and Mansfield, 1997), 'reality' today is what is 'realistic' to the observer. Whatever lies beyond the limits of the 'realistic' is not 'real' to the observer and hence does not exist in his/her world. Longman Academic Writing Series 1 indicates that good things are happening in the field of English language teaching and related areas. Why should we follow abstract teaching materials and clichés while there are infinite number of new things around us to experience!

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JALDA's Interview with Professor Behrooz Azabdaftari

Interview by Davoud Amini

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Behrooz Azabdaftari

Behrooz Azabdaftari is Professor Emeritus of Applied Linguistics at University of Tabriz. Born in 1938 in Tabriz, Iran, he received his BA in Language Education from Tehran Higher Education Institute in 1963 and his MA in English from University of Beirut in 1970. He was granted a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics by the University of Illinois, USA in 1980. During nearly 50 years of academic work, professor Azabdaftari has taught graduate courses at University of Tabriz, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Islamic Azad University. With an interdisciplinary approach to language studies, Dr. Azabdaftari has regularly published on the cross lines of Applied Linguistics, Translation and Literature. By translating a few key works on Vygotsky's thought, he has had a significant role in introducing Sociocultural Theory to Iranian community of language teaching researchers. He has also translated selected poetry from well-known Persian contemporary poets, including an excellent translation of Shahraiar's masterpiece of "Hayder Babaya Selam". He has joined an interview with Davoud Amini.

DA: ---- Dear professor Azabdaftari, I appreciate your kindness in accepting JALDA's invitation to take part in this interview.

BA: ---- The pleasure is mine. I hope the opportunity afforded to me will help me to elaborate my position on EFL/ESL teaching and learning, on contribution of the target literature to developing the student-learner's foreign language efficiency and also on translation studies from one language to another language.

DA: ---- Dear professor, you have lived the history of English Language Teaching here in Iran with more than five decades of involvement in research and education in this area. English Education has become an independent field of study now with hundreds of Ph.D. graduates every year from outstanding Iranian universities. How do you describe English Language Teaching as an academic discipline?

BA: ---- To answer your question, I may point out that the great task of a language teacher, no matter a foreign or the mother tongue, is to enjoy his profession of teaching the language considered in the best possible way. An honest teacher, I believe, is the one who does not spare giving his knowledge to the learner in the formal classroom situation. Language teaching, I tend to believe, is not a job; rather it is a profession which implies the spiritual commitment in the process of conducting his humanistic mission.

DA: ---- Your academic output, based on the whole array of your publications in applied linguistics, literature and translation witness to a cross-disciplinary perspective. As a language expert who has adopted an interdisciplinary approach to language studies, and with regard to the current tendency to specialize language-related studies, what is the central element in applied language studies that can contribute to the dynamics between linguistic, translation and literary studies?

BA: ---- The key word in these three domains – linguistics, literature, and translation – is language. When you have mastered the subtleties involved in phonology, clauses, sentences, speech functions, and lay-outs of discourse, you can put the gained knowledge to proper uses in teaching language, literature and translation studies, especially if your gained knowledge is subconscious, i.e., if you have acquired the target language system. It is worth noting that the mastery of language system will enhance the mental capability to cope with especial issues facing us in linguistic, literary and translation studies.

DA: ---- Our journal has partly been inspired by your publications on the role of literature in language teaching. How can literature be integrated into language teaching programs, in your opinion?

BA: ---- To me the first function of language is its use in speech communities in order to meet our communicative purposes. The second function of language is its use in literature and poetics. It should be noted that the language teacher's work is to teach, and the learner's work is to learn. The teacher cannot learn the target language for the learner. Rather, the teacher can help he student-learner develop his target language through intermixing his intensive teaching with the student's extensive reading of literary texts. Care should be taken that the texts selected should be at the proper level of the student's language proficiency. A great more benefit will ensue if the student, while engaged in reading literary texts, underlines the beautiful

expressions used by the original author and then copy them down in his notebook, and keep going back to them in order to refresh his memory, and finally use his choice sentences to express his own ideas, moods, and feeling.

Indeed, this method has been the spring-board of my own approach to penmanship in English language learning in the past decades.

DA: ---- JALDA aims to contribute to the development of Applied Literary Studies. How do you define Applied Literature?

BA: ---- To me, literature is a vicarious experience. When the student-learner is encouraged to read the relevant English short stories, novels, plays, etc. care should be taken the selected text be in concordance with his linguistic level of language development and in commensurate with his literary gusto. The gist of the argument is that the teacher's intensive language teaching in the classroom situation should be followed by the student's extensive reading outside the classroom.

DA: ---- What image do you have in your mind about the practice of English language teaching in Iran in 20 years from now? What will language classes look like?

BA: ---- The answer to this question is short and simple. The practice of a foreign (English) language teaching in Iranian educational system in the future depends on the educational policy adopted by the government in power. And this is anybody's guess.

DA: ---- Thank you, dear professor for taking part in this interview and sharing your invaluable insights with JALDA readers.

Investigating the Role of Iranian EFL Learners' L2 Proficiency in Their Attitudes Toward the Use of L1 in Institutional Contexts: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract

Given the long-lasting debates over L1 use in language teaching and learning, this study adopted a mixed methods design to investigate the role of Iranian EFL learners' L2 proficiency in their attitudes toward using L1. A questionnaire originally developed by Scheffler et al. (2017) was modified and distributed among 180 elementary, intermediate, and advanced learners in four private language institutes in Karaj, Iran. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 18 participants to support and supplement the findings of the quantitative phase. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and the interviews were transcribed to find common themes. Quantitative data showed that the elementary learners held positive attitudes toward L1 use, while the intermediate and advanced learners held negative attitudes. It was also revealed that the elementary learners held positive attitudes toward all functions of L1 use. The intermediate learners held positive attitudes toward using L1 only for vocabulary and grammar points, while advanced learners held negative attitudes toward all dimensions of L1 use. The findings are likely to help EFL teachers to hear learners' voices and decide when and at which level it is appropriate to use or limit L1.

Keywords: EFL learners, proficiency, attitude, first language

Introduction

The role of L1 in language teaching has been a source of controversy for over a century (G. Cook, 2010, Mohammadi Darabad et al., 2021; Rezaee & Fathi, 2016). In the late 19th century with the emergence of the Direct Method and the growing dissatisfaction with the Grammar Translation Method, the use of translation was strongly frowned upon and as a result, students' L1 was rarely used as the medium of instruction (Cummins, 2007).

Throughout much of the 20th century, the learners' L1 almost had no place in the process of second language (L2) teaching and learning (Cook, 2001), with L1 being totally prohibited or minimized as much as possible in the language teaching orthodoxy (for a review, see Yi, 2016). Total or partial exclusion of L1 use was justified on the grounds that it interfered with L2 learning (Brooks-Lewis, 2009), precluded learners from being maximally exposed to target language input (Ellis 1984; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Turnbull, 2001), and deprived them of opportunities to practice it in real-world tasks (G. Cook, 2010). To put it in a nutshell, L1 use was regarded as an impediment to achieving L2 native-speaker competence (Cook, 1999), which was considered to be the primary goal of monolingual language instruction at the time (Cook, 2001; Hall & Cook, 2013).

However, since the late 20th century, adopting a native speaker model in language teaching has been discouraged (Kirkpatrick, 2006; McKay, 2003). There have been calls for applying L2 user models and exploiting learners' L1 in language teaching instead of approximation to monolingual native speakers (Cook, 1999). Some scholars have cast doubt on the feasibility and desirability of the monolingual approach to language teaching (Atkinson, 1993).

At the turn of the 21st century, bilingual teaching gained more support (G. Cook, 2010). Some researchers and commentators warned against the total exclusion of L1 and the detrimental effect of such a radical policy (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Macaro, 2001; Schweers, 1999; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Wigglesworth, 2002). This alternative view has gained momentum in the post-method era, with scholars calling for the "judicious" and "principled" use of learners' L1 (Butzkamm, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Littlewood & Yu, 2009; Macaro, 2001) as a linguistic resource which should not be ignored (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Moreover, the role of L1 has been referred to as a "natural reference system and a pathfinder" for language learners (Hall & Cook, 2013, p. 9). Rejecting the compartmentalization of L1 and L2 in students' minds, Widdowson (2003) and Cook (2001) have argued against monolingual language teaching. In addition, drawing on a number of studies, McMillan and Rivers (2011) state that cognitive, communicative, and social functions of L1 play an important role in L2 learning. There is also mounting evidence that L1 has pedagogical functions and is frequently used by teachers mainly to "explain vocabulary and grammar, give instructions, develop rapport and a good classroom atmosphere" (Hall & Cook, 2013, p. 22).

The emergence of English as an international language with its principles revolving around multilingualism (Glasgow, 2018) has also contributed significantly

to making the atmosphere more welcoming for L1 use. In this regard, Rivers (2010) points out that "L1 use can enhance and support L2 learning as well as contributing to the development of multilingual and multicultural language learner identities" (p. 104).

Similarly, Xu (2017) discussing the paradigm shift in English language teaching around the world, points to the "shift in people's perception of the role of their first language and culture …, from a 'problem' resulting from 'interference' to a resource that can be naturally 'transferred' into their English language learning and use" (p. 703). Xu goes on to argue that learners' L1 is no longer a baggage of burden and negativity but a "badge of linguistic and cultural heritage and identity" (pp. 703-704). Similarly, McKay (2018), highlighting the importance of L1 in developing language proficiency, calls for a reexamination of the L2-only policy in language classrooms. That said, it seems axiomatic that the advocacy of L1 use has picked up momentum, and "the pendulum has swung firmly in its favor" (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 233).

However, in spite of the preponderance of evidence substantiating the judicious use of L1 and the lack of theoretical underpinning and empirical evidence for its prohibition (Atkinson, 1993; Auerbach, 1993; Brooks-Lewis, 2009), the use of English as the only medium of instruction in L2 classes continues to enjoy a hegemonic status in many contexts (MacMillan & Rivers, 2011) and is stipulated in several governmental policies (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008, cited in Glasgow, 2018). There are still reports of strict L1 prohibition, and L1 use is regarded as a negative classroom behavior to be reprimanded or penalized (Jenkins, 2010).

Along the same vein, some studies in the Iranian context have shown that a majority of teachers hold negative views toward L1 use (Miri et al., 2016; Yaqubi & Pouromid, 2013), and are reluctant to use it in their classes (Tajgozari, 2017). Some teachers even believe that it should not be used at all (Tajgozari, 2017).

To date, most of the studies regarding L1 use have focused on teachers' discourse (e.g., Macaro, 2001; Polio & Duff, 1994) and few studies have attempted to make the students' voices heard (Butzkamm, 2003; Galali & Cinkara, 2017). Despite the significance of examining learners' perceptions regarding L1 use, it seems to be an under-investigated research area (Hall & Cook, 2012; Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Besides, research on learners' perceptions toward L1 use (e.g., Burden, 2000; Hashemi & Khalili Sabet, 2013; Nazary, 2008) has mainly been conducted in university contexts and learners' attitudes have been elicited mostly through questionnaires as the sole instrument of data collection, ignoring the qualitative aspect of the issue (Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Shariati, 2019).

Moreover, most studies have reported inconclusive findings. While some studies reported learners' positive attitudes (Debreli & Oyman, 2015; Hashemi & Khalili Sabet, 2013; Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008), the results of some other studies were indicative of learners' negative stance (Burden, 2000; Nazary, 2008), which highlights the need for further investigation. Since data have been mainly gathered through one method of data collection and mostly in university contexts,

there seems to be a need for studies which use follow-up interviews (Wesely, 2012) in institutional contexts after administering questionnaires to corroborate or complement the findings.

Literature Review

Using L1 in L2 classroom has long been a bone of contention. In reference to the recent history of research and theories in L2 acquisition, Yi (2016) posits that L1 in L2 learning has a two-sided role: it can both debilitate and facilitate language learning.

L1 "the Crutch"

The origins of criticisms levelled against L1 date back to the late 19th century when Grammar Translation Method was losing its favor (Sampson, 2013) due to overemphasis on linking L2 words to L1 equivalents misleading learners into thinking that this is always the case (Scheffler, 2012). Toward the end of the century, following the Reform Movement and the popularity of the Direct Method, the pendulum swung in favor of monolingual approaches which would push learners to "follow the path of the native infant" (G. Cook, 2010, p.18). Thus, the learners' L1 was no longer the medium of instruction and the focus shifted from reading literary texts and translating disconnected sentences to spoken language, fluency, and connected texts (G. Cook, 2010; Hall & Cook, 2013; Yi, 2016).

Another line of arguments against the role of L1 in L2 learning is traceable to the "debates that took place in the 1960s and 1970s concerning the role of L1 transfer centered on competing claims of behaviorist and Mentalist theories of acquisition" (Ellis, 2008, p. 349). Ellis traces back the early criticism levelled at L1 to the behaviorist notion of negative transfer which considered L1 as interfering with L2 acquisition. Krashen and Terrell (1983) – proponents of the natural approach to language teaching – further marginalized L1 use, emphasizing creating an input-rich environment for learners in which the target language is used exclusively and learners are involved in meaning-focused activities.

The L2-Only Policy, Only a Policy

Questioning the L2-only policy dominating L2 classrooms in the 20th century, scholars stated that this policy is more based on political and socio-economic grounds rather than on theoretical and empirical underpinnings. They argued that since methods were developed in center-based communities (e.g., UK, US) and exported to periphery communities by native speaker teachers who could not speak the learners' mother tongue, this hegemony was created as a tool to exert power and keep their domination over other languages and cultures (Auerbach, 1993; Phillipson, 1992). This commentary has been reiterated by several other scholars (e.g., Akbari, 2008; Canagarajah, 1999)

The Role of L1 Revisited

In the field of second language acquisition, the atmosphere for L1 use seems more welcoming than before. This shift in paradigm is reflected in Ellis's (2008)

comments in which he bemoans minimalist researchers neglecting the positive contribution of L1 by an overt emphasis on negative transfer. After years of animosity and neglect, scholars in language pedagogy have started beating the drum of L1 use in L2 classrooms (Atkinson, 1987; Butzkamm, 2003; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Cook, 2001, 2016).

In the last three decades or so, the role of L1 in L2 learning and teaching has been revisited (Cummins, 2007; Ellis, 2012; Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Glasgow, 2018; Hall & Cook, 2012; Hall & Cook, 2013; Levine, 2011; Littlewood & Yu, 2009; Macaro, 1997, 2001; Nation, 2003; Rivers, 2010; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002) reflecting the general consensus on its positive role if used selectively and judiciously. Several studies have corroborated the use of L1 from pedagogical (e.g., de La Fuente & Goldenberg, 2022; Ganem-Gutierrez, 2009; He, 2012; Lee & Macaro, 2013), attitudinal (e.g., Scheffler, 2012; Scheffler et al., 2016), and affective (e.g., Bruen & Kelly, 2014) perspectives.

L1 the "Helpful Scaffold"

Empirical studies focusing on the pedagogical effects of L1 use have highlighted its positive role in vocabulary acquisition (Joyce, 2015; Lee & Macaro, 2013), consciousness-raising grammar tasks (Scott & de la Fuente, 2008), and task-based language learning (Azkaria & Garcia Mayo, 2014; de La Fuente & Goldenberg, 2022). Moreover, drawing on the English language teaching literature in different language classroom settings (e.g., submersion, segregation, mother-tongue maintenance, etc.), Ellis (2008) refers to the importance of recognizing learners' L1 which enhances their learning (p. 311). In addition, L1 has been identified as a communication strategy that learners employ to compensate for their insufficient lexical and grammatical knowledge (Cook, 2016; Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

L1 in Socio-Cultural Theory

According to Yi (2016), learning in socio-cultural theory is a "social and inter-mental activity" (p. 27). A plethora of research has investigated the role of L1 in L2 learning within this framework (e.g., Algeria de la Colina & Garcia Mayo, 2009; Storch & Aldosari, 2010), identifying L1 as a mediating tool through which learners provide each other with scaffolding during collaborative activities and process language at higher cognitive levels such as "attending, planning, and reasoning" (Swain & Lapkin 2000, p. 253). It also helps them arrive "at a shared understanding of objects, events, goals, and sub-goals of a task" (Anton & DiCamilla, 1999, p. 242) and assist each other in working out their ways through the tasks.

Meanwhile, with reference to some studies within the socio-cultural framework (e.g., Brooks & Donato, 1994; Platt & Brooks, 1994), Ellis (2003) highlights the positive role of L1 in assisting learners "to achieve control of a task, …, to set and revise goals and engage in private speech" (p. 200).

Learners' Attitudes

Another strand of research has investigated the role of L1 in L2 classrooms from learners' perspective (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Neokleous, 2017; Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008). For example, Brooks-Lewis (2009) conducted a study in a university context aiming to tap into the perception of 256 adult EFL Mexican learners regarding the inclusion of L1 in their courses. The researcher himself was the instructor of the course. Learners were urged to write diaries of their learning experience and provide the instructor with written reports regarding their perceptions. He started with Spanish–the known language for learners and gradually moved toward more target language use (English). At the end of the course, the analysis of the learners' written comments showed that the majority of the learners held that the use of L1 reduced their anxiety, increased their confidence, and helped them use their prior knowledge gained through their first language.

Likewise, Carson and Kashihara (2012) conducted a study in a Japanese university context investigating learners' attitudes toward instructors' use of L1 and the role of proficiency level in students' preference regarding the use of L1 (Japanese) in L2 (English) classroom. They used Schweers' (1999) questionnaire with some modifications and collected data from 305 participants who were studying English in their first and second years. Students' proficiency was determined using their latest TOEIC scores. The results revealed that in general L1 use had more desirability among the beginner learners. Moreover, the learners did not desire L1 support for testing and emotional support. As to the instructional functions of L1 use, the beginners felt more dependent on L1 use than the advanced learners.

Learners' perception toward L1 use has also been investigated in the Iranian context. For instance, in a university context, Nazary (2008) investigated the perception of students from different fields who had taken part in general English classes. He used a questionnaire developed by Prodromou (2002) which consisted of 16 items. 85 students from elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels were chosen randomly. He found that overall, the majority of learners with different proficiency levels did not appreciate the effectiveness of L1 use. Another finding of the study was that the learners of different proficiency levels held different attitudes.

In another study, Tajgozari (2017) examined the perceptions of 56 high school students aged between 14 and 18 along with those of 11 of their English instructors in an institutional context. The learners' perceptions were examined through a questionnaire developed by Prodromou (2002). The learners' level of proficiency was determined by using Nelson Proficiency Test before the study. They were divided into elementary, intermediate, and advanced groups. The findings showed that on average, 90% of elementary students, 73.3% of intermediate students, and 51.1% of advanced students agreed with L1 use in the class.

In another study in a university context, Hashemi and Khalili Sabet (2013) investigated the perceptions of 345 learners and 25 instructors. The learners completed a 26-item questionnaire developed by the researcher and validated by other researchers in the department. They found that the learners held positive attitudes toward the use of L1.

Reviewing the above studies, the researchers found some gaps. To begin with, the studies have been either solely qualitative or quantitative. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, so far, very few studies, if any, have used a combination of both methods for data collection. In addition, the quantitative studies which used questionnaires have reported only descriptive analysis (frequency counts or percentages). Moreover, in very few, if any, of the studies reported in the literature, inferential statistics have been used to find out if there is a significant difference in the learners' attitudes across various proficiency levels.

Another gap in the literature is that studies conducted in the Iranian context have mainly focused on a specific target group. For instance, in Tajgozari's (2017) study, all the participants were high school students and in Nazary's study, the participants were all university students. Therefore, the wider population of language learners who have a variety of purposes for attending English classes have not been represented in the samplings, making it difficult to generalize the findings.

Considering the significance of investigating learners' attitudes (Long, 1997; Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008; Wesely, 2012) and in order to predict and avoid "expectational conflicts" (Kern, 1995, p. 71), this study aims to fill the gap in previous studies by tapping into learners' perceptions using questionnaires and interviews. The goal is to investigate the role of Iranian EFL learners' L2 proficiency level in their attitudes toward using L1 in institutional contexts and find out if there is a statistically significant difference in their attitudes across levels. The research questions guiding the present study are as follows:

1) What are Iranian EFL learners' attitudes across different proficiency levels toward L1 use?

2) Toward which function(s) of L1 use, do Iranian EFL learners in each proficiency level hold the most positive attitudes?

3) What is the role of Iranian EFL learners' L2 proficiency level in their attitudes toward L1 use?

4) Is there a statistically significant difference in Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward functions of L1 use across L2 proficiency levels?

Method

For the sake of triangulation and complementarity, this study employed a parallel mixed methods design, which is using quantitative and qualitative strands of research concurrently or with minimal time lapse (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

Participants

The participants were 180 EFL Iranian learners above the age of 14 studying general English in language institutes in Karaj, Iran (see Appendix A for the participants' demographic information). The participants, whose mother tongue was Persian, were chosen randomly from 4 language institutes two of which were among the most famous institutes, while the other two enjoyed less popularity. Among the participants who were willing to be interviewed, 18 volunteers, the demographic

information of whom can be found in Appendix B, were randomly selected by the institute authorities. In order to help maintain anonymity, pseudonyms are used instead of interviewees' real names.

Instruments

Questionnaire

The questionnaire, originally developed by Scheffler et al. (2016), was adopted with some modifications. The reliability index of the questionnaire based on the results of a pilot study (to be further elaborated on in the procedure section) turned out to be 0.90. The reason for its adoption was that in this questionnaire, the respondents are required to express the degree of agreement with the given statements on a 5-Point Likert scale which "provides finer scale for statistical analysis purpose" (Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009, p. 50) and increases the internal-consistency reliability (Masters, 1974).

Since the aim of the study was to investigate the role of learners' L2 proficiency level in their attitudes, other sections of the questionnaire which required them to self-report their activities at home and their teachers' practice regarding L1 use in the class were omitted. Only the part containing 36 statements with 5-point Likert scale response options remained. Therefore, the final modified version was a closed 36-item questionnaire. In order to obtain the learners' demographic information, a box with some choices was added to the beginning of the questionnaire, which required the learners to self-report their level of L2 proficiency along with their gender, age range, and years of learning English. A self-reported level of L2 proficiency was adopted because the institutes' authorities would reject administering any exam which would take the learners' class time. The questions aimed to investigate the learners' attitudes toward the use of L1 in learning English in six categories, including anxiety, rapport, grammar, vocabulary, class management, and assessment. Each category was targeted by six statements, three of which were positively keyed, while the other three were negatively keyed.

Interview

Another instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview. This type of interview was chosen because according to Mackey and Gass (2016), it gives the researcher "freedom to digress and probe for more information" (p. 225). The interview questions (see Appendix C) were generated by studying the literature and considering the aim of the study. Pilot interviews were conducted with three learners with different L2 proficiency levels. Based on the pilot interviews, some adjustments were made to the wording of two questions.

Procedure

The modified questionnaire was translated into Persian (learners' L1) by the second researcher, assuming that the English version might not be understandable

for learners of all proficiency levels and hence might lead to some confusion. To check the validity of the questionnaire, the translated version was given to an M.A. graduate of English language teaching to translate it back into English to make sure there is no ambiguity. Then, the Persian version was given to a Ph.D. candidate of Persian literature to be checked for punctuation and possible grammatical errors to avoid learners' misunderstanding or confusion. To check the reliability of the questionnaire, the final translated version was distributed among 60 Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels, studying in a language institute where the second researcher used to work. Upon receiving 46 completed questionnaires, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach Alpha. The obtained value was 0.90, which indicates the questionnaire enjoyed a high index of reliability. The learners were also provided with some space at the end of the questionnaire to comment on any ambiguity they might have come across while completing the questionnaire. However, there was no report of ambiguity in any of the items.

In the next step, the second researcher approached four institutes which expressed their consent for distributing the questionnaires. Out of 180 questionnaires, 45 were given to each institute to be distributed among their learners. The authorities were advised to distribute it proportionately among elementary, intermediate, and advanced level learners. The learners were required to choose their current level of L2 proficiency based on their own perception. When distributing the questionnaires, the institute authorities considered the learners' proficiency based on the placement tests they had previously administered. Out of the 180 distributed questionnaires, 165 were returned with a response rate of 91.6%.

To delve further into the learners' perceptions and investigate how their L2 proficiency levels affect their attitudes, the second researcher arranged for interviews with 18 volunteers from three different levels. The interviews were arranged at times convenient to learners. All the interviews took place in one empty class in the institutes where the learners had classes. Care was taken to choose a class which was far from distracting noise. All the interviews were held in the learners' L1 (Persian) and took about 15 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed by the second researcher. In order to observe ethical considerations, the second researcher obtained each interviewee's consent before audio recording the interview.

Data Analysis

Out of 165 received questionnaires, three of them which had one or more missing responses were excluded from the study. The 162 remaining questionnaires were entered into SPSS for further statistical analysis. 53 elementary, 61 intermediate, and 48 advanced learners had filled out the questionnaire completely. However, to make the sampling in three different groups of proficiency levels equal, 5 questionnaires from the elementary level and 13 questionnaires from the intermediate level were randomly removed, with 48 filled-out questionnaires remaining in each group. Thus, the final number of questionnaires to be analyzed was 144. In order to analyze the data, each response option was scored from 1 to 5,

with 1 showing total disagreement and 5 indicating total agreement. It is to be noted that half of the statements for each category were negatively keyed.

Before conducting descriptive analysis, normal distribution of data was tested using Shapiro-Wilk test of normality and Q-Q Plot in SPSS. The result indicated normal distribution of data. The mean and standard deviation of responses for each category were calculated. Since the numerical value for each response ranged from 1 to 5, the mean scores above 3 would indicate learners' positive attitudes, while the mean scores below 3 would indicate negative attitudes. In order to calculate the overall mean score for each level, the sum of means (SoMs) was preferred to calculating mean of means since the data were discontinuous (Chavez, 2003). To see if there is a statistically significant difference in the learners' attitudes toward L1 use across different proficiency levels, the Kruskal Wallis test of K-independent samples normally used for ordinal data was carried out.

The interviews were analyzed by transcribing them, reading through them carefully, and underlining the key words in common. In this way, some valuable information was obtained to support and supplement the findings of the quantitative data.

Results

The Results of the Questionnaire

The first research question aimed to investigate the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward L1 use across different proficiency levels. According to Table 1, while elementary learners held positive attitudes (SoMs = 19.22 > 18), intermediate (SoMs = 17.44 < 18), and advanced learners (SoMs = 14.62 < 18) held negative attitudes toward L1 use.

Table 1

The Mean Scores for Learners' Attitudes Toward Functions of L1 Use Across 3 Proficiency levels

Level		Anxiety	Rapport	Grammar	Vocabulary	Assessment	Class Management	SoMs
Elementary	M	3.22	3.05	3.50	3.38	3.10	2.94	19.22 > 18
	SD	.62	.48	.56	.61	.59	.56	
Intermediate	M	2.74	2.84	3.19	3.31	2.62	2.74	17.44 < 18
	SD	.78	.66	.67	.67	.74	.78	
Advanced	M	2.13	2.57	2.62	2.86	2.23	2.21	14.62 < 18
	SD	.714	.63	.69	.69	.62	.55	

Note. Number of participants in each group = 48, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, SoMs = Sum of means, 18 = The neutral point.
1 = Totally disagree, 5 = Totally agree

Table 1 also illustrates the breakdown of learners' attitudes toward different functions of L1 use. As can be seen, elementary learners held positive attitudes toward all functions of L1 use except classroom management. Intermediate learners

held positive attitudes toward the use of L1 only for vocabulary and grammar points. Advanced learners, however, held negative attitudes toward all parameters.

The second research question examined toward which functions of L1 use, Iranian EFL learners held the most positive attitudes at each proficiency level. As Table 1 demonstrates, the elementary learners perceived the use of L1 to be the most useful for grammar points, whereas the intermediate and advanced learners considered L1 to be the most useful for vocabulary.

The third research question aimed to find out the role of Iranian EFL learners' L2 proficiency in their attitudes. According to Table 1, there is a negative relationship between learners' proficiency level and their attitudes toward L1 use, meaning that as learners' level of proficiency increased, their attitudes toward the use of L1 seemed to be less positive and more negative. This shows that learners' attitudes toward L1 use is a function of their proficiency levels.

The fourth research question aimed to investigate if there is a statistically significant difference in learners' attitude across three proficiency levels toward functions of L1 use.

Table 2

Significance Level of Learners' Attitudes Toward L1 Use Across 3 Levels

	Anxiety	Rapport	Grammar	Vocabulary	Assessment	Class Management
Chi-Square	42.69	12.17	34.09	16.40	32.27	28.24
Df	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000

As shown in Table 2, there are significant differences ($p < 0.05$) among the three groups of learners with respect to all parameters including "Anxiety", "Rapport", "Grammar", "Vocabulary", "Assessment", and "Class Management."

The Results of the Analysis of the Interview

Based on the interview data, all the interviewees, regardless of their level, attested to the positive effect of being exposed to L2, but the elementary learners were against L2-only instruction and argued for a higher percentage of L1 use as it would improve their understanding. As one participant said:

> It is true that we are not in the L2 environment, so we should listen [to English] a lot, just like a child who learns his mother tongue by listening, but I think 70 percent of the class time should be in English, because it makes us speak English and 30 percent [of the class time] should be in Persian. Honestly, I won't understand much if the teacher doesn't resort to L1. (Narges, elementary)

Or another participant mentioned:

> Our mother tongue is Persian, so obviously it is difficult for me to learn English without any Persian explanation. Because if the teacher speaks only

in English, I don't understand what he is saying. I don't like the teaching method in which Persian is not used at all. I agree that English should be used in the class, but I think 40 percent of the class [time] should be in Persian and 60 percent in English. (Morteza, elementary)

Another finding of the conducted interviews was that all the participants at different levels believed L1 can be helpful for vocabulary and grammar issues; however, with the rise in learners' proficiency level they felt less dependent on L1 use, thus arguing for more judicious and restricted use of L1 only when L2 explanation turns out to be insufficient. As one of the participants said:

I think L1 is so helpful in vocabulary and grammar issues. When the teacher explains them in Farsi, that's the moment when something lights up in my mind, because it improves our understanding and helps us to learn better. (Narges, elementary)

One more participant said:

Persian is useful only in special cases and after several explanations in English. If the students still have problems understanding the materials, then the teachers' use of L1 helps the learners to understand the lesson better, especially when it comes to vocabulary and grammar issues. (Nazanin, intermediate)

In this respect, one more participant commented:

I think when teaching grammar and vocabulary items, sometimes L1 can help us understand better. But it should not exceed a restricted amount. (Raha, advanced)

Based on the interview results, the majority of the participants at different levels highlighted the anxiety-provoking experience of L2-only instruction at the beginning stages of their language learning, which led to their frustration and disappointment.

In this respect, Mina, an elementary student, said:

When you ask the definition of a word, they [teachers] give a synonym in English, but they should speak a little Persian as well. Sometimes when I don't know the meaning of the [English] word, they give a synonym in English, but I don't know the synonym either, so it makes me anxious and irritated.

Likewise, Leila, an intermediate student, stated:

At the beginning levels, it was very difficult. When the teacher explained everything in English to me, I felt disappointed. I just stared at the teacher, because I didn't understand anything. But over time, as I learned more vocabulary and my grammar knowledge improved, it became easier for me to understand the materials.

Finally, Parviz, an advanced student, observed:

At the elementary level we had a teacher who did not allow us to use any L1 and we had to speak using L2 from the very beginning of the class. If we spoke L1, he would give us a negative mark. At the time, my repertoire of

vocabulary was very limited and I was silent the whole session. It made me leave that institute feeling desperate and disappointed.

Overall, as evidenced by the interviews, the elementary learners were highly dependent on L1 use and felt frustrated and stressed out when facing an L2-only instruction, while more proficient learners showed a higher degree of willingness toward using L2 and minimizing L1 use as much as possible. This is supported by the questionnaire data which revealed a negative relationship between the learners' proficiency level and their willingness toward L1 use. In addition, the learners' susceptibility to anxiety in case of teachers' emphasis on L1 avoidance is in line with the questionnaire data, which indicated that anxiety had the third highest mean score among the elementary learners.

Furthermore, in spite of the variation in learners' attitudes toward the ideal amount of L1 use at different levels, no learner denied the positive role of L1 for grammar and vocabulary points. This corroborates the results of questionnaire data which showed that grammar and vocabulary had the highest mean scores across different proficiency levels. Moreover, intermediate and advanced learners' emphasis on a restricted amount of L1 use could complement quantitative results, since their negative attitudes revealed in the questionnaire analysis might not necessarily mean that they are in favor of total exclusion of L1 at all costs. Instead, the interviews revealed that they prefer restricted and judicious use of L1 and only in case of exigencies when L2 explanation does not work out.

Discussion

As mentioned previously, this study aimed to investigate the role of Iranian EFL learners' L2 proficiency in their attitudes toward L1 use in institutional contexts. The results indicated that elementary learners agreed most with using L1 for explaining grammar while intermediate and advanced learners were most in favor of using L1 for explaining vocabulary, which is to a great extent in line with the results of Kim and Pertaki's (2009) study. However, it is to be noted that in the aforementioned study elementary learners found L1 most useful for explaining vocabulary while using L1 for explaining grammar was the second most useful activity for them. The discrepancy might be due to grouping of the samples. Level 1 group in Kim and Petraki's study included beginners to pre-intermediate learners while in this study level 1 included only elementary learners. Therefore, respondents' attitudes in group 1 in Kim and Petraki's (2009) study might be closer to intermediate learners. The discrepancy could also be attributed to determining learners' proficiency level through self-reports, which might have suffered from lack of precision.

In addition, the results showed that the degree of learners' agreement about the use of L1 depended on their proficiency level. While elementary learners were the strongest supporters of L1 use (Debreli & Oyman, 2015) intermediate and advanced learners were rather reluctant toward this phenomenon. This can be justified on the accounts that with the development of learners' proficiency their reliance on L1 is diminished, which is consistent with the results of previous studies (Carson &

Kashihara, 2012; Chavez, 2003; Prodromou, 2002; Shariati, 2019; Shuchi & Shafiqul Islam, 2016; Tajgozari, 2017).

The results further highlighted that teachers' exclusive use of L2 without any recourse to L1 caused frustration and anxiety for learners at the elementary level. This could indicate that learners who do not have enough linguistic knowledge need more L1 support (Shin et al., 2020).

According to the interview data, most of the learners especially at higher levels believed in the positive role of exposure to L2; however, they did not agree with the total exclusion of L1, especially at the elementary level. Reviewing previous studies (e.g., Macaro et al., 2020) shows the same conclusion. Besides, the results of the interview data revealed that while the elementary learners desired a higher percentage of L1 use, intermediate and advanced learners were more conservative in this regard. They welcomed restricted and selective use of L1 only in case of insufficiency of teachers' explanation in L2 and on very special occasions such as explaining grammar and vocabulary. This might indicate that providing learners with L1 translation after L2 explanation is likely to help learners obtain an exact understanding in their mother tongues (Shin et al., 2020).

Moreover, it needs to be mentioned that while the questionnaire data indicated advanced learners' negative attitudes toward all functions of L1 use, the interview results showed that they prefer a very limited use of L1 for vocabulary and grammar points only and only when L2 explanation does not work. On the surface, this might seem contradictory with the questionnaire results; however, deep down, it could suggest that the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaire per se might not give a complete picture of the learners' attitudes toward L1 use unless they are examined in the light of interview results.

Limitations of the Present Study

In spite of its contributions, this study suffered from a shortcoming that could be dealt with in future research. Due to some constraints, the students' proficiency level was determined through self-reports, which might have affected the results of the study since students might have over- or under-reported their proficiency levels. Therefore, in future studies, researchers are recommended to use reliable proficiency tests to maximize the reliability of the findings.

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the obtained results, it is concluded that learners' attitudes toward L1 use are similar to a continuum which is affected by learners' L2 proficiency level. Depending on where on the continuum the learners' proficiency lies, individual learners might have different attitudes toward L1 use. On the one end of the spectrum, there are learners with low L2 proficiency level who do not have much linguistic knowledge and desire more L1 use to help them with comprehension of English materials, while on the other end, there are more proficient learners who prefer less L1 and more L2 use. Therefore, it might be advisable for EFL teachers to

be aware of the variability and change in the learners' attitudes across different proficiency levels, which occur along with their progress in language learning. The results also suggest that teachers should be encouraged to adopt a more flexible approach with regard to the use of L1, especially at elementary levels since learners at the beginning stages of language learning are more prone to frustration and anxiety due to their limited knowledge of L2.

In addition, the results could suggest that as learners become more proficient in L2, teachers' L1 use should be gradually minimized and teachers at higher levels should avoid excessive and uncontrolled use of L1 as the first and easiest strategy. Therefore, teachers at higher levels of proficiency can use other alternatives to L1 use such as simplification, examples, pictures, etc. (Polio & Duff, 1994).

This study has some implications for EFL teachers and institute authorities. The results of this study could help teachers identify, at what level of proficiency, learners have a more positive or negative attitude toward the functions of L1 use. This could help them decide when to use or avoid L1 for each group of proficiency levels, thus avoiding likely conflicts. This said, it could be concluded that L1 use is not an either-or issue and teachers should not employ a one-size-fits-all approach toward L1 use for all levels. Besides, the results of the study could invite EFL teachers and decision makers to think twice before dogmatic adherence to L2-only policy without considering the learners' proficiency level as an external factor existing in the immediate context of classroom.

The results could further suggest that while teachers' efforts to maximize L2 exposure in the class are appreciated by learners, any attempt to minimize their dependence on L1 should happen gradually so that learners can overcome the challenges of learning a new language at the beginning stages of language learning. Therefore, it might be advisable for institute managers and supervisors not to dictate certain L2-only policies to teachers and ban the use of L1, especially at lower levels. It might be best to give teachers autonomy and provide them with appropriate training so that they can tailor their use of L1 to learners' level of L2 proficiency creating a desirable atmosphere conducive to language learning.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A
Demographic Information of the Survey Participants

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age group		
15-20	71	49.3
21-25	20	13.9
26-30	22	15.3
31 and older	31	21.5
Gender		
Male	84	58.3
Female	60	41.7
Years of learning		
0-2	57	39.6
3-5	47	32.6
6 and more	40	27.8
Total	144	100

Appendix B

The Semi-Structured Interview Participants' Demographic Information

Name	Gender	Age	Level	Years of Learning	Book
Narges	female	28	elementary	6 months	*American file 1*
Morteza	male	25	elementary	4 months	*American file 1*
Mina	female	34	elementary	4 months	*World English 1*
Bahar	female	22	elementary	9 months	*World English 1*
Hadi	male	27	elementary	About 1 year	*American file 1*
Shohre	female	29	elementary	5 months	*American file 1*
Leila	female	28	intermediate	about 2 years	*American File 3*
Ahmad	male	33	intermediate	about 3 years	*American File 3*
Ehsan	male	32	intermediate	about 2.5 years	*World English 3*
Mojtaba	male	24	intermediate	about 2.5 years	*American File 3*
Nazanin	female	35	intermediate	about 3 years	*World English 3*
Mahtab	female	31	intermediate	about 3 years	*American File 3*
Raha	female	37	advanced	about 3 years	*American File 4*
Hassan	male	19	advanced	about 4 years	*American File 4*
Babak	male	26	advanced	about 3 years	*American File 4*
Parinaz	female	19	advanced	about 4 years	*American File 4*
Soheil	male	29	advanced	about 3 years	*Mindset 1*
Akbar	male	33	advanced	about 3.5 years	*Mindset 1*

Appendix C

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Please explain briefly about your language learning background.

2. What is your idea about using Persian in English classroom?

3. In your opinion, how much Persian use is ideal in the class and in what cases?

4. What is your idea about total exclusion of L1 use in the class?

5. Has your idea regarding the use of Persian in the class changed over time?

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High and Low Achieving Online Graduate Students' Learning Styles and Strategies

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Abstract

This study explored the styles and strategies used by online MA students of TEFL and investigated the relationship among their learning styles, learning strategies, and learning achievement. The participants were 87 online graduate students of TEFL at Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST). The instruments consisted of questionnaires on learning styles and strategies and average scores of online students. The results showed that the most learning style preferences were obtained by synthesizing, field-independent, closure-oriented, random-intuitive, and visual, while the lowest ones were related to field-dependent, auditory, tactile / kinesthetic, and open styles. Online students' highest tendency was related to handling possibilities, while their lowest tendency was concerned with using physical senses. With regard to learning strategies, goal setting strategies received the highest mean, whereas task-strategies received the lowest mean. The results of binary logistic regression also revealed that high achievers were mostly grouped into visual, tactile, inclusive, closure, and open learning styles. However, there was no difference between high and low achieving students in learning strategy use. Online instructors are recommended to consider styles and strategies of online students and choose appropriate materials and methods based on their styles and strategies.

Keywords: learning strategies, learning styles, learning achievement, online learning, MA students of TEFL

Introduction

Over the last two decades, online instruction has become more prevalent in higher education at universities and colleges (Allen & Seaman, 2017), and learning has experienced a remarkable change from traditional classroom to online learning environment (George & Lal, 2018). Learners' styles and individual attributes are considered one of the most significant factors, influencing online learning and academic competence (Gökçearslan & Alper, 2015). In online learning environments, learners' performance can be influenced by their learning styles (Ford & Chen, 2000; Kolb, 1984), because different learning styles require different ways of instruction and study (Pashler et al., 2009; Popescu, 2010). It is also argued that although learning styles help make clear distinction in individuals' learning preferences and processing information, they can be an indicator of possible learning success.

It is stated that familiarity with different styles can help educational system to provide valuable instruction to learners to optimize their learning procedure (Truong, 2016). In addition, for learners, perceptions of their own styles would enable them to be more self-assured of their learning process (Truong, 2016). Felder and Silverman (1988) state that if teaching style does not correspond learners' learning style, those with particular learning styles may confront difficulties in learning, because there are various preferred ways of learning for different learners. For instance, some may learn immediately through pictures, while others prefer passages and reading; some may learn through theories, whereas others may acquire through examination and examples (Truong, 2016). However, a blend of distinct techniques can provide a situation for learners in which all types of learning styles can be successful in an online learning course (Zapalska & Brozik, 2006). It is also essential to integrate learners' cognitive and physiological features into teaching requirements to offer an effective online teaching and to adjust teaching to these features (Gökçearslan & Alper, 2015).

According to Ehrman et al. (2003), learning styles and strategies are commonly considered interrelated, and styles are made apparent by learning strategies. Lin et al. (2017) argue that fostering motivation and a diversity of cognitive and metacognitive strategies for active regulation of students' learning is essential for online learning success. Uysal and Yalın (2012) state that for effective teaching, the integration of learners' cognitive, emotive, and physiological characteristics into pedagogical requirement is essential, and that teaching should be adjusted to such features. It is stated that to grow the effectiveness of learning and teaching activities, concentration on learner's learning features is efficient (Kurilovas & Juskeviciene, 2015; Truong, 2016).

It is also argued that there is a positive association between strategy use and L2 learners' learning achievement (Barcroft, 2009; Lai, 2009; Mezei, 2008). In other words, learning strategies are found to mediate the relationship between styles and academic achievement; however, few studies have delt with this issue in either L2 learning or e-learning conditions. Some researchers (e.g., Doulik et al., 2017; Goda et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2012; Işık, 2019; Ryan & Poole, 2019) have investigated the relationship between learning styles and learner achievement. The association

between learning style and learning performance has been verified; learning style causes better learning performance needs to be confirmed (Huang et al., 2012). In other words, despite some research on learner characteristics for successful online learning (e.g., Kauffman, 2015; Kerr et al., 2006; Zhao et al., 2005), little systematic research has been conducted on this issue. Given the fact that learners with various learning styles and strategy use enrolled in the e-learning campus of IUST and to explore whether there was a difference between high and low achieving online graduate students' learning styles and strategies, this study investigated learning strategies and styles they used in online learning. Moreover, the study explored the relationship among learning styles, learning strategies, and learning achievement of online graduate students of TEFL. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the learning styles of online MA students of TEFL?

2. What learning strategies are used by online MA students of TEFL?

3. Is there any relationship among learning styles, learning strategies, and learning achievement of MA students of TEFL?

Literature Review

Online instruction requires learners to exercise more independent control over their online learning trait (Barnard et al., 2009). It has also been established to enhance learning motivation and outcome (Shih et al., 2001). In addition, student involvement is increased in online participation, enhancing learning effectiveness (Zhang et al., 2006). Laying the groundwork for comprehending learners' learning performance, learning style is significantly important (Furnham et al., 2009; Gadzella et al., 1997; Jackson et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2008; Phoha, 1999; Tucker, 2000). Some researchers (e.g., Felix, 2001; Kim, 2001; O'Donnell & Kelly, 2001) have found that individual differences can have significant impact on online learning performance. Learning styles are classified as personality centered, cognition centered, or activity centered and is considered a subcategory of cognitive styles (Curry, 1983; Ehrman & Leaver, 2003; Riding & Rayner, 1998). According to Goldstein (1998), it is crucial to assess students' learning styles to evaluate their online learning performance.

Obtaining insights into various learning styles, teachers can have means to design interpositions appropriate for individual requirements (Goda et al., 2015). According to Felder and Silverman (1988), the dropout level is lower and the rate of performance is higher when there is congruity among method of teaching, subject matter, and the preferred learning style. As also argued by Lumsdaine and Lumsdaine (1993), the deficiency of congruity between the features of content and the way of teaching and preferred learning style is related to relatively poorer functioning and lower motivation, and consequently resulting in possible nonfulfillment of a course. Several researchers (e.g., Felder & Soloman, 1997; García et al., 2007; Graf & Kinshuk, 2006) have argued that learning style is an important indicator of performance. For instance, Graf and Kinshuk (2006) evaluated learning styles regardless of students' behaviors in an online course and found that learners with various learning styles revealed different functions in online

courses and showed different willingness to become online or stay online to observe materials.

The learning cycle, based on Kolb's model (1984), is classified into four stages: reflective observation, active experimentation, concrete experience, and abstract conceptualization. Honey and Mumford (1992) further suggest four styles (i.e., reflectors, activists, pragmatists, and theorists) in the Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) developed based on Kolb's learning cycle model. The LSQ evaluates learners' preferred way of learning and the amount of learning they are expected to (Huang et al., 2012). According to Huang et al. (2012) the Index of Learning Styles (ILS) containing 44 items with four pivotal scales relevant to learning style preferences was developed by Felder and Soloman (1997) considering Felder and Silverman Model. Huang et al. also note that the ILS evaluates dimensions related to other learning style measurements suggested earlier in the literature. For instance, the Riding cognitive style model proposed by Riding (1991) is a two-dimensional model comprising of Wholist / Analytical and Verbal / Imagery dimensions. Gregorc (1982) also suggests the mind style model, which is of two dimensions, i.e. perception dimension (Abstract / Concrete) and ordering dimension (Random / Sequential). Other considerable theories are VARK, including Visual, Auditory, Read, and Kinesthetic and Honey and Mumford's learning styles (Honey & Mumford, 1986); and Kolb's learning styles inventory (1984).

Graf et al. (2007) argue that a comprehensive evaluation of learning styles is important to determine the relationship between learning styles and learner's performance in an online course. Having compared several models of learning style, Kuljis and Liu (2005) state that Felder-Silverman Learning Style Model (FSLSM) suggested by Felder and Silverman (1988) is the most efficient model in terms of its application in e-learning systems. Soflano et al. (2015) similarly highlight that the FSLSM has been one of the most common applied models in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) with its validity and reliability being confirmed. Huang et al. (2012) also pinpoint that the FSLSM is more comprehensive compared to other models of learning style, such as the LSQ (Honey & Mumford, 1992) and LSI (Kolb, 1984). It is also argued that FSLSM is commonly applied due to its combination of diverse main learning style models, accounting for various aspects of learning process (Dorça et al., 2013). Moreover, unlike other learning style models categorizing individuals into some groups, the FSLSM classifies the preferences of a learner into four main aspects, including perception, information input, information process, and understanding along with their related accounts of characteristics (Huang et al., 2012). In addition, the FSLSM has by far been considered the most applicable theory to adaptive learning system (Truong, 2016).

The FSLSM differentiates the learning styles in terms of four dimensions, each of which further followed by two sub-elements (Felder & Silverman, 1988). These dimensions and their sub-elements include (a) perception dimension (intuitive / sensing) based on Jung's (1990) personality type theory, (b) information input dimension (visual / verbal) derived from the experiential learning theory of Kolb (1984), (c) information process dimension (active / reflective) based on the cognitive theory, and (d) understanding dimension (global / sequential) derived from the

learning style system of Pask. The FSLSM, according to Huang et al. (2012), indicates that intuitive style is integrated into imagination and creativity, and that individuals prefer theories and principles in addition to being capable of finding relationships and possibilities, while the sensory types are patient with details, preferring concrete contents, tangible procedures, and realistic outlook. Visual individuals are keen on acquiring information via diagrams and images; verbal ones tend to obtain information via spoken and written demonstrations; active individuals' best way of obtaining knowledge is by experimenting things and working with other members of group; and reflective ones obtain information best by thinking about things, introspective processing, and contemplating on the learning materials along with tending to work independently or with one reliable person (Huang et al., 2012). Huang et al. further state that sequential individuals obtain knowledge in small gradual and linear steps, are keen on details, tend to evaluate, and have convergent thinking; while global individuals benefit from holistic thinking, comprehend in intuitive leaps, and are interested in applying holistic thinking.

As stated by Liu and Reed (1994), learners devoting more time to online courses are considered field-dependent. Academic work on this topic is related to the prediction that learners with various learning styles and levels take part in online courses (Huang et al., 2012). Online courses, which are not simultaneous, self-paced, and need not much group work are more useful for introverts who seem to be more reflective, whereas extraverts should take mix of online discussion and face-to-face (F2F) class to prevent socially isolated feeling (Friedman, 2016; Fuster, 2017). According to Huang et al. (2012), sensory learning style was found to be so compatible with online learning environment. Shaw (2012) examined the relationship among learning styles, type of participation, and learning performance and found that the accommodator style was related to higher learning score.

Hsu (2015) explored the relationships among EFL learners' learning styles and technology acceptance model. Hsu found that most learners were visual and that no significant relationship was found between the type of learning style and perceived usefulness. Exploring participation styles of students in online discussions, Pala and Erdem (2020) found four patterns of to get information / analytical, to discuss / innovative, to socialize / connective, and to fulfill requirements / practical. These four styles were considered contributing to instructors and researchers to determine learners' participation styles before organizing discussion environments, and learners to help them gain awareness about their own participation styles for effective online discussion and learning processes. Designing an adaptive online learning environment based on learners' learning styles and investigating the impact of such environment on learners' engagement, El-Sabagh (2021) found that adaptive e-learning based on learning styles could significantly increase student engagement and motivation, activate their active learning, and facilitate their knowledge construction. El-Sabagh further emphasized adjusting the learning environment and instructional materials and activities based on students' preferences and learning styles.

Since learning strategies and styles are commonly viewed as being interrelated (Ehrman et al., 2003), studies on online learning (e.g., Barnard et al., 2008; Barnard-

Brak et al., 2010; Kuo et al., 2014; Lee, 2006) have concentrated on general domain strategies and reported that students' self-regulated learning strategy use is influential for their success. Ehrman et al. (2003) argue that a learning strategy should be considered neither good nor bad, as it can be essentially neutral as long as it is examined in context. A number of researchers (e.g., Lin et al., 2017; Mezei, 2008; Tsuda & Nakata, 2013) have argued that high-educated L2 learners seem to be more informed of the procedure of their learning and are able to organize their own learning processes compared to low-level counterparts. Having explored the relationship between learning styles and instructional strategies in an online graduate course, Akdemir and Koszalkab (2008) found that using discovery type as well as collaborative and expository types of instructional strategies for low field-dependent and high field-dependent learners resulted in equal benefits in terms of their learning outcome in online courses. It is also stated that how learning strategies are used can anticipate L2 outcomes (Barcroft, 2009; Mezei, 2008; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012).

Learners who perform satisfactorily in courses have agreed that there can be a positive relationship among learning achievement, learning strategy use, and motivation; that highly motivated learners prefer to use different learning strategies in second language learning; and that higher learning achievement correlates with a higher rate of strategy use (Mezei, 2008; Vandergrift, 2005). Moreover, learners' satisfaction is considered a critical factor for online learning success (Kuo et al., 2014). According to Lin et al. (2017), a high level of online satisfaction is the indicator of learners' achievement. Lin et al. also examined the role of online learning strategies in the performance of 466 K-12 online language learners. They found that online language strategies had a considerable role in online learning, and that learners were aware of their learning process and their active strategy use. Given their findings, Lin et al. further concluded that online learning strategy use positively brought about learners' better perceived progress, final grades, and satisfaction. Sahragard et al. (2016) investigated the relationships between, learning style preferences, language learning strategies and field of study of university students majoring in the fields of science, engineering, social sciences, arts and humanities, and EFL. The findings revealed no significant relationships between the learning styles of students and their fields of study. However, significant relationship was found between the learning strategy use and fields of study. For example, EFL students used metacognitive strategies significantly more than students of other fields.

Method

Participants

The study was conducted with 87 Iranian MA students at IUST. All participants were students of TEFL, who were passing related courses at the e-learning campus of IUST. They had received three semesters of instruction and passed 28 credits. Availability sampling was used to choose them; in other words, 72 females (63%) and 15 males (13%) with their age ranged from 24 to 39 were asked to respond to the instruments of the study.

Instruments

Three instruments were used in this study. The first one was the learning style survey to determine each individual's preference for learning. This questionnaire was developed by Cohen et al. (2009), consisting of 100 items with 11 categories: auditory, visual, and tactile / kinesthetic (30 items); introverted and extroverted (12 items); random-intuitive and concrete-sequential (12 items); open and closure-oriented (8 items); global and particular (10 items); analytic and synthesizing (10 items); leveler and sharpener (6 items); inductive and deductive (6 items); field-independent and field-dependent (6 items); reflective and impulsive (6 items); and literal and metaphoric (4 items). The second instrument was a questionnaire on online learning strategies developed by Barnard-Bark et al. (2010). This questionnaire was used to determine MA students' learning strategies in online classes. The scale consisted of four categories of goal setting (5 items), help-seeking (4 items), task strategies (4 items), and self-evaluation (3 items). The average scores of online graduate students were also used to compare their achievement with their learning styles and strategies and were classified into four categories of A = 18-20, B = 16-18, C = 14-16, and D = 12-14.

Procedure

This study was carried out at the end of academic year 2019-2020. The questionnaires on learning styles and strategies: learning styles survey by Cohen et al. (2009) and online learning strategies by Barnard-Bark et al. (2010) were selected. The questionnaire on learning styles survey was aimed to determine online graduate students' learning styles, while the survey on learning strategies was used to determine their strategy use in online courses of TEFL. The items of the questionnaires were based on five-point Likert scale with the values ranged from 1 = Never to 5 = Always.

Before conducting the survey, online students were informed about the significance of knowing their learning styles and its effects on their achievements. To further motivate students to answer the scales, they were informed that the researchers would send them the results of their styles via social networking sites such as, among other services, WhatsApp and Telegram they mentioned at the beginning of the scales. Before administering the questionnaires, the researchers identified students willing to participate in the study and made them aware of the procedures of the research. The students were then asked to answer some questions about demographic variables, such as name, gender, age, and the way they preferred to be informed about the result of their learning style. The questionnaires were administered through an online survey tool (Google doc form.com) and for completing the survey, its link was sent to participants through e-mail or WhatsApp. Accompanied with the link, a voice message was also sent to students to familiarize them with the purpose and methods of completing the survey. The researchers also ensured that the responses would be used only for research purposes.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were conducted to explore graduate students' learning style preferences. Descriptive statistics of major activities related to their learning

styles were also calculated to determine students' online learning preferences. In addition, the average scores of online graduate students of IUST were classified into four categories, and the frequencies and percentages of their average scores in terms of four categories were calculated. Descriptive statistics were also run to explore their learning strategy use. Moreover, binary logistic regression was performed to investigate the relationship among learning styles, learning strategies, and four categories of learning achievement.

Results

Online Graduate Students' Learning Style Preferences

The learning style survey was administered to determine the online students' general approach to learning. This survey included 23 major learning style preferences. To determine their learning tendencies, descriptive statistics were run. Table 1 highlights the results of this analysis.

Table 1

Online MA Students' Learning Styles

Learning Styles	Min	Max	M	SD
1. Visual	1.70	12.60	3.65	1.19
2. Auditory	1.00	4.30	3.00	.58
3. Tactile / Kinesthetic	1.60	4.50	3.01	.72
4. Extroverted	1.67	4.83	3.27	.73
5. Introverted	1.50	4.50	3.30	.56
6. Random-Intuitive	1.00	5.00	3.72	.77
7. Concrete-Sequential	1.67	4.83	3.46	.61
8. Closure-Oriented	1.00	5.00	3.72	.88
9. Global	1.40	5.00	3.58	.70
10. Open	1.5	5.00	3.09	.71
11. Particular	2.00	5.00	3.34	.55
12. Analytic	1.8	5.20	3.12	.58
13. Synthesizing	1.60	5.00	3.82	.80
14. Sharpener	1.67	5.00	3.45	.64
15. Deductive	1.67	5.00	3.52	.72
16. Leveler	1.67	5.00	3.26	.61
17. Inductive	1.33	5.00	3.26	.72
18. Field-Dependent	1.00	5.00	2.92	.86
19. Field-Independent	1.00	5.00	3.73	.86
20. Reflective	1.33	5.00	3.48	.76
21. Impulsive	1.00	5.00	3.44	.80
22. Literal	1.50	5.00	3.19	.64
23. Metaphoric	1.50	5.00	3.55	.80

As shown in Table 1, the most learning style preferences were obtained by synthesizing, field-independent, closure-oriented, random-intuitive, and visual, while the lowest style preferences were related to field-dependent, auditory, tactile / kinesthetic, and open. Table 1 also shows that the most homogeneous responses were received by particular, introverted, analytic, and auditory learning styles, whereas the most heterogeneous ones were obtained by visual, closure-oriented, field-dependent, and field-independent approaches, respectively. In learning style survey, the items of the survey were also classified into 11 major activities. The descriptive statistics of this classification are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Eleven Major Activities Related to Online Students' Learning Styles

Activities	Min	Max	M	SD
1. How I use my physical senses	2.00	6.60	3.22	.59
2. How I handle possibilities	1.67	4.92	3.59	.61
3. How I expose myself to learning situations	2.00	4.42	3.28	.46
4. How I receive information	2.10	5.00	3.46	.50
5. How I deal with ambiguity and deadlines	1.50	5.00	3.41	.62
6. How I further process information	2.20	5.10	3.47	.54
7. How I deal with language rules	2.33	5.00	3.39	.51
8. How I commit material to memory	1.67	5.00	3.36	.53
9. How I deal with multiple inputs	2.33	5.00	3.33	.55
10. How literally I take reality	2.25	5.00	3.37	.51
11. How I deal with response time	2.00	5.00	3.46	.62

As indicated in Table 2, online students' highest tendency was related to the activity of "handling possibilities" (M = 3.59), while their lowest tendency was concerned with "using physical senses" (M = 3.22). Table 2 also shows that the two activities of "receiving information" and "dealing with response time" received the similar preference (M = 3.46). Considering the standard deviation of the activities, "dealing with ambiguity and deadlines" and "dealing with response time" received the most heterogeneous responses (SD = .62), whereas "exposing oneself to learning situations" received the most homogeneous responses (SD = .46).

Online Graduate Students' Learning Strategy Use

The questionnaire on online learning strategies administered to online students of TEFL included 16 items and was classified into four categories. The percentages of their responses to the options of each item of this questionnaire are provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Percentages of Learning Strategies Used by Online Graduate Students of TEFL

Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I set short-term (daily or weekly) goals as well as long-term goals (monthly or for the semester).	3.4	14.9	25.3	42.5	13.8
2. I set standards for my assignments in online courses.	3.4	5.7	27.6	48.3	14.9
3. I keep a high standard for my learning in my online courses.	4.6	5.7	37.9	34.5	17.2
4. I don't compromise the quality of my work because it is online.	10.3	23.0	33.3	18.4	14.9
5. I set goals to help me manage study time for my online courses.	2.3	8.0	28.7	37.9	23.0
6. I try to take more thorough notes for my online courses because notes are even more important for learning online than in a regular classroom.	3.4	5.7	37.9	26.4	26.4
7. I read aloud instructional materials posted online to fight against distractions.	10.3	21.8	31.0	28.7	8.0
8. I prepare my questions before joining discussion forum.	5.7	23.0	34.5	31.0	5.7
9. I work extra problems in my online courses in addition to the assigned ones to master the course content.	2.3	20.7	54.0	20.7	2.3
10. I share my problems with my classmates online, so we know what we are struggling with and how to solve our problems.	6.9	20.7	14.9	46.0	11.5
11. I find someone who is knowledgeable in course content so that I can consult with him or her when I need help.	8.0	16.1	27.6	32.2	16.1
12. I am persistent in getting help from the instructor through e-mail.	4.6	25.3	35.6	27.6	6.9
13. I ask myself a lot of questions about the course material when studying for an online course.	3.4	13.8	41.4	26.4	14.9
14. I summarize my learning in online courses to examine my understanding of what I have learned.	5.7	13.8	31.0	34.5	14.9
15. I communicate with my classmates to find out what I am learning that is different from what they are learning.	10.3	18.4	27.6	32.2	11.5
16. I communicate with my classmates to find out how I am doing in my online classes.	10.3	20.7	26.4	26.4	16.1

As indicated in Table 3, the most frequent strategies used by online graduate students of TEFL were as follows: "setting standards for assignments" (63.2%); "setting goals to manage study time" (60.9%); "sharing problems with other students

online to know struggles and how to solve them" (57.5%); "setting long-term and short-term goals" (56.3%); "trying to take more thorough notes" (52.8%); and "keeping a high standard for online learning" (51.7%). The items of the learning strategies questionnaire were grouped into four categories. The descriptive statistics of these categories are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Categories of Learning Strategies

Categories of Strategies	Min	Max	M	SD
1. Goal Setting	1.60	5.00	3.48	.672
2. Task-Strategies	1.75	5.00	3.19	.65
3. Help Seeking	1.00	5.00	3.24	.91
4. Self-Evaluation	1.00	5.00	3.27	.89

As shown in Table 4, the highest mean ($M = 3.48$) was gained by "goal setting" category, while the lowest one ($M = 3.19$) was obtained by "task-strategies" category. Table 4 also indicates that the most homogeneous responses ($SD = .65$) were given to task strategies, whereas the most heterogeneous ones ($SD = .91$) were related to help seeking strategies.

Online Graduate Students' Learning Achievement

The average scores of online students were classified into four categories of A = 18-20, B = 16-18, C = 14-16, and D = 12-14. The frequencies and percentages of students' average scores in terms of the four categories are provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Online Graduate Students' Average Scores in Terms of Four Classifications

Categories of Average Scores	f	%
A	29	33.3
B	35	40.2
C	19	21.8
D	4	4.6
Total	87	100.0

As indicated in Table 5, with regard to students' average scores, most online students (40.2%) were grouped into the second category of average scores = 16-18, while fewest students (4.6%) were classified into the fourth category of learning achievement = 12-14.

Relationship among Learning Styles, Learning Strategies, and Learning Achievement

Binary logistic regression was performed to investigate whether there was any relationship among the four categories of average scores, twenty-three categories of learning styles, and four categories of learning strategies. In this statistical technique, categories of learning achievement were considered the dependent variables, while those of learning styles and strategies were the independent variables. Table 6 indicates the relationship between the first level of learning achievement (18-20) and the classifications of learning styles.

Table 6

Relationship Between First Category of Learning Achievement and Learning Styles

Styles	Estimation	Standard Error	Z	P
(Intercept)	3.137	2.977	1.053	0.292
Visual	1.409	0.620	2.271	0.023*
Auditory	0.197	0.523	0.377	0.706
Tactile	1.147	0.488	2.35	0.018*
Extroverted	-0.563	0.499	-1.128	0.259
Introverted	-0.305	0.639	-0.478	0.632
Random	-0.253	0.523	-0.485	0.627
Concrete	0.079	0.678	0.117	0.906
Closure	1.251	0.576	2.173	0.029*
Open	1.051	0.507	2.074	0.038*
Global	0.241	0.552	0.438	0.661
Particular	0.497	0.827	0.601	0.547
Synthesizing	-0.253	0.553	-0.459	0.646
Analytic	0.262	0.643	0.407	0.683
Sharpener	0.043	0.627	0.069	0.944
Leveler	-0.123	0.690	-0.179	0.857
Deductive	-0.538	0.511	-1.053	0.292
Inductive	-1.510	0.649	-2.325	0.020*
Field Dependent	0.535	0.410	1.306	0.191
Impulsive	0.167	0.470	0.355	0.722
Reflective	-0.187	0.587	-0.319	0.749
Metaphoric	0.539	0.518	1.041	0.297
Literal	0.045	0.583	0.078	0.937

As highlighted in Table 6, the relationship between the first level of learning achievement (18-20) and visual, tactile, closure, open, and inductive learning styles was statistically significant, implying that the high achievers were mostly grouped

into these learning styles. However, there was no significant relationship between the average category of A and other categories of learning styles. The relationship between the second category of learning achievement (16-18) and the categories of learning styles are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Relationship Between Second Category of Learning Achievement and Learning Styles

Styles	Estimation	Standard Error	Z	p
(Intercept)	-0.629	2.604	-0.242	0.809
Visual	1.133	0.531	2.134	0.032*
Auditory	0.017	0.474	0.038	0.970
Tactile	0.892	0.432	2.066	0.038*
Extroverted	-0.066	0.424	-0.157	0.875
Introverted	-0.687	0.557	-1.234	0.217
Random	-0.653	0.494	-1.321	0.186
Concrete	-0.010	0.593	-0.017	0.986
Closure	-0.259	0.483	-0.537	0.591
Open	0.411	0.463	0.888	0.374
Global	0.095	0.450	0.211	0.832
Particular	0.415	0.728	0.57	0.568
Synthesizing	-0.265	0.502	-0.529	0.596
Analytic	0.047	0.561	0.085	0.932
Sharpener	-0.161	0.581	-0.279	0.780
Leveler	0.0531	0.616	0.086	0.931
Deductive	0.270	0.458	0.59	0.555
Inductive	1.009	0.507	1.988	0.046*
Field Dependent	-0.317	0.340	-0.931	0.351
Impulsive	0.547	0.489	1.119	0.263
Reflective	0.182	0.504	0.363	0.716
Metaphoric	-0.217	0.483	-0.451	0.652
Literal	-0.678	0.488	-1.389	0.164

Table 7 shows that the relationship between the second level of learning achievement and visual, tactile, and inductive learning styles was statistically significant, implying that the high achievers were mostly grouped into these learning styles, while there was no significant relationship between the average category of B and other categories of learning styles. In addition, there was not any significant relationship between the average categories of C and D and learning styles. The

relationship between the four categories of average scores and learning strategies are provided in Table 8.

Table 8

Relationship Between Four Categories of Learning Achievement and Learning Strategies

Leaning Strategies	Levels of Achievement	Estimation	Standard Error	Z	p
Intercept	A	-1.5798	1.3922	-1.1335	0.256
	B	-0.511	1.3354	-0.383	0.702
	C	0.8749	1.6102	0.543	0.587
	D	-6.1973	3.1135	-1.99	0.046
Goal Setting	A	0.4514	0.3858	1.17	0.242
	B	-235	0.3691	-0.637	0.524
	C	-0.2167	0.4319	-0.502	0.616
	D	-0.1887	0.7634	-0.247	0.804
Task Strategies	A	0.2041	0.4033	0.506	0.613
	B	-0.0387	0.3891	-0.099	0.921
	C	-0.5981	0.48	-1.246	0.213
	D	1.0277	0.8178	1.257	0.208
Help-Seeking	A	-0.5461	0.3918	-1.394	0.163
	B	0.1545	0.3767	0.41	0.682
	C	0.6875	4746	1.449	0.147
	D	-0.2999	0.6782	-0.442	0.658
Self-Evaluation	A	0.1254	0.3979	0.315	0.753
	B	0.1685	0.3849	0.438	0.662
	C	-0.5473	0.4677	-1.17	0.242
	D	0.4022	0.7949	0.506	0.612

As shown in Table 8, no significant relationship was found between the average categories of A, B, C, and D and learning strategies. This result indicates that there was no difference between high and low achievers in using learning strategies.

Discussion

Findings revealed that visual was the most frequent style reported by online students. This might be due the fact that MA students of TEFL should be good at making summary of their lessons, enjoy guessing meanings, predict outcomes, and determine similarities and differences among academic issues related to their discipline. Closure-oriented was the second style recorded by the students,

indicating that they might be good at focusing on learning tasks, meeting deadlines, planning beforehand for assignments and tasks, and preferring explicit instructions and directions. Field-independent was the third style, which might be related to the fact that students prefer to separate materials from a certain context, even while exposing distractions. However, they may not be good at dealing with facts and information holistically.

The findings also showed that the auditory style was the least frequent style. This finding is in line with that of Zapalska and Brozik (2006), showing that learners with auditory learning style did not choose online education as their initial option of learning. The finding revealed that the blend of distinct techniques could provide a situation for learners in which all types of learning style could be successful in an online course. Huang et al. (2012) similarly reported that online participation was known as a mediating factor, and its mediating impacts on relationship between learners' performance and learning styles were confirmed. The results also revealed that learners whose learning styles were identified as sensory / intuitive took part online more often and for a longer term. The sensory learning style was found to be very compatible with online learning environments. The result of this study showed that the visual (i.e., sub-category of sensory styles) was reported as one of the most learning style preferences. Hsu (2015) also found that most learners who were passing the online course were visual and that no significant relationship was found between the type of learning style and perceived usefulness of technology use. El-Sabagh (2021) found that students' preferences and styles could have an impact on the effectiveness of learning. He further suggested that instructional materials and activities should be developed based on students' learning styles resulting in enhancing their participation and motivation.

The results also showed that the most frequent strategies were related to goal setting strategies, while the lowest ones were gained by task-strategies. In addition, no difference was found between the high and low achieving online graduate students in strategy use. This finding is similar to that of Reichelt et al. (2014), showing that the average score for transfer was higher in informal situation than in formal one, but the difference was not considerable. Results did not prove that learners obtaining a personalized computer program had higher-ranking performance on transfer compared to those receiving a formal version. The findings also corroborate those of Goda et al. (2015), indicating significant relationship between learners' type of learning and maximum learning achievement, as learners who displayed the learning habit type scored remarkably higher on the test than learners of the cunctation type. The results of their study also showed that regulated learning or making a learning habit could enhance learning usefulness and lead to better online learning achievement. However, the findings are in contrast with those of Sahragard et al. (2016), indicating that students majoring in EFL used more metacognitive strategies than students of other fields.

Conclusions

The study aimed to investigate learning strategies and styles of online graduate students of TEFL as well as to determine the relationship between online students' learning styles and strategies with their learning achievements. The most learning style preferences were obtained by synthesizing, field-independent, closure-oriented, random-intuitive, and visual. With regard to learning strategies, the finding also showed that online graduate students mostly used goal setting strategies. The findings revealed that high achievers were mostly grouped into visual, tactile, inclusive, closure, and open learning styles; however, there was no difference between low and high achieving students in learning strategy use. It is argued that instructional methods and strategies should be in line with learners' learning styles and preferences, since as Butler (1987) argues, adapting to learning styles seems the easiest and most impressive factor for improving learning performance. Online instructors can also help online learners get familiar with their own styles and strategies, because as Kolb (1984) notes, learners with a clear learning style preference are interested to learn more effectively if learning is directed toward their preference.

To enhance online learning outcomes, it is necessary to assess learners' learning styles and strategies. Therefore, online instructors need to pay attention to students' styles and strategies and select appropriate materials and methods based on their styles and strategies. Online students should also identify their styles and strategies and adapt their learning to their style so as to improve their online learning outcomes. Policy makers can also identify online learners' styles and based on which provide infrastructure, materials, and facilities for online learners and instructors. They can also hold some training sessions for learners to make them familiar with effective learning styles and strategies to help them achieve online learning success.

Future researchers can compare the styles and strategies used by students in online and F2F classes to gain more insights into graduate students' styes and strategy use. Other psychological variables, including autonomy, self-efficacy, self-regulation, self-directedness, satisfaction, and motivation can also be investigated, and the relationship between such variables and online students' learning achievement can be compared. In another study, interview can be conducted with online instructors to explore the techniques and strategies they use to consider various styles and strategies of online learners. Future researchers can also conduct group discussion and interview with online learners to gain more insights into the styles and strategies they use. They can also compare styles and strategies used by female and male online graduate students.

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A Study of Modifications in Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs: Pre-Service Versus Novice Teachers

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Abstract

Pedagogical beliefs as an important concept in psychology are one of the most influential and decisive factors in learners' success. Recently, teacher beliefs have attracted the attention of many researchers in English language teaching contexts; therefore, the current study investigated non-native novice English Language Teachers' pedagogical beliefs and the extent to which their pedagogical beliefs modified in the first year of their teaching experience in comparison to pre-service teachers. The required data were collected through a belief questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Although the results of the questionnaire demonstrated that there were statistically significant differences between pre-service and novice teachers, the findings of qualitative data illustrated that the majority of pedagogical beliefs were reformed. The findings indicated that several factors stimulated reformation in teachers' beliefs; the overlooked importance of teachers' role in materials development; lack of teaching practices in teacher education programs; cultural and contextual factors; and assessment procedure. Therefore, teachers need authority and power in educational contexts; teacher educators should specify a specific time to teaching practices to pre-determine the possible problems of the actual teaching practices in the classrooms; and a strong need for assessment practices in teacher education programs is required.

Keywords: education reform, English teacher education, international teacher education, teacher beliefs, teacher education program

Introduction

All students deserve trained and motivated teachers who enjoy their work under the support of efficient educational systems and proper management (Aspfors & Bondas, 2013; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). The teachers should also have the ability to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and provide proper feedback (Beijaard, 2019; Delano-Oriaran, 2012). Therefore, good teaching means adhering to professional behavior and trying to help students learn, to the best of the teacher's knowledge and ability, in the best possible way (Cheng et al., 2009; Impedovo & Khatoon Malik, 2016). Good teachers reduce the gap between poor education and efficient teaching by increasing the learning benefits for each class and for each individual student (Harfitt, 2015; Joyce et al., 2018). Since teachers are the mainstay of the education system, and their ability to motivate students depends on their own beliefs (Mellati et al., 2015; Schaefer, 2013; Szeto & Cheng, 2018), the teachers' beliefs about how to teach more effectively and the factors that motivate or discourage teachers should be carefully considered.

As an important concept in psychology, teachers' pedagogical beliefs that are their understandings, premises, or propositions about teaching are one of the most influential and decisive factors in learners' success, which determines the type of activity that teachers want to do and the desire to continue (Maulana et al., 2015; Schaefer et al., 2014). Understanding teachers' pedagogical beliefs and attitudes about educational strategies plays a key role in improving EFL teachers' performance and the effectiveness of their activities (Aspfors & Bondas, 2013; Hoffman & Seidel, 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Levin et al., 2013; Trent, 2019; Yuan & Lee, 2014).

Recently, teachers' beliefs have attracted the attention of many EFL researchers. Many recent studies in the field have examined the effect of teacher education programs on teachers' beliefs, teachers' belief on students' belief, and challenging situations that teachers face in their first year of their career (Borg, 2011; Maistre & Paré, 2010; Szeto & Cheng, 2018). For instance, Sage (2011) believes that it is necessary to improve professional preparation as well as teachers' teaching methods to understand their belief structures. Teachers' performance is directly related to their beliefs and well-being. Moreover, in the process, teachers' performance has a direct impact on students' motivation and learning outcomes (Hoffman & Seidel, 2015; Yuan & Lee, 2014). Levin et al. (2013) emphasized that educational reform involves helping novice teachers develop constructive beliefs and practices for teaching and learning that are necessary to meet the diverse and growing needs of student learners. Shifting towards constructivist approach appears to be a universal tendency among language teachers, and Iranian teachers are not exception to this trend.

Nevertheless, Karimi et al. (2010) argued that while constructivist approach has been added in teacher training programs, actual language teaching practices in the classrooms have not altered noticeably (Rahmati et al., 2019). In theoretical foundations, the programs focus on constructivist approach, but they offer similar practices that are similar to previous teaching approaches (Szeto & Cheng, 2018).

Likewise, Fahim and Samadian (2011) believed that teachers' practices are based on the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and this teaching method is completely different from what are taught in teacher education program as constructivist approach. They stated that in contrast to constructivist approach teachers have not a central and significant role in the intricate and multidimensional process of language teaching and learning. In confirmation, some studies show that there are discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices (Boyd & Ash, 2018). These discrepancies might be related to modification in teachers' beliefs from teacher education programs to the actual teaching context. While many teachers have valuable reasons to enter the profession, they are not trained enough and do not have the necessary skills (Chaaban, 2017). This lack of knowledge and skill may cause some kind of reality shock at the beginning of their career (the first year of their teaching) that influences their performance and the program outcomes. Therefore, the causes of any modification in teachers' pedagogical beliefs should be investigated.

Teachers' beliefs can shape teachers' instructional behaviors (Levin et al., 2013). Therefore, to improve teacher effectiveness and student learning, it is imperative to comprehend the responsibility of EFL instructors' educational beliefs about the language teaching and learning process. It is also vital to recognize how these pedagogical beliefs differ depending on their backgrounds, training, and learning contexts. These differences may cause reality shock that will lead to some modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs in the first year of their teaching.

Recently, educational programs such as professional development and teacher training programs in Iran have been focused on constructivist approaches, and teachers intended to use this approach in their instructions (Kiany et al., 2013). The approach is based on understanding, critical thinking, and question and answer. The constructivist approach is in contrast to traditional paradigm of the teaching and learning process that emphasizes memorization (Levin et al., 2013). Proponents of this approach intended to use learners as a central part of the classrooms to generate a comfortable and effective learning environment that motivates language learners and improve their understandings and language achievements (Szeto & Cheng, 2018). While the research studies on novice teachers are growing internationally, there is little research investigating the beliefs of novice teachers in Iran; therefore, the findings of the present study addressed novice teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The specific purpose of this study was to shed light on modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs in the first year of their teaching. To consider this concern, the present study compared the pedagogical beliefs of Iranian pre-service teachers with novice teachers (teachers who are in the first year of their teaching).

Literature Review

According to the definitions of the experts in the field, beliefs can be considered as a set of acquired hypotheses that are rooted in personal experiences or expert knowledge (Polat, 2010; Shirrell et al., 2018). In contrast to knowledge that must be justified and derived from valid evidence and arguments, beliefs express claims or expectations about reality. Belief formation presumes that a proposition is

represented in the mind. Beliefs are strongly influenced by the social and cultural environment (Mellati et al., 2018; Suchodoletz et al., 2018). Contrary to knowledge, which is conscious and fixed, beliefs are unconscious and often fictitious and are subject to change (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014; Teng, 2016). Teachers' pedagogical beliefs in this study are beliefs in specific cases, such as teaching and learning methods that affect their view of classroom activities (Borg, 2011). Some scholars consider pedagogical beliefs as the consequence of scientific knowledge formed in real environments that have evaluative nature (Decker et al., 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2014; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). Fives and Buehl (2014) argued that teachers' beliefs can be investigated from different perspectives: teachers' identity and motivation, context, and teachers' beliefs about knowledge, and teachers' beliefs about learners. From this perspective, teachers do not yet have the professional knowledge necessary to reorganize and re-shape their beliefs, and their beliefs are formed more directly in the classroom through their educational experiences (Szeto & Cheng, 2018). Therefore, teachers' teaching practices can have a remarkable impact on the formation and even on the reformation of these beliefs (Suchodoletz et al., 2018).

A review of available literature suggests that a number of studies have been conducted on the belief change from different perspectives (Flores, 2017; Levin et al., 2013; Sage, 2011). Liao (2007) revealed that personal experiences might be the first source of teachers' beliefs. What they experience as adulthood in their schools shapes the foundations of the teaching beliefs. In the same vein, Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) stated that teacher cognition is one of the major sources that shape teachers' beliefs. They also asserted that beliefs that established by teacher cognition are stable and resistant to change. In contrast, Borg (2011) investigated the impact of teaching experiences on teachers' beliefs and consequent modifications. He believed that the reality of the classrooms could redefine teachers' beliefs. Shirrell et al. (2018) investigated how teacher education programs change student / pre-service teachers.

Reviewing the literature, the researchers found controversial evidence of impact of TEP on teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Some scholars strongly believe that effective TEPs shape the mainstay of teachers' pedagogical beliefs (Boyd & Ash, 2018; Zhang & Liu, 2014). However, some other researchers considered it only as a source of belief. They argued that other sources of teachers' beliefs such as teaching experience and contextual factors play more significant role in establishing the beliefs (Chaaban, 2017; Pilitsis & Duncan, 2012; Szeto & Cheng, 2018). Caudle and Moran (2012) investigated beliefs changes in teacher education programs and teaching practices. They found that teacher education programs had little influence on revising teachers' pedagogical beliefs while classroom practices could change their beliefs to a large extent. In contrast, Chaaban (2017) investigated changes in teachers' beliefs over a teacher education program. They found that the majority of teachers in the study experienced considerable modifications in their pedagogical beliefs. Zhang and Liu (2014) argued that teachers' beliefs were context-dependent. It means that contextual factors such as principals' restrictions, curriculum design, and educational tests shape teachers' beliefs and determine how much they influence teachers' previous beliefs. In a similar statement, Boyd and Ash (2018) stated that

classroom practices could change teachers' prior beliefs. They focused on teaching mathematics and found that actual teaching practices in class can modify teachers' pedagogical beliefs.

Today, with the introduction of theoretical debates related to classroom challenges, individual differences, and communicative classroom activities, teachers received sufficient academic knowledge about the reality of the classroom. However, the extent to which this awareness is effective in changing beliefs and enabling them to free themselves from the shackles of traditional teaching methods that they have experienced as language learners and pre-service teachers and making possible better education through adequate educational behavior in accordance with the principles of language teaching approaches requires empirical research. In other words, reviewing the literature reveals that there are questionable findings about stability or modification of teachers' beliefs after teaching experiences in their real classrooms. Most of studies about the change in teachers' beliefs were conducted in native contexts and this left us with minimal insights into non-native contexts. Therefore, the current study investigated the difference in teachers' beliefs about different aspects of language teaching between pre-service teachers (teachers who are at the end of TEP in different Universities) and novice teachers (those who have one year of teaching experience).

Research Questions

With the goal of comparing teachers' beliefs between pre-service teachers and novice teachers, three interrelated research questions guided this study:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences in teachers' pedagogical beliefs between pre-service teachers and novice teachers (first year)?

2. Are there any statistically significant differences between pre-service teachers and novice teachers in terms of their attitudes towards subcategories of teachers' beliefs such as classroom assessment, curriculum design, teachers' role, and language teaching activities?

3. What are teachers' perceptions towards modification in teachers' pedagogical beliefs from TEP to the first year of teaching experience?

Method

The detailed information and procedure of conducting this study is presented in the following parts.

Research Design

The researchers of this quasi-experimental study chose exploratory mixed methods design to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The purposes for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data were triangulation of the data and to achieve complementary that reduce the likelihood of unfairness in the study and collect deep data about the specific topic (Riazi & Candlin, 2014). In addition, Mackey and Gass (2005) stated that employing a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data paved the way to attain more accurate and reliable findings.

Participants

The population of the study contained teachers who were at the end of their teacher education programs in different universities in Iran and those who entered their profession as novice teachers (First year) (Tsui, 2011). To gather the required data, the researchers compared teachers who enroll in the first year of university teaching with those who enroll in the third year of teacher education program. Searching the sites and surfing the net, the researchers invited all of them into the study. Due to time limitation, cost, and practicality, the researchers used convenience sampling to select their participants (Cohen et al., 2007). Fifty-one Pre-service EFL teachers and 56 novice EFL teachers accepted to participate in the current study (N = 107). Seventy-six of the participants were male and 31 were female. Among them 71 were under the age of 30, 29 were between 30-35, and 7 were 35-40 years of old.

Materials and Instruments

To collect the required data, the following instruments were used.

Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire

To elicit participants' pedagogical beliefs, the researchers employed Teacher Belief Questionnaire (TBQ) developed by Mellati et al. (2013). The reported reliability index of this questionnaire is .74 (r = 0.74) that is acceptable for the purposes of the study. It has forty questions. This questionnaire contains four parts and these parts are: beliefs about classroom assessment, curriculum design, teachers' role, and language teaching activities.

To be sure about its validity, three experts in the field checked the questionnaire to check its face and content validity. In addition, it was piloted with 20 participants of the same population. The questionnaire was revised based on the comments of the experts and results of reliability analysis. The reported reliability index of this questionnaire was .81 (r = 0.81) that is acceptable for the purposes of the study. To increase the number of participants, the researchers distributed the questionnaire in both paper and pencil format and online format.

Semi-Structured Interview

To eliminate the possible bias that is inevitable in the use of a single way of data collection and collect a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in question, the researchers conducted semi-structured interview with 20 novice teachers. In a thirty minutes' interview, the researchers focused on the subcategories of the questionnaire (teachers' role, curriculum design, language teaching activities, and classroom assessment) to achieve comprehensive information about the topic under study. In addition, the participants were allowed to express their own attitudes about different aspects of the topic. The interviews were transcribed for further analyses.

Procedure

To conduct the study, researchers invited Iranian pre-service and novice teachers. Among them, 56 non-native novice teachers and 51 pre-service teachers

accepted the invitation. From the beginning, the researchers informed all of the participants of the nature and purpose of the research project through written information form. In addition, they could leave the study on their wills and without penalty. To investigate the modifications in teacher pedagogical beliefs of novice teachers, the researchers compared their beliefs with senior student teachers. To do this, the TBQ was distributed among novice teachers who graduated from different universities of Iran in both paper and pencil and online format. At the same time, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 novice Iranian EFL teachers. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to conduct further analyses.

Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, the researchers used T-Test and MANOVA. To answer the second research question, they used MANOVA. Since there are two groups (independent variables) and several continuous variables (Subcategories of the TBQ: language teaching, interaction, teacher role, assessment, and classroom management) in the current study, MANOVA analysis would be an adequate analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). To answer the third research question that has qualitative data, the results of interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was employed. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, for instance patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research questions. In this method, the texts were studied several times and common themes and pattern were identified.

<p align="center">**Results**</p>

Quantitative Data Analysis

To answer the first research question and check teachers' pedagogical beliefs between pre-service teachers and novice teachers, the researchers conducted independent-samples t-test.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Service & Novice Teachers

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Beliefs	Pre-service	52	126.5385	8.57598	1.18928
	Novice	56	141.9821	9.50501	1.27016

The results of Table 1 showed that novice teachers had different beliefs and different scores on TBQ. To check the validity of this finding, the researchers conducted independent-samples t-test. The results of this analysis are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2

The Results of Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Beliefs	Equal Variances Assumed	.132	.717	-8.842	06	.000	-15.44368	1.74670	-18.90669	-11.98067

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of TBQ for pre-service and novice Iranian EFL teachers. There was a statistically significant difference in scores for pre-service ($M = 126.53$, $SD = 8.57$) and novice teachers ($M = 141.98$, $SD = 9.50$); t (106) = -8.8, $P = .000$. The results demonstrated that there were beliefs' discrepancies from teacher education program to the first year of actual teaching practices. The magnitude of the differences in the means was also very large (eta squared = .42).

To answer the second research question and check teachers' pedagogical beliefs about the subcategories of the questionnaire (assessment, curriculum, teacher role, and classroom activities) between pre-service and novice EFL teachers, the researchers conducted MANOVA. At first, they checked the assumption of the analysis and then conducted the MANOVA. The results of these analyses are presented in the following tables.

Table 3

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices[a]

Box's M	6.281
F	.602
df1	10
df2	51646.321
Sig.	.813

Tests the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Group

The results of Table 3 show that the sig. value is larger than .001; therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices is not violated.

Table 4

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a]

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Curriculum	.220	1	105	.640
Activities	.713	1	105	.400
Role	.003	1	105	.960
Assessment	.011	1	105	.916
a. Design: Intercept + Group				

The results of Table 4 reveal that all of the sig. values are more than .05. It means that the assumption of equality of variances is not violated.

Table 4

Multivariate Tests for Beliefs Differences Between Pre-service and Novice Teachers

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
	Pillai's Trace	.436	19.724[a]	4.000	102.000	.000	.436
	Wilks' Lambda	.564	19.724[a]	4.000	102.000	.000	.436
Group	Hotelling's Trace	.773	19.724[a]	4.000	102.000	.000	.436
	Roy's Largest Root	.773	19.724[a]	4.000	102.000	.000	.436
a. Exact statistic							
b. Design: Intercept + Group							

Since the assumptions of MANOVA were not violated and we deal with normal data, the main entry of Table 4 is Wilks' Lambda value that shows a significant difference between two groups.

Table 5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Pre-Service and Novice Teachers

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	f	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
		Curriculum	329.200		329.200	28.768	.000	.215
Group	Dimension 1	Activities	335.068	335.068	27.276	.000	.206
		Role	619.486	619.486	48.136	.000	.314
		Assessment	391.860	391.860	33.865	.000	.244

A one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate teachers' pedagogical beliefs differences between pre-service and novice teachers. Four dependent variables were used: curriculum design, teacher roles, classroom teaching activities, and classroom assessment. The independent variable was teachers' teaching experience (pre-service or novice teachers). Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no violations noted. There was a statistically significant difference between Iranian pre-service or novice EFL teachers on their attitudes towards teachers' pedagogical beliefs such as curriculum design, teacher roles, classroom teaching activities, and classroom assessment, $F (4, 102) = 19.7$, $P = .000$; Wilks' Lambda = .56; partial eta squared = .43. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, all differences reached statistical difference, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of 0.01; curriculum design $F (1, 105) = 28.76$, p = .000, partial eta squared = .21, teacher roles $F (1, 105) = 48.13$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .31, classroom teaching activities $F (1, 105) = 27.27$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .20, and classroom assessment $F (1, 105) = 33.86$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .24. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that Iranian EFL novice teachers reported higher level of agreement on different aspects of teachers' pedagogical beliefs.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data of this particular study was obtained through conducting a semi-structured interview with 20 novice teachers; the teachers were selected randomly. The researchers used the following procedure for analyzing the obtained qualitative data: they read the collected data several times to find the main ideas of them. Then they analyzed and coded the findings' main points subjectively and manually. Therefore, they converted the collected data in the interviews into texts. Finally, they used open coding to code and explain the transcribed texts. Some of the main beliefs about teachers' pedagogical beliefs and its subcategories after one year of language teaching experience in the interviews are presented here:

- Teachers play a key role in classrooms.

- Teachers complained that have no control over teaching materials.

- Teaching materials are out-of-dated.

- Teacher education programs lack enough practice.

- Teachers are not providers.

- Programs do not prepare teachers with cultural diversity of classrooms.

- The assessment procedure taught in programs is out-of-dated.

- The focus of programs is on norm-referenced tests.

- Teachers are supporters.

- Teachers are not able to follow political language polices.

In confirmation with the results of quantitative data, Iranian novice EFL teachers criticized their undergraduate education programs in the interviews. They believed that educational setting did not prepare them sufficiently for complexities of actual teaching environments.

Teachers play a key role in classrooms.

They illustrated how fundamental it is the teachers' intellectual and moral sensibility in developing a sense of friendship and trust in the classrooms.

"I think one of the problems that all teachers face with is the diversity of students in a classroom. They are different and have different interests, so they prefer different teaching methods. They play a key role in language classrooms. Holding a class in such a situation is somehow difficult. The teacher education program highlighted this diversity theoretically. We did not have any experience of such difficult situations; therefore, we had to change our beliefs about the best way of language teaching in our specific teaching context" (Two teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

They also stated that while the focus of the TEPs was on teaching methods and effective materials, they found that teachers play the most important role in real classrooms. They highlighted the significance role of teachers and suggested that a teacher-centered method that teachers can employ their intellectual and moral sensibility would be the best solution to the diversity of classrooms.

Teachers complained that they have no control over teaching materials.

While principals and policy makers claim that teachers have freedom on their jobs, teachers usually argued that they were under mounting inspections and growing challenges. They also asserted that their monitoring - from the quality of their teaching or even what they wear in the classrooms - directly relates to what organizations they join. They believed that educational and legal challenges or restrictions could significantly influence their job quality.

"Today, many sources of information are in access for students. The materials are available everywhere and students can study them based on their own interests. However, teachers have to follow a predetermined curriculum. They have no control over choosing the teaching materials. While there are numerous up-to-dated teaching materials on the market, the teacher education program focused on some out-of-dated materials. In addition, the materials that we read in the program were different from what we have to teach in actual classrooms. When we have no control over the materials, we cannot follow the objectives of the program. We have to change them based on the existed teaching materials" (Most of the teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

Almost all of the teachers criticized that they had to follow predetermined syllabus while they knew the determined syllabus is not adequate for the specific context where they taught.

Teaching materials are out-of-dated.

It is generally believed that interactions with teachers and instructional materials affect learners' understanding in learning environments. However, teachers believed that policymakers and stakeholders overlooked these important factors in their curriculums. Instructors claimed that no one could deny the effects of supplementary materials in teaching and learning process, but the main concern in using supplementary materials was availability.

"Unfortunately, the problem is that the existed materials on educational programs are not comprehensive from different language teaching and learning perspectives and teachers have no control over them" (Three teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

Teachers mostly benefited from materials that were not in access for all learners. In addition to their lack of availability, both principals and learners did not accept the supplementary materials and considered them as additional pressures in the education system.

Teacher education programs lack enough practice.

Regardless of the quality of teacher education programs, many student teachers stated that the real teaching experience happens only in school and universities not in the program.

"In the program, we as student teachers become familiar with different teaching methods theoretically, but we are not allowed to experience them practically in the classrooms. Lack of experience in conducting a specific teaching method influences its effectiveness in real classroom. Moreover, it can lead the class to a state of confusion. I modified my understanding about teaching theories and methods after the first session of teaching practice" (Most of the teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

It can be concluded from these statements that although the teacher education program had no significant impact on teachers' pedagogical beliefs, teaching practices have a considerable impact on further modifications in their beliefs.

Teachers are not providers.

Teachers argued that teachers can be the best providers of teaching materials since they can elicit learners' needs, select the most adequate existed materials, adopt them to their specific contexts, and even develop authentic materials appropriate for four language skills in classrooms.

"Teachers' role is the most important role in teaching circle. Even in the most fixed schedules, teachers can be very reflective. They are providers. They are providers of learning opportunity for students, providers of rich sources of materials, providers of perfect language task that help learners to practice learned materials. They also control the provided materials to fit students' interests and needs. These are some sentences that I have heard several times during teacher education program, but in reality, everything was different. Since they have no role

over teaching materials, it is somehow difficult to tell them be creative in your classroom" (Four teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

The results of interviews revealed that Iranian EFL teachers believed like traditional teacher-directed method, the roles of teachers are so important, but today their role has changed to some extent.

Programs do not prepare teachers with cultural diversity of classrooms.

Teachers believed that increasing diversity among learners and continuing demographic alterations in any teaching context indicate that if they want to reach a deep understanding of different learners, they have to increase an in-depth understanding of their cultures.

"I read somewhere that language is a window to the culture. In my opinion, it is the culture that determines the most appropriate materials, method, and classroom activities in every teaching context. While I learned in teacher education program that close relationship with learners increases their motivation and participation, what I have found in real classroom was completely different. I think teachers' close relationship ends their authority in the class and I'm sure that is the culture of my context" (Five teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

Culture is not isolated from teaching contexts. As researchers believe, an ongoing implicit and explicit interaction is happening between teachers, learners, context, and culture that can influence every teaching and learning context (Kirkebæk et al., 2013).

The assessment procedure taught in programs are out-of-dated.

One the main factors in successfulness of a teaching course is the role assessment in that context. Teachers believed that adequate assessment activities along with effective teaching can certify the adequacy of a teaching program.

"While the necessity of assessment has been emphasized in the education program and numerous methods of conducting effective assessment have been taught, there is no priority over the use of assessment procedures in real classrooms. It can be said that assessment is the least important matter in real educational setting" (Three teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

Collecting data about the specific level of every learner in a course (weakness and strengths) is essential in improving further teaching and learning programs. In addition to collecting such information, they should be shared with stakeholders and policy makers to support them in making precise decisions for learners' future learning procedures.

The focus of programs is on norm-referenced tests.

Teaching to the test can be a big concern in many teaching contexts.

"Priority of criterion referenced tests over norm-referenced was highlighted in many sources of the education program, but those theoretical concepts are absent in actual teaching environment. The only applicable testing procedure in real

classrooms is norm-referenced and criterion referenced tests are overlooked completely" (Most of the teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

Teaching to the test has a negative impact on teaching procedure and learning outcomes. There are some examples in the literature that the teacher demonstrated that the improvement in learners while standardized test did not prove that enhancement.

Teachers are supporters.

Teachers believed that when they have role in material development, when they know enough about different notions of assessment and the way that they can conduct them in classroom, they can play their main role as "supporter".

"It is clear that one of the most important roles of a teacher is to be a supporter and no one can deny this role and responsibility. However, we should keep in mind that as teachers, we are not knower and we just deliver the knowledge. We should encourage students to find out the right answer and lead them to be independent step by step" (Most of the teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

The teachers asserted that the main role a teacher in learning environment is being a supporter. However, they argued that teachers should be skilled in supporting learners in different ways to help them to reach their final goal that is autonomous learners.

Teachers are not able to follow political language policies.

Language policy and sociopolitical concerns of educational system is out of teachers' access and usually there are controversies between teachers teaching goals and macro-educational policies.

"Teachers have other problems rather than lack of experience or mixture of their students in classroom. Language policy can affect teachers largely. They cannot follow their beliefs because of political language polices. Students also have different purposes; a variety of purposes along with a variety of preferences create a complex situation that even professional teachers would not able to handle it" (Four teachers stated the same concept, but in different words).

A majority of teachers stated that teacher trainers did not use different teaching methods to stimulate real learning in the program. The results of interviews demonstrated that teachers had beliefs and attitudes toward language teaching that are different from policy makers. They stated that to act according to their beliefs requires dedicating a large amount of time and money and is not allowed by policy makers.

Discussion

The findings of quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that teachers have noticeable challenges in their educational program that eventuate in chaos in language classrooms. Iranian EFL teachers argued that they need to reform their ideas and beliefs about language teaching, but they see that this reformation requires

countless prerequisite knowledge that were absent in their teacher education programs. The results of the current study demonstrated that several factors such as curriculum design, teacher roles, classroom teaching activities, and classroom assessment work simultaneously in shaping teachers' beliefs. It can be interpreted that teachers' beliefs are not a one-dimensional phenomenon. In other words, to investigate teachers' beliefs factors such as teachers' cognition, teachers' teaching experiences, and the quality of teacher education programs should be considered. Among them, the quality of teacher education programs play a key role in determining teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The findings of the current study confirmed Chaaban (2017) who stated that teachers are not trained enough in teacher education programs and do not have the necessary skills to handle the teaching context. The statements of the teachers in the interviews demonstrated what Joyce et al. (2018) argued that this lack of knowledge and skill may cause some kind of reality shock in novice teachers in the first year of their career that can influence their performance and the program outcomes. Similar to Suchodoletz et al. (2018), the findings of the present study demonstrated that social and cultural environment play a significant role in shaping teachers' pedagogical beliefs.

The findings are in accordance with what reported by Szeto and Cheng (2018) that contextual factors that are overlooked in teacher education programs play a significant role in the modification of the teachers' pedagogical beliefs. In contrast to Liao (2007) who found that personal experiences might be the first and important source of teachers' beliefs, the findings of present study demonstrated that no matter what is the source of beliefs' formation, teaching practice is the major source of reforming of preexisted pedagogical beliefs and establishing more stable beliefs.

The findings of the study indicated that teacher educations programs have some shortcomings that are common in the literature. When comparing the findings of the current study to those of older studies, it must be pointed out that there some important points in many studies that are generally overlooked in teacher education programs:

- While teacher education program highlighted the importance of teachers' role in teaching environments, the adequate facilities for implementing such a significant role is absent in teacher education programs and teaching contexts (Aspfors & Bondas, 2013).

- Teacher education programs emphasizes the control of the teachers over teaching materials; however, this control is absent in actual teaching contexts. In addition, they generally focused on out-of-dated teaching materials (Levin et al., 2013).

- Practice is the major shortcoming of the teacher education programs. The results of the study demonstrated that teacher had to reform their pedagogical beliefs after the first session of teaching practices (Cheng et al., 2009).

- The culture of teaching contexts is overlooked in teacher education programs. This point leads novice teachers to culture shock state (Trent, 2019).

- Assessment theory and practices are completely different from what happens in actual teaching contexts (Shirrell et al., 2018).

- Policy makers are not aware of language changes and the modifications in theories of teaching and language teaching and learning (Fives & Buehl, 2014).

Conclusion

This study evaluated possible modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs from pre-service period to the first year of teaching practice. The findings of the study demonstrated that teacher beliefs are multi-dimensional. Several factors such as teachers' teaching experiences, teachers' cognition, and the quality of teacher education programs should be considered simultaneously. The study also highlighted the key role of the quality of teacher education programs in shaping and modifying teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The results of the questionnaire and the interviews indicated that Iranian novice EFL teachers criticized their undergraduate education programs. They believed that educational setting does not prepare them sufficiently for the complexities of teaching environments. They stated that the teacher education program did not appear to enhance teachers' elasticity adequately in employing various teaching methods and strategies for diverse teaching environments. One explanation about this phenomenon is that when novice teachers entered the classroom, they faced a complex situation that was not explained in the program. They believe that many factors can be attributed to this inadequacy. Educational policy, broad curriculum design, material availability, learners' diversity, and the culture of the teaching contexts are among the most important factors that can influence teacher education programs and teacher performance in language classrooms.

The results of the study demonstrated that experienced and novice teachers were different in their beliefs about curriculum design, teacher roles, classroom teaching activities, and classroom assessment. Based on the specific findings of the current study and challenges which were not predicted in the teacher education program, some suggestions are presented here:

- Teachers need authority and power in educational contexts. There are some problems in teaching contexts that are unpredictable and should be solved only by the creativity of the teachers. If they have no power in their teaching contexts, they cannot solve these problems.

- The overall teaching materials should be designed by the stakeholders and policy makers, but those teaching materials should be under the control of the teachers. They should be able to modify or change them if it is necessary (based on their specific culture and context).

- Lack of teaching practice is one of the major shortcomings of most teacher education programs. Teacher educators should specify a specific time to teaching practices to pre-determine the possible problems of the actual teaching practices in the classrooms.

- Policy makers should be familiar with the new theories of teaching. They need to modify their teaching policies based on the new teaching approaches and theories.

- Many modifications have happened in assessment procedure theoretically; however, a strong need for assessment practices in teacher education programs is required.

Although this study was conducted on Iranian EFL teaching contexts, reviewing the literature demonstrated that these findings and suggestions can be generalized to other EFL contexts. This study focused on pre-service and novice teachers; future studies can be focused on experienced teaching and the impact of teaching experiences on their pedagogical beliefs. The study showed that teaching context and culture play a significant role in effectiveness of teaching practice; therefore, it is worth considering these important factors in future studies. Teaching preferences, accepted assessment activities, teachers-students interaction, and material development are among other factors that need to be highlighted in future studies.

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English Didactics in Norway: A Propaedeutic or Parasitic Discipline?

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Abstract

Since English didactics has a relatively short history in Norway, exploring its nature, scope, academic identity, definition, status, and raison d'être is an ineluctable necessity. This article sets out to answer a simple yet fundamental question about English didactics: Is English didactics a propaedeutic discipline or a parasitic discipline? We argue that English didactics is warranted to address three interrelated issues if it purports to establish itself as a propaedeutic discipline. First, English didactics needs to demarcate and delimit its disciplinary boundaries with other adjacent disciplines which feed into it. Second, delineating the ontological axioms and epistemological underpinnings as well as the methodological apparatus which distinguish English didactics from other closely related disciplines is warranted. Third, through invoking intellectual capital and scientific findings of other disciplines, English didactics must aim to generate its own novel theoretical and practical knowledge. This article calls for more attention to expounding and theorizing English didactics than currently conceptualized.

Keywords: English didactics, propaedeutic discipline, parasitic discipline, adduction fallacy, reduction fallacy

Introduction

English didactics is a young yet emerging area of scientific and professional inquiry in the Norwegian context. Even though English studies enjoys a relatively long past in Norway, English didactics as an academic discipline has a very short history. English didactics has been gaining momentum in leaps and bounds over the past 30 plus years. Nonetheless, it is not an overstatement to say that it is in its formative years and still does not show characteristics of maturity. This means, among other things, that it behooves us to critically reflect upon and constantly ponder several pivotal questions about English didactics, viz. Is English didactics a science or an art of the English teaching-learning process? If it is a science, what kind of science is it? Is English didactics a human science or a social science? How does English didactics define itself vis-a-vis other cognate disciplines? Which one is a priority for English didactics: English teaching-learning theory, English teaching-learning practice, or both? What are the milestones that English didactics has achieved since its inception in Norway? What is the nature of knowledge that English didactics seeks to generate? What theoretical trends, practical orientations, methodological heuristics, scientific research programs, and organizing conceptual grounds currently are, or historically have been, popular in English didactics? What is the disciplinary terminus of English didactics? How could Norwegian academics eschew disciplinary fragmentation of English didactics over time? What is the connection between English didactics and *Bildung*-centered didactics? What is the subject matter and specific epistemic content of English didactics: learning English, teaching English, or a nexus of learning and teaching English? How should English didactics discourse community identify themselves: as researchers, practitioners, or something else? Is English didactics an idiographic or a nomothetic science? What prevailing paradigmatic way of thinking informs and guides English didactics today? How to reconcile between scientific facts and pedagogical praxis in English didactics? What is the knowledge base that English didactics purports to generate and disseminate? What is the relationship between English didactics and other school subjects such as Norwegian didactics? Is there a researcher-practitioner divide in English didactics? Is there a theory-practice void in English didactics? What should the content of English didactics curricula be? Is English didactics responsive to important societal and public expectations? What kinds of research questions should English didactics be addressing? What kinds of problems should English didactics be finding a solution to? What role do curricular concerns and thinking play in fashioning English didactics? Does English didactics furnish a theory of practice or a theory for practice? How likely is it that English didactics becomes bifurcated to two independent enterprises, that is, scientific English didactics versus practical English didactics? What is the relative place of English didactics in Norwegian universities and the academy? How much disciplinary knowledge of English didactics is, or should be, impacted by extra-academic influences of governmental bodies such as the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir)?

This is an indicative, and not intended to be exhaustive, set of open questions which should be entertained if English didactics intends to be an autonomous and

accountable discipline with potential societal relevance, academic appeal, and practical implications in Norway. On this note, some researchers have endeavored to define what English didactics is (Rindal & Brevik, 2019b), what English is (Rindal, 2014), how English is approached in Norway as a school subject and a language (Rindal, 2020), history of English didactics in Norway (Simensen, 2011, 2018, 2020), development of the school subject English (Gundem, 1990), and state of the art developments in English didactics (Rindal & Brevik, 2019b). Yet, (meta) scientifically predicated questions are given short shrift in the extant literature. Similarly, the impact or implications of meta-scientific questions thus far has not been the subject of inquiries in any systematic and coherent way. Within present space limitations of a single article, therefore, our argument focuses on only one fundamental meta-scientific question: Is English didactics a propaedeutic or parasitic discipline? More specifically, three sub-questions that we would like to entertain are a) how English didactics - a practice-mediated and scientific domain of knowledge - defines its disciplinary watersheds with other parent disciplines such as English linguistics, general didactics, English literature, second language acquisition, English language teaching, educational psychology, and so forth b) what are the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions in which English didactics is anchored and c) what are, or better what should be, the properties and distinguishing contributions of English didactics to generating new parcels of scientific and professional knowledge, frameworks, categories, and concepts as a coherent epistemic whole that its audience, including researchers, students, and practitioners, could invoke, however tangentially but deliberatively, in their research inquiries and pedagogical practices.

It is our contention that addressing this seemingly taken-for-granted array of questions will emancipate English didactics from being viewed as a portmanteau discipline which is a handmaiden to its parent disciplines. More importantly, leaving these questions unanswered is not conducive to attaining the status of a propaedeutic discipline that identifies, analyses, and serves the practical and concrete needs of teaching and learning English in Norwegian educational settings. Nor will English didactics provide a powerful intellectual impetus and scientific standing to researchers who have opted for it as their scientific field of inquiry if we fail to recognize the importance of constant theorization, reshaping, and (re-)demarcation of its scope and status. In this article, we will first set forth to briefly explore the status quo of English didactics in Norway and propose a unitary dynamic systems framework for a revisionary understanding of English didactics. Then, in order to gain insights for English didactics in the Norwegian context, we will move on to make a short excursus into three main feeder disciplines which contribute to English language teaching internationally. In the third section, we will enunciate English didactics from a three-pronged meta-scientific perspective highlighting intrinsic and extrinsic goals of English didactics, the types of knowledge it establishes, and two fallacies that lie in wait for English didactics. Finally, we conclude the article by offering some reflections on English didactics as a propaedeutic discipline.

1. English Didactics in Norway: One Static Figurehead, Three Dynamic Faces

In this section, we set out to argue that English didactics in Norway has tended to concern itself with three interrelated yet distinct types of activities 1) a scientific discipline in the Norwegian academy, 2) an academic teacher education program of studies in Norwegian universities, and 3) a professional praxis in Norwegian schools. This implies that the term English didactics ipso facto has been approached from various perspectives and perceptions and thus has been subject to different interpretations over time. Still, from another vantage point, it could be argued that English didactics, by its nature, conceivably has branched into three intertwined and multilateral activities by and for academics, students, and practitioners. These three groups reckon with and contribute to English didactics for various reasons, but also appropriate output of English didactics to inform their respective scientific, academic, and professional engagements. It should be emphasized that these three knowledge-based activities are not the same, notwithstanding the fact that they pertain to similar and valid bodies of knowledge. The intended purposes, target audiences, expedient means, types of knowledge, substance of experiences, institutional status, conceptions of knowledge, putative contexts of operation, organized practices, and system of facts or ideas that they are concerned with are differentiated enough to be considered distinct but complementary dimensions of English didactics.

Viewed as a scientific discipline in its own right, English didactics can, and should, be considered an empirical and theoretical area of inquiry which deals with English teaching-learning processes and practices within educational settings as its locus. There is no reason, however, why English didactics should not broaden its focus of inquiry to go beyond the confines of educational settings and investigate how English language learning, and even English teaching, is realized, or could better be realized, in the wild. Second, English didactics is an institutionalized academic field of study in many Norwegian universities and teacher education programs that students undertake to earn qualified English teacher status and subsequently embark on teaching English in Norwegian schools. Third, English didactics seeks to provide relevant theoretical pronouncements and concrete practical frames of reference which are, or should be, made compatible, indeed, congenial with the quintessential and real concerns, preoccupations, constraints, and questions of practicing English teachers in educational settings as part of their professional praxis that entails dealing with learning and teaching English as a school subject.

We would propose to look at English didactics as a dynamic, progressive, open, adaptive, and unitary nested system which consists of three interconnected parts that themselves could be viewed as a nested dynamic system par excellence. Each of these sub-systems of English didactics are in constant interaction with other sub-systems and any change, deliberate or otherwise, in one sub-system and its underlying processes and knowledge base will lead ineluctably to changes in the other specialized sub-systems and their attentive processes and practices. For instance, if problem situations arise with English teaching praxis in Norwegian schools, or with gaining new competences and pedagogical English knowledge by

English teachers at tertiary master's level to keep up with implementing new English subject curricula, or in meeting legislative requirements designated by governmental bodies such as the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir), then English didactics, as an academic field of study at teacher education programs in Norwegian universities, will undergo changes which originate at school level. Accordingly, academics and teacher educators at Norwegian universities whose engagement is centered on English didactics will change in step with the other two changing and evolving sub-systems of the English didactics system.

Our unitary systems approach to English didactics implies that three sub-systems hold an organic and interpenetrated connection with one another while enjoying constitutive relationality with one another. This position obviously contrasts with looking at these three dimensions of English didactics as discrete and isolated components without any chain of internal relations holding them together. The three constituent parts of English didactics, in line with the proposed conceptualization, should not be beholden to be juxtaposed in a linear and unidirectional fashion. To put this another way, none of the three constituents of English didactics, we maintain, is granted with unidirectional ebb and flow of influence on, and absolute priority over, the other two components. Otherwise, a chasm, for example, would be occasioned between the repository of scientific knowledge and disciplinary canons that academics generate and what English teachers actually do or are expected to do in classroom settings. Another entailment of perceiving English didactics as a coherent, nested, and dynamic whole, but which has three intricately interconnected sub-systems and undergoes constant changes, is that English didactics is contextualized in a wider social, cultural, political, and ideological milieu rather than being considered a purely academic discipline or a skilled practical activity per se which neither influences nor is responsive to the wider socio-cultural, historical, political, educational, or even ideological doctrines of the Norwegian context. Viewed from this perspective, English didactics not only is a self-organizing albeit interlocking system par excellence with its internal dynamics and mechanisms, but also it is a dynamic and adaptive open system which is influenced by and subjected to external forces and perturbations, and over time exhibits a tendency to equilibrium by virtue of being inextricably embedded in a larger system and adapting to changing circumstances. That is, a web of external inputs and influences are constantly exerted on intra-system dynamics and realities of English didactics by a broad range of social, political, cultural, educational, national, and historical constrains and contingencies of the Norwegian context in conjunction with global structural relations, global social order, global economy, global citizenship, and indeed global discourses of neoliberalism, democracy, social justice, social change, social identity, and so forth (Fairclough, 1999; Pennycook, 2017). On the other hand, looking at English didactics as a self-consistent, indiscerptible, and autonomous system means that synergistic and labile interactions between its sub-systems and its ongoing changes ought to be viewed as a seamless totality which grants English didactics a functionality which is invariably and qualitatively more than a mere summation of those sub-systems in isolated and piecemeal fashion.

Figure 1

Dynamic Systems of English Didactics in Norway
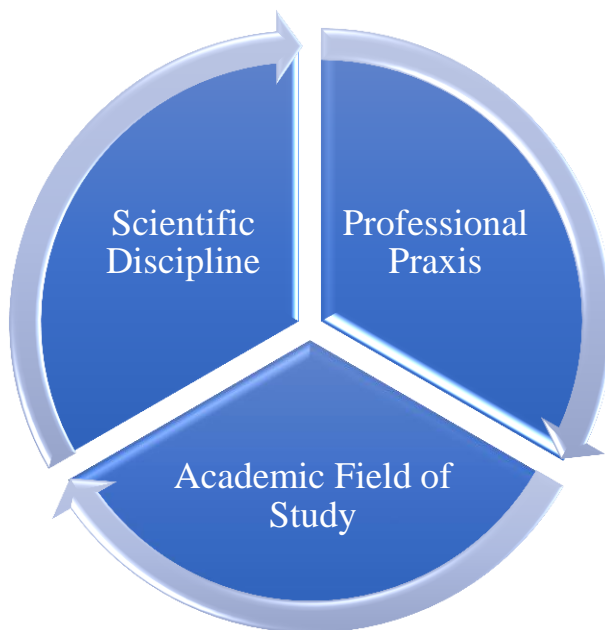
As shown in Figure 1, an internal relationality holds between the three constitutive components of the cycle of knowledge in English didactics and thereupon it is viewed qua an integrated and dynamic ensemble. This, in turn, will permit one to consider ongoing processes, interactions, flows, and the concomitant dynamicity of the tripartite totality rather than focusing on isolated, static, decoupled, and self-contained knowledge constituents. In line with our proposed systemic view of English didactics, a dialectical relationality holds between the three bodies of knowledge (i.e., the scientific discipline, the academic field of study, and professional praxis) and indeed reciprocal determination and relational confluence between those knowledge components is the sine qua non of English didactics. According to this conceptualization, each knowledge component of English didactics, and by the same token English didactics itself, changes with time and hence the past and future of English didactics and its knowledge constituent parts relate to and are actualized in their present state in a specific time and place. The arrow of the knowledge systems of English didactics accordingly moves from the past to the present to the future, displaying a tendency towards a state of dynamic equilibrium over time. This means that English didactics adjusts in response to, and incorporates, changes - both endogenous and exogenous ones - which each of its three knowledge components undergo in order to self-maintain some kind of punctuated balance between those sub-systems while granting unity and continuity to its interconnected and integral knowledge domains system. In this scenario, to

have a full picture of the flux of English didactics, we are warranted to survey its history, delve into its present status, and envisage its future direction. In the next section, we shall discuss representative feeder disciplines to English language teaching with a view to garner fresh insights about English didactics.

2. Feeder Disciplines of English Language Teaching

In this section, the three main feeder disciplines which contribute to the formation and operation of English language teaching (hereafter ELT) internationally are discussed briefly. We do not intend to depict a comprehensive nor chronological picture of ELT nor of English didactics here. The reason behind choosing not to put forward a historical account of ELT, nor for that matter teaching modern languages, is that there is comprehensive published research which has catalogued this (see Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Kelly, 1969; Lodeman, 1887). Similarly, the history of English didactics in Norway has been surveyed by other researchers (e.g., Gundem, 1990; Simensen, 2007, 2011, 2018). Because of space constraints, only three representative feeder disciplines of ELT are discussed here. These feeder disciplines, once incorporated into English didactics, will forge and have a transformative impact on its breadth and depth at "both the micro and macro levels" (Crandall, 2000, p. 34) - meaning not only in the discipline itself but also in practical instructional praxis, professional lives of English teachers, English teacher education programs, and attentive research agenda. Here, the term ELT is used when we refer to teaching and learning English as understood at an international level, whereas English didactics pertains to the de facto usage of the term in Norway.

The first discipline upon which ELT draws is theoretical linguistics - or the scientific study of language - whose aim is to establish the nature of the human language faculty and human linguistic ability. To elaborate, according to Chomsky (1965), linguistics is an inquiry that is primarily concerned with the intrinsic linguistic knowledge of "an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly" (p. 3). The focus of linguistic inquiry has been centered on syntax, which is a set of rules that explains how words are combined to form grammatical sentences. While the nexus between theoretical linguistics and ELT may appear distant or invisible for some practitioners, the former lent the latter investigations, methods, and discoveries (Corder, 1973). For instance, there was use of a data collection method called linguistic fieldwork in the preparations of new language training courses for American military personnel during WWII. Through linguistic fieldwork, theoretical linguists systematically determined basic information about target languages such as vocabulary and the morphological, phrasal, and syntactic structure from the native speakers of the target languages. Such information was then utilized to initiate, plan, and develop foreign language training programs for those American soldiers (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Wilkins, 1999). Another collaborative connection between linguistics and ELT was more visible, and stronger than would be experienced today, when highly-trained theoretical linguists in the US after WWII were hired to study the similarities and differences between the forms and structures of non-English speaking learners' native languages and those of English and discovered that such similarities and differences impacted the process, level of difficulty, rate, and degree of success in learners' English language learning processes. Such systematic comparisons helped prepare English language courses for non-English speaking learners who shared the

same mother tongues (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Wilkins, 1999). In addition, the differences in features between English and the learners' mother tongues were repeatedly emphasized in lesson planning, teaching materials design, and classroom practices in the US. The comparison has afterwards been coined "contrastive analysis" (Lado, 1957), which insinuated the application of linguistic knowledge and analysis expertise resulting in "Applied Linguistics." Therefore, the term "Applied Linguistics" was first known as a synonym for contrastive linguistics (Wilkins, 1999) and later for teaching English as a second and / or foreign language (Cook, 2003). While what has been presented so far outlines the chronological, causal development between linguistics and ELT, linguistics, as a scientific discipline, defines and controls the construction of knowledge about language and therefore language teaching, in many cases, through its initial influence on Applied Linguistics (Pennycook, 2017).

This leads to our introduction of the second feeder discipline, termed Applied Linguistics, upon which ELT is primarily based. The post-WWII era witnessed the consistent influence of Applied Linguistics in the teaching of second and foreign languages (Kramsch, 2015; Wei, 2014). Defined as the "theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue" (Brumfit, 1997, p. 39) or, similarly, an "academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the practical world" (Cook, 2003, p. 125), Applied Linguistics has broadened its domain of inquiry and scope of application with which linguistics is neither the only nor the primary feeder discipline concerned (Davies, 2004, 2007; Kramsch, 2015; Shuy, 2015; Widdowson, 2005, 2006; Wilkins, 1999). There are several language-related real-world problems that people (of course, English language teachers and learners included) experience for which applied linguists can help provide practical solutions. As highlighted by Schmitt and Celce-Murcia (2020, p. 1), "applied linguistics is using what we know about (a) language, (b) how it is learned, and (c) how it is used, in order to achieve some purpose or solve some problem in the real world". One example of the knowledge of language is "phonocentrism" (Pennycook, 2017, p. 135), a linguistic belief in the preeminence of oral language, which was adopted early by Applied Linguistics. The pedagogical implications of phonocentrism includes the discovery of the Direct Method, Audiolingualism, and Communicative Approaches; all prioritize oral language learning. The second type of knowledge, i.e., how language is learned, will be presented under SLA below, while the third one reflects the need for pragmatic competence or "the knowledge necessary for appropriately producing or comprehending discourse", "the knowledge of how to perform speech acts", and "the knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions which govern language use" (Bachman, 1990, p. 42). Based on these three types of knowledge, applied linguists can provide general practical guidance upon which English language teachers can draw for pedagogical practice (Kramsch, 1995, 2015). As concluded by Cook and Wei (2009, p. 4), the "applied linguist is there to serve [English language] teacher's needs". However, it should be remarked that, due to its widened scope and multidisciplinary status, Applied Linguistics should not be equated exclusively with teaching English as a second and / or foreign language (Cook, 2003, 2015; Cook & Wei, 2009; Widdowson, 2006). Nevertheless, its scope includes applied and practical knowledge and combined, these maintain the balance between theory and practice (Pennycook, 2017).

As one sub-field of Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition (hereafter SLA) is the third important discipline whose findings have significantly benefitted language pedagogy enterprise including ELT (Ellis, 1997; VanPatten, 1992a, 1992b). According to Ellis (2015), SLA is the field of inquiry that explores "acquisition or learning of any language other than a learner's first language that can take place in both second and foreign language contexts" (p. 19). The "second language" in SLA focuses not only on acquiring the second language but also on "any language learned after the L1 has been learned", be it the third or fourth language, and so on (Gass et al., 2020, p. 3). In consideration of, in response to, recent developments in Applied Linguistics, the field of SLA has broadened its scope to include understanding "… the processes by which school-aged children, adolescents, and adults learn and use, at any point in life, an additional language, including second, foreign, indigenous, minority, or heritage languages" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 19). What the foregoing shows is that "second language" includes any *additional* language on top of, and subsequent to, first language that a person learns and uses throughout his / her lifespan. In the Norwegian context, studies of SLA broadly explore how Norwegian native speakers acquire languages other than Norwegian or how Norwegian nonnative speakers acquire Norwegian. Therefore, the scope of inquiry within SLA does not include first language acquisition of Norwegian (i.e., L1 Norwegian), nor does it include Norwegian didactics as such (for Norwegian L1 curricula with a historical and disciplinary orientation, see Ongstad, 2015, 2020).

For Gass et al. (2020), SLA is expected to answer questions of, for instance, "how second languages are learned", "what is learned of a second language and, importantly, what is not learned", "why English language learners do not achieve the same degree of proficiency in a second language as they do in their native language", and "why some individuals appear to achieve native-like proficiency in more than one language" (p. 3), where a second language is broadly referred to as "any language(s) learned after the L1 has been learned" (p. 7) whether it be a second or foreign language. Briefly, Ellis's (2015) definition indicates the setting factor (i.e., either second or foreign language contexts), while Gass et al. (2020) seek to explain what is internalized and what the outcomes possibly are. It is worth mentioning that settings where people acquire a second language include either natural (i.e., informal, naturalistic, or untutored) or instructional (i.e., formal or guided) settings.

Some ongoing, controversial topics which are of interest to both SLA researchers and practitioners include age-related factors in the success of English language learning (Birdsong, 1999; Singleton & Pfenninger, 2018), roles of mother tongues in second language acquisition, comprehension, and processing (Paradis, 2007), and roles and necessity of consciousness in English language learning (DeKeyser, 2003; Schmidt, 1990). Indeed, research on age as a factor in English language learning is of practical importance in that it can inform not only language teachers about appropriate learning objectives and classroom activities but also educational policy makers about at what age one should be encouraged to start learning a second language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Spada & Lightbown, 2020).

Gass et al. (2020) and Kramsch (2003), however, remind us that the main goal of SLA is not necessarily intended to improve second language pedagogy but to

understand the process (i.e., developmental stages) one goes through and the outcomes (i.e., developing knowledge and skills) one accomplishes when learning a second language. Consequently, second language pedagogy receives scant attention from SLA researchers if it does not influence such process and outcomes. As this article emphasizes ELT and English didactics, we are compelled to briefly introduce here a sub-field of SLA, namely, Instructed Second Language Acquisition (ISLA), which explores "any type of L2 learning or acquisition that occurs as a result of the manipulation of the L2 learning context or processes" where the manipulation includes "an attempt, either by teachers or instructional materials, to guide, facilitate, and manipulate the process of L2 acquisition" (Loewen, 2020, pp. 580-581). In fact, the manipulation is composed of "a wide range of instructional approaches, methods, strategies, techniques, practices and activities" (Housen & Pierrard, 2005, p. 2) that the teacher plans and implements either inside or outside the classroom.

Like Applied Linguistics, its precursor, SLA (and therefore ISLA) deals with real-world issues and problems. That is, this subject of inquiry continues to provide English language teachers with ways to systematically look into problems identified in English classrooms (e.g., "why doesn't a learner learn English successfully?", "why don't all learners achieve the same (high) level of English language proficiency?", "why do some language-related errors persist in learners' productions", etc.) and with optimal practical solutions to such questions regarding the practice of ELT (Kramsch, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Tarone, 2015). Such questions confirm that, from its inception, SLA has had a strong connection with second language pedagogy (Ellis, 2010, 2021). Ellis (2010) further emphasizes that "arguably, SLA is still at heart an applied rather than a pure discipline" (p. 183) and introduces how SLA research activities can intimately connect practitioners with researchers, practice with theory, and SLA as a field with teacher educators (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Framework for Examining SLA – Language Pedagogy Nexus (Ellis, 2010, p. 190)
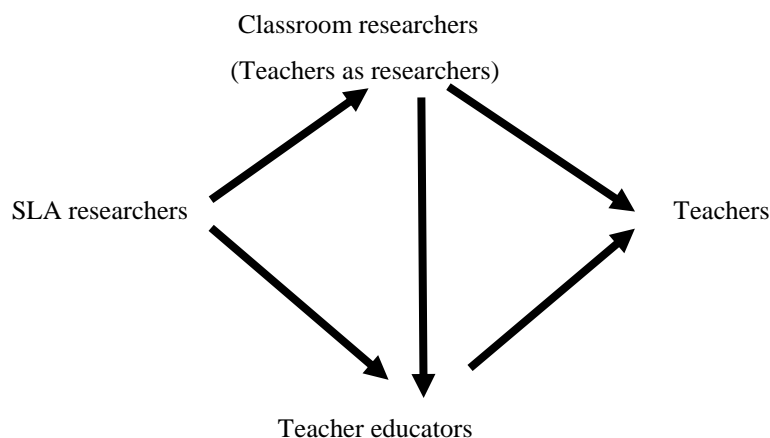
The three disciplines that feed ELT, introduced briefly above, are among several other disciplines whose investigations, methods, and discoveries help and continue to help ELT set up its goals and directions, expand its depth and breadth, and become truly multidisciplinary. Language, by nature, is an immensely complex system; as a result, knowing, acquiring, and using a language is a complex, socio-cognitive process. The same is true for learning English for non-English speaking learners due to numerous factors, some of which are language-related (i.e., a mother tongue and an English language structure) while many are not (e.g., age, motivation, intelligence, attitudes, aptitude, personality, cognitive capacity, educational policy, etc.). As a result, numerous disciplines are warranted to give us a better picture of English language learning and teaching processes and practices and to assist us in coming up with ways to optimally improve both ELT and English didactics. In addition to those three feeder disciplines, there are others whose scientific investigations have influenced how we understand language, language learning, and language teaching directly, or indirectly, through those three disciplines. For instance, the sociolinguistic approach to ELT addresses questions of whether a foreign language should be formally taught and, if so, which language or dialect, whom to teach, and how much to teach (Ferguson, 2006), while extending its inquiry to cover, for instance, identities (Benson et al., 2013; Block, 2014; Norton, 2016), race (Kubota & Lin, 2006), genders (Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004; Hruska, 2004), or multilingualism (Canagarajah, 2006; García & Sylvan, 2011; May, 2013), etc. Psycholinguistically-informed ELT deals with questions of when to teach (i.e., learner age, discussed above) and, broadly, how to teach English. "How to teach English" from a psycholinguistic perspective provides pedagogical practices that enhance, for instance, linguistic input (e.g., frequency, salience, and redundancy) (Ellis & Collins, 2009), learners' motivations in English language learning (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012), and learners' declarative memory, procedural memory (Ullman & Lovelett, 2018) and working memory (Wen, 2012).

It should be acknowledged that "English" as in English didactics in the Norwegian context, as elaborated by Rindal (2014) and Rindal and Brevik (2019b), has been influenced by a whole gamut of beliefs and premises about language proposed by linguistics through Applied Linguistics. The other constitutive element, "didactics", as in English didactics, according to Gundem and Hopmann (2002), includes action, reflection, practice, and theory, all rooted in educational sciences (i.e., utdanningsvitenskap) and educational research (i.e., utdanningsforskning), into the subject. In a similar vein, English didactics in Norway has been fashioned by, and nestled itself between, the Anglo-American tradition of "curriculum studies" and the continental European tradition of "Didaktik" (e.g., see Gundem,1992, 2008; Hopmann, 2015; Ongstad, 2021; Westbury et al., 2000). Yet, Didaktik still tends to be "the main tradition of didactics and has had the longest and most profound impact" (Gundem, 2000, p. 242) while being invoked as a general theory for subject pedagogy (i.e., fagdidaktikk) in the Norwegian teacher education and schooling tradition (Gundem, 2008; Gundem et al., 2003). Didaktik is defined traditionally as a relatively static interconnection that holds "between an educational content (what) and its methods (how) and legitimation (why)" (Ongstad, 1999, p. 173).

Besides, English studies in Norway has experienced what we propose to dub a *didactical turn* over the past three decades or so. By didactical turn in English studies we purport to signify a collective and sustained endeavor by scholars, researchers, teacher educators, policymakers, and even teachers to redefine and reconceptualize the nature of English learning and teaching, its ontological status and epistemological grounding, its conceptual frame of reference, its methodology of teaching and learning, its associated professional praxis, its curricular documents and guidelines, its textbooks, and not least, its methodological rules and methodical instruments which are employed to investigate processual trajectory of teaching, learning and using English in the Norwegian context both within educational settings and in social milieu (for a historical survey of English didactics in Norway see Lund, 2002; Rindal & Brevik, 2019a). Accordingly, English studies in Norway has become an a priori didactical discipline which sets out to cast light on dynamic and complex interrelationships which concatenate school, society, and academy by dint of English learning-teaching nexus and accordingly offers a system of synthetic propositions and spatio-temporally novel solutions that are pedagogical-practical in character - that is, they are a set of descriptive and explanatory statements with didactical overtones about mediated activity of English learning-cum-teaching that stand in fundamental coherence and harmony with a proliferated body of empirical facts that are gleaned, ordered, interpreted, and disseminated. This suggests a strong connection is forged and evolved over time between English as a discipline, teacher education program of study, and professional praxis as we have argued here. However, research on English didactics in Norway has been predominantly classroom-based and school-bound, reflecting the scope of the subject, i.e., "the teaching (and learning) of English, including theory and practical applications", that Rindal and Brevik (2019b, p. 419) define. In addition, Rindal (2014) reminds us of the sociolinguistic aspect of English and the global role and spread of English (e.g., English as Lingua Franca) that not only has influenced English didactics curricula in Norwegian schools but also has induced a wide variety of mutative changes in English language use in Norway.

While English didactics in Norway presumes the accumulative and multisource knowledge of the subject can be applied pedagogically, as any body of scientific and professional knowledge is expected to be applied in some way in order to be socially, politically, culturally, and institutionally responsible, we believe that such customarily assumed applicability and multisource outlook do not necessarily warrant the field of English didactics to be applied nor transdisciplinary per se. With a view to interdisciplinary input and the feeder disciplines to ELT discussed in brief herein, we determine that English didactics in Norway has a three-fold task if it purports to be in consonance with cognate academic disciplines such as ELT. First, it must appropriate the evidence, propositions, theoretical persuasions, intellectual content, and conceptual apparatus provided cross-disciplinarily by the feeder disciplines and intra-disciplinarily by its own sub-fields to construct a comprehensive, synthetic, and self-consistent conception of the English learning-teaching processes and practices. Second, it must put forward effective ways of individualizing its own unifying principles and tenets to concrete and actual practices, affording both regularity and particularity to English teaching and learning

practices and processes. Third, English didactics must examine its own methods of discovery and research techniques and procedures in order to establish itself as a rigorous scientific and professional discipline with its own distinctive aim, function, significance, transdisciplinary ideals, topics, problems, transcendental purview, and indeed unified and unifying knowledge systems. In this way, knowing what we know about English didactics and knowing how we know in English didactics, two interdependent sides of the same scholarly activity, are given due credit. In the next section, we turn to a brief discussion of three meta-scientific perspectives concerning English didactics.

3. Meta-Perspectives on Scientific Discipline of English Didactics

In this section, we aim to put forward some arguments regarding English didactics from a three-pronged meta-scientific perspective. It is our contention that examining the normative features and metatheoretical underpinnings of English didactics due to their considerable impact on processes and practices of empirical investigations is pivotal for establishing a correspondence, inter alia, between universal explanations and particular instantiations, general knowledge and specific knowledge, and more importantly theory and practice. To this end, first we discuss the intrinsic and extrinsic goals of English didactics, then move on to know-that and know-how as two distinct types of knowledge that English didactics must attempt to generate, and finally two fallacies in English didactics are examined.

3.1. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals of English Didactics

It is our contention that English didactics in the Norwegian context - if it intends to eschew being considered a peripheral and dilettantish area of inquiry and to make scientific progress - has no option but to commit itself to a constant (re)articulation of its intrinsic goal to understand and explain the teaching and learning of the English language coupled with defining, anticipating, solving or at least thinking through the real-world problems or utilitarian concerns related to teaching and learning English in educational milieus. Our position is that the epistemic goal of knowledge-enhancement and the extrinsic goal of problem-solving and answer-providing of English didactics do not necessarily stand in exclusive disjunction with one another. English didactics needs to entertain both types of knowledge to develop adequate theoretical-practical models and procedures to account for the complexity and dynamics of English learning-teaching phenomena without continuing to thrive on the basis of reducing its knowledge base to one or the other. Rather, both intrinsic and extrinsic goals of English didactics stand in an independent but complementary relationship to one another, establishing in tandem a systematic and organized body of knowledge about quotidian, and oftentimes disarrayed, experiences of teaching and learning English.

Intrinsic and extrinsic goals of English didactics - when viewed through the lens of a propaedeutic discipline - arguably are inseparable aspects of doing English didactics and jointly yield insights which would be impossible otherwise. Consequently, if English didactics as a fledgling specialized discipline intends to make steady and inexorable theoretical or empirical progress without being inhibited, it must generate a systematized and new body of factual knowledge and

make a set of interrelated factual propositions about English teaching and learning that hold across the board. Accumulating an incremental repertoire of scientific facts and substantiated observations is brought about by foregrounding the empirical side of investigations in English didactics. On the other hand, the scientific progress of English didactics is not viable simply by the mere accumulation of scientific facts, observational evidence, and empirical data unless a body of theories and theoretical frameworks are engaged to unify, explain, analyze, collate and hence establish systematic connections, provide adequate interpretations, and draw informative conclusions about clusters of empirical observations, generalizations, data, and facts.

The scientific growth of multi-dimensional yet unitary dynamic systems of English didactics in terms of producing quality, new theoretical and practical knowledge by virtue of using scientific methods and innovative patterns of enquiry is contingent upon accumulating knowledge which is motivated by its intrinsic goal of discovering and establishing general novel facts about the English learning-teaching processes. On the other hand, given one of its core functions that defines it as the kind of discipline it is, it is quite reasonable to argue that English didactics caters for relevant and particular practices by reference to unique and contingent educational realities too. One may grant that pursuing the intrinsic theoretical interests and extrinsic practical goals of English didactics as a purposive knowledge-seeking activity, as advocated in this article, entails focusing on the actual, consistent, and relevant influence of English didactics on changing the surrounding educational, scientific, and practical activities at a given time and place. On the other hand, English didactics is supposed to center its focus on the substantive problems and concerns of English teaching-learning situations which are identified, lifeworld solutions which are proposed, and practical actions that are recommended. Therefore, dealing with concrete problems of a theoretical nature and theoretical problems of a concrete nature with varying degrees of generality and generalizability are both sides of the same goal that English didactics should pursue. In the next sub-section, we will sketch some aspects of the knowledge base of English didactics.

3.2. Know-That Knowledge and Know-How Knowledge About / of English Didactics

Another meta-scientific observation about the nature of the systematic fund of knowledge that English didactics generates and wields is relatable to a distinction that is made by Gilbert Ryle (1945, 1949) about two different kinds of knowledge, that is, *knowledge-that* and *knowledge-how*. Knowledge-that is knowledge of facts and propositions, knowing that something is the case whereas knowledge-how is a knowledge one knows how to do something. In other words, knowledge-that is acquiring information, facts, and truths that are imparted to us and can be declared propositionally while knowledge-how is a skill, a procedural ability or a battery of dispositions to skillfully act and do things (Ryle, 1945). We submit that English didactics should germinate both *knowledge that* various theoretical accounts and studies yield and *knowledge how* practical preoccupations and cases of classroom practices of English teaching and learning can be addressed. We do not, however, propose to claim that these two knowledge categories inevitably are exclusive of one another. Contrary to the prevailing view, knowledge-that and knowledge-how are

two complimentary standpoints that jointly form the scientific and systematic knowledge base of English didactics and, in turn, bring organization and order to the flux of observational evidence and subjective experiential data that are collected about a rich matrix of English teaching and learning processes and practices.

From the vantage of the framework proposed here, English didactics goes beyond the province of pure theoretical knowledge (i.e., know-that) that consists of context-free assertations, factual propositions, empirical generalizations, and value-free laws with universal validity. Likewise, English didactics transcends the domain of pure practical skill (i.e., know-how) that consists of context-dependent observations, experiential precedents, value-laden exigencies, and coherent interpretations. Although know-that knowledge and know-how knowledge that English didactics affords are distinguished here, it is arguably the case that the relation between them when it comes to the English teaching-learning nexus is mutually constitutive. Following from this, coalescing these two kinds of knowledge - seeking general laws and commonalities and engaging with concrete structured patterns and particularities - brings about an emergent scientific and professional knowledge termed English didactics. Accordingly, English didactics deals with objective qualities of generalizable descriptions, stateable regularities, existential assertions, and universal principles about austere scientific study of English learning and teaching processes. Equally important, English didactics is bestowed with demonstrative qualities of effectiveness and meaningfulness about the real and experienced world of the English classroom and the attentive practical activities and orientations. In other words, English didactics sets itself a two-pronged task of articulating factually *what is* and evaluatively *what ought to be* English learning-teaching processes and practices.

Scientific progress of a theoretical or practical nature of English didactics, admittedly, could be accomplished by simultaneous accumulation of factual knowledge and accounting for that factual knowledge in a recursive fashion over time. Whereby, English didactics would be well-positioned to make scientific generalizations and develop novel theories and conceptual models about English-related phenomena while not losing sight of the context-specific and locally situated particularities and unique idiosyncrasies that are part and parcel of dealing with any culture-cum-human oriented activity such as learning and teaching English in the wealth and fullness of sociohistorically-fashioned educational ambients. Admittedly, the knowledge-that and knowledge-how of English didactics complement and do not supplant one another and their co-agentive interplay and relational unity obviates the inveterate division between context of discovery (i.e., theory) and context of application (i.e., practice) in English didactics.

Additionally, combining knowing-that with knowing-how profitably yields insights which are relevant and useful to the particular context and actualities of the English teaching-learning process while honoring objective descriptions, scientific explanations, parsimonious principles, theoretical generalities, and the empirical verifiability of data across specifiable contexts of the English learning-teaching enterprise. Indeed, our proposition that English didactics is warranted to reckon with both knowledge-that and knowledge-how in concert with one another exemplifies

the fact that neither knowledge-that nor knowledge-how alone is adequate to provide a veridical account of the English-oriented practices, issues, needs, concerns, and problems associated with the English teaching-learning processes. It is perhaps uncontroversial to claim that the *materia medica* of English didactics is engendered by a dialectical interchange between the centrifugal push of the generality and the centripetal pull of the particularity of its scientific knowledge claims. Similarly, a proposition could also be made about the (seemingly) inexhaustible realities of English learning-teaching processes and practices, wherein a harmonious fusion of propositional knowledge (i.e., knowledge about universal) and practical knowledge (i.e., knowledge of particular) is entailed. Following on from this discussion the next sub-section discusses two instances of defective reasoning about the relationship between English didactics and its foundation disciplines.

3.3. Adduction Fallacy and Reduction Fallacy in English Didactics

Another meta-scientific point that needs to be recognized pertains to the issue that doing English didactics, like any other form of doing science, is a human activity with all its complex factors and multifaceted aspects and is thereby susceptible to postulating confounding suppositions and taking fallacious ideas for granted. We propose that English didactics in Norway has a proclivity for committing two fallacies: a) the adduction fallacy and b) the reduction fallacy. By adduction fallacy, we mean the assumption that English didactics does not have an autonomous identity, characteristic principles, and distinguishing ethos as a scientific and professional discipline sui generis, but is a miscellaneous and discerptible aggregate of metatheoretical, theoretical, conceptual, analytical and methodological categories which are imported and added in an unmediated and indiscriminate fashion to the field from its discipline-bound progenitors including general didactics, English linguistics, English literature, second language acquisition, and so forth.

Considered in line with the adduction fallacy, English didactics nominally is a disciplinary rubric, yet is devoid of the juggernaut of synthesis that is capable of interrelating and fashioning all insular inputs and discrete academic scholarship from other contributing disciplines into an integrative and architectonic whole to be used by researchers, students, and practitioners. English didactics therefore is not considered a coherent nor mediatory academic field with a grand paradigmatic umbrella and sui generis scholarly agenda which simultaneously unifies and differentiates its distinct characteristics. Rather, English didactics, according to the adduction fallacy, is viewed as a heteronomous and heterogenous field of inquiry whereby exogenous disciplines impose their necessarily fragmentary and discursive knowledge - or what we might venture to term "conceptual blinders" - unilaterally on all elements of the polythetic reality of the English teaching and learning processes and practices. Correspondingly, English didactics does not have its own unifying ontological, epistemological, conceptual, and methodological bona fides. But, as an amorphous and degenerative field with porous boundaries and a nebulous academic agenda, English didactics is constituted entirely and exclusively by the myriad discrete disciplinary domains it is dependent on for its modus operandi. Consequently, there is no flow of knowledge from English didactics to its diverse

and transgressive feeder disciplines, nor is any novel and original corpus of knowledge generated by English didactics on its own as such.

By reduction fallacy, we mean the assumption that English didactics is viewed as reducible wholesale to, or even is identical with, its split-off foundation disciplines such as English linguistics, English literature, second language acquisition, general didactics, and so on. In this way, each of the parent disciplines which contributes to English didactics serves as a synecdochic representation of it whereby English didactics loses its autonomous identity with no defining criteria of its own. This usually means English didactics is ontologically reducible to, or is nothing more than, the scientific domain of general didactics, for example. Therefore, observational techniques, research methodologies, theoretical frameworks, conceptual apparatus of, for example, general didactics could adequately describe, understand, and explain the subject matter, quotidian concerns, and problematic situations which fall within the scientific and professional domain of English didactics. In effect, the misguided idea of the reduction fallacy presupposes English didactics and its associated knowledge base are isomorphic, if not ontologically identical, with each one of its major contributing disciplines. The differences and specificities between English didactics and its feeder disciplines, the argument goes, are eliminated, or regarded as irrelevant.

One derivative corollary of the reduction fallacy is that categories, observations, findings, empirical facts, methods, and phenomena concerning the English language learning-teaching enterprise can be accounted for and deduced from those of the feeder domains of knowledge such as general didactics, English linguistics, second language acquisition, English literature, and so forth. Another ramification of the reduction fallacy is that English didactics is explainable in terms of the theoretical concepts and scientific terms of epistemically prior disciplines such as English linguistics, general didactics, educational psychology, English literature, second language acquisition, etc. This aspect of the reduction fallacy means that English didactics does not have its distinct repertoire of concepts and terms and, by the same token, issues and problems that it identifies and addresses are not fundamentally at variance with those of the adjacent disciplines that English didactics relies on for its scientific and professional insights. The last practical consequence of the reduction fallacy is that English didactics could not provide its own factual, useful, and nuanced solutions to actual practice-oriented problems and theory-anchored issues. Relatedly, practical problems and theoretical issues of English didactics must be identified, analyzed, catalogued, and encompassed in whole by one or more of its parent disciplines. The reduction fallacy hence casts serious doubts about the raison d'être of English didactics. By no means is it self-evident how, if at all, English didactics and its associated knowledge community will have an enduring presence in the Norwegian context if English didactics succumbs in the long run to adduction and reduction fallacies and their insidious effects. In Table 1, two paradigmatic vantage points about the parasitic connection between English didactics and its contributing disciplines qua two fallacies are summarized.

Table 1

Two Positions on Parasitic Connection Between English Didactics and Its Feeder Disciplines

Paradigmatic Perspective	Relation Between English Didactics and Its Feeder Disciplines
Adduction Fallacy	English didactics is nothing but an additive montage and side-by-side juxtaposition of English linguistics, English literature, general didactics, and second language acquisition, etc.
Reduction Fallacy	English didactics is nothing but English linguistics, English literature, general didactics, second language acquisition, etc.

In the following section, we draw some conclusions about English didactics.

4. Concluding Notes

The general aim of this article is to invigorate professional deliberations and disciplinary discourses concerning the scope and nature of English didactics in Norway and make it viable for researchers, teacher educators, and indeed (student) teachers to gain a deeper and more tenable understanding of the field that they pursue academically and professionally. The desire of the English didactics discourse community that our discipline should rank as an academic discipline with a scientific and professional posture is a palatable aspiration. Yet there are fundamental questions regarding English didactics and its associated disciplinary practices remaining to be addressed properly. We endeavor to entertain a simple albeit paramount question about English didactics viz., is English didactics a propaedeutic or parasitic discipline? We maintain that if English didactics as a transdisciplinary field fails to deal properly with some substantive issues including the said question, it will remain a parasitic discipline and knowledge enclave with neither epistemic authority nor professional autonomy whilst being dependent wholesale on other disciplines for its functioning, research inquiries, conceptual profile, and scientific practices. English didactics will not thereby gain status of a veritable propaedeutic discipline that - in the virtue of its epistemically coherent and unitary systems of knowledge - deals autonomously with the systematic investigation and solving of the whole spectrum of teaching-learning-driven problems and issues of practical or theoretical import.

We argue that English didactics must pay attention to features that reconfigure and demarcate its boundaries from that of possible competitor disciplines and therefore differentiate its authentic knowledge type from the encroaching types of knowledge of rival disciplines. Significantly, we contend that English didactics conceived as a propaedeutic discipline transcends the boundaries of its contributing disciplines including English linguistics, English literature, general didactics, second language acquisition, and so forth. Thus, in the Norwegian context, propaedeutic English didactics should, but currently hardly does, serve as a mediating function between a myriad of theoretical and practical disciplines and domains of knowledge and be able to define, address, and solve an array of English teaching and learning problems as they are encountered over time. In fact, we define English didactics as a

propaedeutic, transdisciplinary, practice-mediated, scientific, problem-focused, and synthetic field of inquiry that is generated to guide a complex of contextualized and purposive actions, autonomous and judicious educational decisions, principled professional judgments, and theoretical and empirical inquiries about the processual and socio-cognitive trajectory of learning and teaching English processes and practices in novel and innovative ways. We further suggest that English didactics, like any other academic discipline, ought to resolutely desist from committing certain fallacies with respect to its nature, scope of application, posited distinctions from other disciplines, scope of inquiry, and permeable academic boundaries and interfaces.

It is plausible to state that English didactics in Norway tries, albeit in an inchoate fashion thus far, to deal with imperative what, how, and why questions about organized English language teaching-learning processes and practices. However, we argue that English didactics in Norway must evolve into a scientific and professional fund of knowledge for discovering, synthesizing, and systematizing a matrix of conceptual systems, theoretical research programs, empirical investigations, core research findings, substantive discovery procedures, practical orientations, modes of thinking, scientific instrumentation, methodologies, and techniques rather than the current disparate areas of English studies that have dealt with English teaching and learning processes and practices in a piecemeal fashion and without honed focus. English didactics, we maintain, is expected to be an autonomous, mediating, and dynamic field with its distinct and differentiated yet inherent practical and epistemic problems and contextualized solutions broadly construed. In this light, English didactics does not cordon itself off. Instead, it reflexively engages and is in mutual transaction with an expansive array of disciplines, fields, and epistemes to cross-pollinate its scientific capital, disciplinary resources, and research traditions. Therefore, English didactics brings different areas of its triadic, unitary, and time-locked disciplinary knowledge systems (i.e., the scientific discipline, the academic field of study, and professional praxis) into a self-conscious dialogue and undergoes constructive epistemic transformations with other disciplines and fields while enjoying its own ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions and indeed a collectively sustained matrix of disciplinary goals and ideals. In addition, English didactics in Norway must focus on studying English learning-teaching discourse, which by its very nature is constantly changing and complex, to make productive use of both empirical findings and (meta) theoretical frameworks whereby its primary end-users in schools and academia will be able to augur, comprehend, reflect upon, and solve practical and intellectual issues across and relative to a wide range of circumstances.

Our thesis is that generating a new body of specialized knowledge and genuine practice about a wide range of issues pertaining to the English learning-teaching nexus, and with a coherent epistemic agenda, is the main differentia of English didactics from other cognate disciplines. More specifically, English didactics deals systematically with, and furnishes the wherewithal to solve, different kinds of unresolved problems and issues of practical concern about the English teaching-learning processes that are experienced in the rough and tumble of classroom life.

Moreover, English didactics settles its attention on theoretically conceived problems and theory-impregnated matters which originate from the field itself and its supporting transdisciplinary resources, wherein recursive deployment, entwined (r) evolution, and mutual fertilization of different realms of knowledge are actualized so as to provide a pluralistic and intra-inter-trans-disciplinary basis for addressing unsolved theoretical problems of English didactics. Finally, the article intends to bring into dialogue some (meta)theoretically predicated issues about English didactics, namely, the intrinsic and extrinsic goals of English didactics, knowledge-that and knowledge-how about / of English didactics, and finally the adduction and reduction fallacies. These fallacies, implicitly if not explicitly, jeopardize English didactics' academic identity and relegate its status to an infra-scientific one and accordingly keep it a parasitic rather than propaedeutic discipline. We hope that Norwegian scientific and professional communities who are affiliated with English didactics will pay increased attention to the reflective appraisal of English didactics in Norway and develop its disciplinary resources, tenets, maxims, categories, meta-discourses, presuppositions, and axioms.

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Iranian EFL Instructors' Practical Adherence to Postmethod and Critical Pedagogy

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Abstract

Fundamental changes and novel ideas have been brought into the field of English Language Teaching through introduction of postmethod and critical pedagogy. Postmethod as an alternative to methods aimed at fulfilling its triple principles of particularity, practicality, and possibility. The well-known sub-branch of postmethod, critical pedagogy, aimed at empowerment of instructors and learners, and establishment of social justice through education. Unlike theoretical aspects of these movements, practical dimensions have not received due attention, especially in eastern contexts. This qualitative investigation sought the extent EFL instructors practically adhere to the principles of these inherently western concepts in Iran, as a sample of eastern context with its own social, cultural, and academic norms. Qualitative data collection techniques were used to obtain data from the intended instructors. Qualitative data analysis laid bare the findings that postmethod and critical pedagogy are practically adopted, to a great extent, by the Iranian EFL instructors, and the pertinent principles are being put into practice enthusiastically. Powerful communication with western communities blurring cultural boundaries was deemed to be the chief reason of such strong adoption. Ironically enough, it was revealed that in general, the Iranian EFL instructors' theoretical knowledge suffered greatly concerning postmethod and critical pedagogy. In other words, although haziness of cultural boundaries has made the room for smoothened practical realization of these trends, due attention should be paid to development of theoretical knowledge in these regards in Iranian EFL teacher training courses so as to take the utmost advantages from postmethod and critical pedagogy.

Keywords: English language teaching, postmethod, critical pedagogy, Iranian EFL instructors, practical adherence

Introduction

The question of how to teach and learn English as a foreign or second language has preoccupied intellectuals of the field for decades. Seeking the answer to this question led to flourishment of numerous theories and methods of teaching and learning. Lots of language teaching methods developed and later were pushed aside as an alternative method was introduced, with the hope that the new method is better and could compensate for the shortcomings of the previous ones. However, after development of a collection of methods, some scholars exhausted with methods and their restrictive nature and ideological loads, started to talk of demise of methods and the need to go beyond methods towards a postmethod era so as to make teachers and learners independent, and empower them. Simultaneously, the principles of critical pedagogy lent themselves to postmethod since they were so in line with what postmethodologists yearned for as side-products of postmethod, namely changing the society, establishment of social justice through education, and development of critical thinking so as to perceive ideological intentions in education to empower the marginalized through that.

Attention to a brief history of postmethod and critical pedagogy looks reasonable here. According to Richards (1990) cited in Akbari (2008b), the roots of postmethod or going beyond method could be traced back to eclecticism, which according to Rivers (1968) is used when direct application of a method is not feasible and parts of different methods are chosen according to requirements of the context to be applied in a combined fashion. Again, Akbari (2008b) states that the first scholar who used the term postmethod was Kumaravadivelu (1994), although other well-known figures of the field such as Pennycook (1989) and Prabhu (1990) played a significant role in paving the way for introduction of the notion of postmethod. Pennycook drew attentions to ideological loads of any type of knowledge, knowledge of language teaching and methods included as well; and Prabhu talked of teacher's sense of plausibility, which is a teacher's perception of what works and what does not work (principled pragmatism) in a specific context. Continuous elaborations on these issues led to creation of what is called postmethod today.

To elaborate more on postmethod notion, reference to the three principles of postmethod introduced by Kumaravadivelu (2001) is a tactful idea so as to have a brief and useful view of what postmethod strives for:

1) Practicality: Instead of relying on expert-made theories, teachers should theorize based on their practices and practice what they theorize.

2) Particularity: Teaching and learning should be localized and context-sensitive.

3) Possibility: Teachers and learners should be empowered so as to be independent and also make social transformations possible via education.

Critical pedagogy, which was introduced into the field as an adverse reaction to banking system of education, is regarded as the significant counterpart of

postmethod. Akbari (2008b) regards the linkage of postmethod to critical pedagogy as one of its strengths, and Kumaravadivelu (2003) considers critical pedagogy as a postmethod perspective on ELT. The truth is whether the relationship between these two is of a superordinate or subordinate type, these notions are strongly related to each other due to the good deal of similarities they share considering their focuses on teachers' and learners' independence, empowerment of teachers and learners, establishment of social justice and transforming society through education, development of critical thinking, attention to the marginalized groups, and use of students' real life problems in teaching English language to them.

Objectives of the Study

This qualitative research, employing quantification to some extent as well, aims at revisiting one of the significant dimensions of postmethod and critical pedagogy, namely EFL instructors, in Iran as an eastern platform. Speaking more precisely, the greatest focus of the present investigation, is to probe the extent to which these frameworks are practically feasible through teaching practices of Iranian EFL instructors, what the possible gaps or barriers are between theoretical and practical aspects of postmethod and critical pedagogy with an eye on social, cultural, institutional, and personal realities of teachers, and what could be done to strike the right balance between theory and practice in these regards.

Significance of the Study

In the late decades, the banking system of education has been receiving mounting criticisms from methodologists and theoreticians, who yearn for nurturing of critical thinking and radical changes in society and educational systems. Especially in the field of English language teaching, this trend has been growing rapidly and ambitiously, leading to creation and growth of concepts such as postmethod and critical pedagogy. Though theoretically very promising, practically these inherently western ideas could be challenging, especially in eastern contexts – such as Iran – with their cultural, social, and traditional barriers. It seems that it is time to think of practical and localization issues of postmethod and critical pedagogy and bring the other so-called peripheral factors with their huge impacts into play rather than rejoice repeatedly at the discovery of the relatively new concepts of postmethod and critical pedagogy. The purpose of the present investigation is to find out whether postmethod and critical pedagogy are feasible practically through Iranian EFL instructors' practices and to what extent they practically adhere to these trends.

To elaborate more, let us note that as maintained above, postmethod and critical pedagogy have been introduced into the field of ELT in recent decades, and therefore these disciplines are relatively recent modes of ELT thinking, at least in comparison with the previously introduced methods of ELT. Thus, there might be lots of underresearched areas in the field with these regards, one of which is practical realization of the relatively new and novel notions of postmethod and critical pedagogy. The practical challenges become even more highlighted when the context of realization (eastern context) is different from context of origination of language teaching methods (western context). Especially regarding Iranian context, the researchers noticed that not many investigations have been conducted studying

postmethod in Iran, and EFL instructors in these regards were perceived to be underresearched as well.

Research Questions

This study pursues two research questions.

1. Are postmethod and critical pedagogy practically feasible through Iranian EFL instructors' teaching practices in the Iranian EFL contexts?

2. What is the extent of Iranian EFL instructors' practical adherence to postmethod and critical pedagogy in their teaching practices?

Literature Review

In this section, a few works of research conducted by Iranian researchers and in Iranian context are reviewed so as to pave the way for further discussion of issues under investigation in the present study. The first study handpicked for presentation in this section was conducted by Khatib and Fathi (2014), the aim of which was exploration of Iranian EFL domain experts' perspectives about postmethod pedagogy. The researchers employed Delphi technique since their supposition was that Delphi technique was capable of playing a key role in quick obtainment of consensus on postmethod pedagogy for the participants who were twenty one domain experts in the field of applied linguistics in Iran. Three sets of data collection were conducted in three sets of Delphi with the same participants. The findings of the research "raised much doubt and uncertainty about both method and postmethod pedagogy" (Khatib & Fathi, 2014); i.e. methods are not realized in their appropriate and desired manners in Iranian language education, let alone postmethod. Teachers adhere to their own electic approaches based on their personal preferences, and methods do not receive the attention they deserve; thus and according to findings of the Delphi technique, postmethod too is not applicable in Iranian context.

The second study selected for presentation at this point is a study by Rashidi and Mansourzadeh (2017) conducted so as to investigate nonnative EFL teachers' viewpoints and perceptions concerning postmethod pedagogy with an eye on their contexts and needs. Through purposive sampling, ten nonnative teachers were selected and assigned to three groups according to their teaching experiences. Next, semi-structured interviews were utilized in order to elicit their perceptions regarding postmethod pedagogy. The findings of the study revealed that while nonnative teachers were unable to explicate the principles of postmethod pedagogy, they revealed to have an acceptable discernment of postmethod tenets and applications in their classroom practices; i.e. despite unfamiliarity with postmethod's theoretical and technical issues, the participants adhered to practical sides of postmethod pedagogy and used them in their teaching processes. The researchers of the study regard this finding as a sign of hope considering admission of postmethod into Iranian context, although the participants were only teachers (and not students or other experts in the field).

Another study that again dealt with the relationship between postmethod and Iranian context and was handpicked for review here, was conducted by Amiri and Sahragard (2018). The researchers of the study believed that most of the studies concerning postmethod have dealt with the theoretical aspects of it and practical realization issues have mostly remained underresearched. Thus, they investigated perspectives of Iranian EFL teachers regarding applicability of postmethod pedagogy. The participants of the study were twenty one teachers, both male and female, from different parts of the country, and semi-structured interview was used as the primary means of data collection for the study. The outcome of their research illuminated that due to the following issues language teachers do not adhere to postmethod pedagogy in their classroom practices: absence of required autonomy among teachers, teachers' job security, students' passivity, absence of critical thinking skills among students, dominance of transmission model of teacher education, inefficiency of textbooks, teachers' focus on coverage and grade pressure, demanding nature of postmethod pedagogy (Amiri & Sahragard, 2018).

As the reader might have noticed, the sample studies reviewed above deal with postmethod pedagogy in Iranian context, the overall outcomes of which are disappointing regarding not only practical application of its principles, but also familiarity with theoretical dimensions of it in Iran. Since the construct of critical pedagogy as a part of postmethod is the focus of the present research as well, a few sample studies handpicked for this purpose are going to be presented in the following paragraphs.

Moving chronologically, the first study considered for review here as a research linking critical pedagogy to context of Iran, was conducted by Safari and Pourhashemi (2012). In their investigation, they explored the problems and constraints of application of critical pedagogy in Iranian educational system. The participants were twelve English language teachers, both male and female from Yazd, Iran. Journal writing, observation, and semi-structured interview were used as data collection means for the study. As the chief outcome of their study, the researchers claimed that optimal application of critical pedagogy in Iran is not feasible.

Another study conducted in these regards is by Sarani et al. (2014). Their study investigated Iranian EFL university instructors' awareness of critical pedagogy principles, and difference(s) between Iranian EFL instructors and subject instructors in terms of applying the CP principles. Convenience sampling was utilized in this study, through which fifty five EFL and subject teachers were selected from different universities. Questionnaire of critical pedagogy attitudes was used as the mean of data collection, and the results of the study approved that there is a difference in terms of attitudes towards critical pedagogy between EFL instructors and subject teachers: EFL instructors adhere to principles of critical pedagogy more than subject teachers.

Aliakbari and Amoli (2014) conducted a research in which the researchers were interested in finding out the extent of application of critical pedagogy principles by Iranian EFL instructors in Iranian English language institutes.

Viewpoints of two hundred Iranian EFL instructors were considered in this study, and a questionnaire with reference to their age, gender, educational level, and work experience was used as the mean of data collection. The findings revealed that each of the stated factors could have a specific effect on application of critical pedagogy by the EFL instructors.

And, another study that is chosen to review here, which again deals with the relationship between critical pedagogy and Iranian context, was conducted by Atai and Moradi (2016). In this investigation as well, the focus of the research was on teachers: it investigated Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions regarding basic tenet of critical pedagogy. The data for the study were gathered through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, and a hundred forty eight participants in total took part in the research. The results of the study indicated that in general, Iranian EFL teachers supported the basic tenets of critical pedagogy.

Regarding the sample studies above dealing with the relationship between critical pedagogy and Iranian context, the reader might have contemplated that critical pedagogy is potentially more promising than postmethod in Iran since in spite of some challenges, at least EFL teachers are supportive of its principles, thus we would be hopeful to its future in Iran as an eastern context. However, the researchers of the present study regard such thought a naïve supposition – why did the findings on the relationship between postmethod and Iranian context turned to be disappointing in general, while the findings on the relationship between critical pedagogy and Iranian context turned to be promising? We know that critical pedagogy could be regarded as a subcategory of postmethod or at least there are considerable similarities between their tenets; therefore, why the findings of studies in these regards are contradictory? How reliable could the findings be? Should not we think of triangulation of the studies to judge with more confidence concerning these issues? All these questions are worthy of consideration since as was noted above the topics of postmethod and critical pedagogy are somehow new in Iranian context (and even in other eastern contexts maybe) since the origins of these approaches could be traced back to western world chiefly. Thus, the number of research projects in these regards are limited in other contexts. The present study hopes to shed more light on some of the vague dimensions of these issues.

Method

Design of the Study

The present investigation is dominantly a qualitative nonexperimental study, and it could be claimed that it is a combination of four qualitative research types: the phenomenological research, the ethnographic research, the case study research, and the narrative research. Providing a definition of each of these research types and a brief explanation on how these definitions relate to the present study context might serve as an efficient clarification on design of this study. In their book, *Research Methods in Applied Settings*, Gliner et al. (2017) define these research approaches as follows:

- **The phenomenological qualitative approach** is a qualitative research approach which helps researchers understand the meaning participants place onto events, phenomena, activities, etc.

- **The ethnographic qualitative approach** is a qualitative research approach which describes a group of individuals who share the same culture.

- **The case study qualitative approach** is a qualitative research approach in which the goal is to develop a deep understanding of a case or cases.

- **The narrative qualitative approach** is a qualitative research approach which explores the life of an individual; the goal is to identify and report stories from the participant(s).

This research is to some extent a phenomenological investigation since it aims at delving into the participants' perceptions of the concepts under scrutiny, i.e. postmethod and critical pedagogy. To some extent it is also an ethnographic study since it aims at describing the participants as samples of a community who share the same culture, i.e. Iranian English language instructors within Iranian context. The present research could also be regarded as case study to some extent due to its efforts in developing deep understandings about some of the participants' thoughts and ideas through in-depth interview with them. Finally, the participants picked out for in-depth interview provided some types of personal narratives; therefore, it might be justifiable to claim that the present investigation is also narrative to some extent.

Participants

The participants of this investigation were 30 English language instructors, all of whom were picked out through three nonprobability sampling techniques: convenience sampling, purposeful sampling, and snowball sampling. These non-probability sampling techniques were in-line with qualitative research paradigm of the present study. Regarding the first round of data collection, which included questionnaire submission on the part of the researchers via WhatsApp messenger, the participants were picked out through convenience sampling as the first step of nonprobability sampling. As the second step of nonprobability sampling for this investigation, purposeful sampling was conducted – out of the accessible populations, instructors were chosen who were professional enough to fit into the context of a research project dealing with postmethod and critical pedagogy. As the final step of nonprobability sampling, snowball sampling was regarded, and participants who had agreed to take part in data collection process were asked to submit the questionnaires to any other colleague they assumed to fit into the context of this investigation.

Now let us touch upon the criteria regarded for selection of these instructors, and review the characteristics of those who actually took part in data collection for this research. Gender of the participants was not an important criterion for this study, and the participants included both ladies and gentlemen. The instructors were supposed to be graduated in English language, teach adult language learners at the time of data collection and have at least 2 full years of language teaching experience

to adult language learners. The participants were mostly in their thirties. The least experienced instructor had 2 full years and the most experienced instructor had 13 full years of experience in teaching English language to adults.

It should be noted that for the second round of data collection (in-depth interview) purposeful sampling was utilized again. However, this time the sampling process was conducted within these 30 participants, and 5 participants were picked out for in-depth interview. The criteria for selection of these instructors were firstly their comments provided in the questionnaires, and secondly their teaching experiences.

Instruments

The instruments utilized in this research were a questionnaire and a set of interview questions. These instruments were employed for data collection processes. For the first round of data collection, i.e. questionnaire submission to participants, a questionnaire was written which contained thirteen partially open-ended questions – questions with Likert scale items to choose and an extra space for each question for participants' comments. Here, the reader might wonder what could be the justification(s) for utilization of Likert scale questionnaire format for a research like this with high inclination towards qualitative paradigm, and the researchers' answer would be that for the sake of clear and to-the-point operationalization of the participants' preferences, such format was assumed to be appropriate. However, to make up for use of such quantitative means of data collection, as was maintained, a space was provided for each of the items (besides in-depth interview after data collection through the questionnaires) encouraging the participants to share their comments verbally, which is in-line with qualitative research paradigm. Considering number of questions in the questionnaire (13 questions) and the frameworks according to which these questions were written, it should be noted that two frameworks were regarded for this purpose one of which contained ten items and the other three items. The first framework is by Kumaravadivelu (2003) called *Macrostrategic Framework* with the following principles:

- Maximize learning opportunities.

- Minimize perceptual mismatches.

- Facilitate negotiated interaction.

- Promote learner autonomy.

- Foster language awareness.

- Activate intuitive heuristics.

- Contextualize linguistic input.

- Integrate language skills.

- Ensure social relevance.

- Raise cultural consciousness.

The second framework is by Stern (1992) with these items:

- The intra-lingual and cross-lingual dimension

- The analytic-experiential dimension

- The explicit-implicit dimension

The questionnaire and the interview questions were prepared according to the items of the above-mentioned frameworks as the principles. As the subprinciples, there was also an eye on items introduced for critical pedagogical teaching in Iran by Akbari (2008a):

- Base your teaching on students' local culture.

- Regard learners' L1 as a resource to be utilized.

- Include more of students' real-life concerns.

- Make your learners aware of issues faced by marginalized groups.

Finally, it might be noted out to satisfy the requirements of validity and reliability, opinions of three experts in the field were considered after preparation of the preliminary version of the questionnaire. Moreover, the questionnaire was piloted with five participants prior to the final revision. The utilized questionnaire is available in the appendix section of the present research report. Furthermore, the pieces of advice provided by the three experts in the field mentioned above were regarded before the final preparation of the interview questions, most of which were drawn from the questionnaire items for more in-depth investigation of the intended issues.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

For the present research, two rounds of data collection were conducted. The first round included submission of the questionnaires to the participants of the study. The second round of data collection was conducted through interviewing some of the participants so as to extract the proper answer(s) to the research question(s).

Due to the Covid-19 conditions, the questionnaires were submitted to the participants through WhatsApp messenger. The questionnaires were in PDF format, and the participants were supposed to submit their answers by typing them in the chat space, or taking photos of their answer sheets, or scanning their answer sheets and submitting them in PDF format. The received answers were saved and categorized by the researchers, and the numbers of options chosen for each of the questions were counted manually. Since this study falls under the qualitative research paradigm, a type of descriptive statistics, i.e. percentage calculation, was supposed to be appropriate for reporting the frequency of the chosen options. Thus, the percentages were calculated to report the results more efficiently, offer a more tangible view of the findings, and for the sake of easier comparison of the obtained results.

Also, comments provided by the participants were scrutinized by the researchers, thematically analyzed, and notes were taken. Then, five participants were handpicked for in-depth interview. Selection of the interviewees was based on the extra comments they had provided in their questionnaires and also their teaching backgrounds. Interviews were also carried out through WhatsApp messenger due to the Covid-19 conditions. The files were saved, investigated, and thematically analyzed, and notes were taken.

Results

In the above sections, it was noted that two frameworks were regarded for writing the questionnaire items. The first framework was by Kumaravadivelu (2003) called Macrostrategic Framework embracing ten items, and the second framework was by Stern (1992) holding three items. The following Table represents distributions of the results obtained from the instructors through the questionnaire. In the Table, questions 1 to 10 respectively refer to the questionnaire items written according to Kumaravadivelu's Macrostrategic Framework, and questions 11 to 13 respectively refer to the questionnaire items written according to Stern's framework.

Table 1

Distribution of the Instructors' Questionnaire Results

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Q 1	90	10	0	0	0
Q 2	60	26.6	0	13.3	0
Q 3	90	10	0	0	0
Q 4	36.6	50	13.3	0	0
Q 5	36.6	50	6.6	6.6	0
Q 6	66.6	20	6.6	6.6	0
Q 7	80	20	0	0	0
Q 8	43.3	50	6.6	0	0
Q 9	43.3	43.3	13.3	0	0
Q 10	73.3	13.3	13.3	0	0
Q 11	30	50	6.6	13.3	0
Q 12	60	33.3	0	6.6	0
Q 13	20	60	6.6	13.3	0

*All numbers are in percentages.

*Q = Question, A = Agree, D = Disagree, U = Undecided, S = Strongly

In the first place, let us have a general interpretation of the results according to what the Table above demonstrates. An overall glimpse at Table 1 reveals the fact that distribution of the results is not dispersed; i.e. perhaps a continuum could be imagined in these regards at one end of which no one has chosen the "strongly disagree" option, and at the other end most of the participants have chosen the "strongly agree" option. Such density at one end of the continuum ("strongly agree" and "agree" options) and such sharp inclination in the results are meaningful, especially with consideration of the point that the questionnaire submitted to the instructors was written in a way that the more positive the options chosen, the more in-line with principles of postmethod the participants' ideas would be. Thus, it could be safe to claim that generally speaking, these instructors – as samples of Iranian EFL instructors – are for postmethod and critical pedagogy, and have positive perceptions towards these notions according to the patterns the outcomes lay bare in these regards.

Concerning the conducted interviews, the first issue asked about from the instructors was atmosphere of their classes. This item was regarded due to its fundamental role in realization of many of postmethodological and also critical pedagogical principles. What kind of atmosphere do they practice and control in their language classes was elicited from five handpicked EFL instructors. Their reason(s) for consideration of such atmosphere, and also the extent of friendliness between them and their language learners were also asked from these participants. All the five participants were unanimous that a friendly class facilitates language learning through reduction of learning anxiety, increasing learners' motivation for learning, making them feel confident, and thus, encouraging them to participate in class activities. Due to these reasons they all said to try to conduct a friendly class and maintain a warm relationship with their learners. However, they maintained that two points should be kept in mind:

- The personality type of the instructor affects the degree and the manner such friendly atmosphere is preserved in the class.

- Such warm and friendly relationship between the instructors and their learners should be practiced within a framework of respect and discipline, otherwise the class might turn into an ineffectual fun-and-game state of affairs wasting time, energy, and budget. Therefore, maintaining a delicate balance in these regards is of paramount importance.

The second issue concerning which the instructors' ideas were elicited was their learners' reaction(s) to utilization of their L1 (mostly Turkish in the case of those learners) or the official language (Farsi) in English language learning classes. The overall response of these interviewees was that learners confirm use of any languages other than English which facilitate learning English language; especially in the early stages of learning English or whenever they encounter a problematic part that could not be resolved but through the use of a language they already know (e.g. Farsi or Turkish). However, they do not like to have this trend as the common norm of the class. The learners do not like their instructors over-use a language other

than English in the class, especially as their level ascends. After all, they attend an English class to learn and use English as the primary language of the class.

These interviewees brought up another interesting point to the researchers' attention: when English language instructors over-use a language other than English in their classes (Farsi or Turkish for example), apart from depriving their students from learning and using English properly, they threaten the face-validity of their classes and even themselves. Because their learners might take such over-use of another language as a sign of their teacher's incompetency (their teacher uses another language, because s / he is not competent enough in English). This in turn, raises other problems such as distrust in the instructor, demotivation for learning English, etc. Therefore, here as well a fine balance should be maintained in the use of L1 in English classes.

The next issue investigated through the interview dealt with language learners' reaction(s) towards inclusion of their real-life challenges and every-day concerns into their language learning activities. The instructors maintained that their learners have totally positive reactions towards incorporation of such topics into their flow of class activities and even home assignments. These interviewees mentioned that some topics in language learning materials (especially materials produced by native experts and in English-speaking countries) seem alien to their learners in Iran. The learners do not show much interest in them since they have no more to say about them. Thus, they replace these alien topics with real-life social and personal issues that Iranian learners struggle with in their social or personal lives. By so doing, the instructors asserted, their learners' participation in class activities reflects a considerable growth, and the quality of their assignments improves as well. This is because they are in the context they are talking or writing about (there is a great deal of authenticity); they have many things to say in these regards. One of the interviewees mentioned the problem-solution mode as the most fruitful type of activity for such conduction of language classes. She said she outlines a problem (taken from real-life issues), and then asks her students to offer solutions for the mentioned problem. Such activities are very controversial and fruitful regarding not only the enhancement of language proficiency, but also the enhancement of reasoning skills and critical thinking.

Development of cultural competence and the manner in which it is conducted in their English language classes, were the next issues questioned form the interviewees. Also, their learners' reaction(s) to such practice was elicited from these instructors. All these participants maintained that even though they are interested in culture teaching in their language classes, they do not find the chance to do so due to the limitations of time and their lesson plan. However, there are opportunities provided through the textbooks, learners' questions, or initiated by the instructors themselves that could be used for the enhancement of cultural awareness in their language learners. These instructors maintained that they try to facilitate such enhancement of cultural competence through explanations on target culture issues, or through comparisons and contrasts between the target culture and the home culture. Besides development of cultural awareness, it is important to notify

the learners about respect for and acceptance of all the cultures – target and home cultures included as well.

Regarding their learners' reactions towards learning the culture associated with English language, these instructors asserted that their learners show a great interest in the target culture. Especially, technological facilities, social media, and the learners' desire to communicate with other people from other communities have all multiplied their fascination with cultural aspects of English language. The interesting point is that language learners do not show much interest in ancient culture associated with English (e.g. cultural issues that trace back to 200 or 300 years ago). Such enthusiasm is alive only for contemporary culture of English communities.

Then, issues concerning the textbooks and language learning materials that these instructors use in their classes were investigated via interview – what materials they use to teach English, their satisfaction with such materials, the positive or the negative points of these materials, and whose choice they are. The interviewees mentioned two series as the textbooks chosen by the language learning institutes they were teaching at: *American English File* and *New Headway*. They said to have a high level of general satisfaction with these series. The books are comprehensive, they contain interesting topics to cover, and they are authentic. The only short-coming of these books is the way they present grammar – they do not have much to say about grammatical points, and the points mentioned are so truncated and inadequate. To compensate for such inadequacy, the instructors maintained that they consider some supplementary grammar books for their learners. On the other hand and considering their private classes, the instructors said to have total freedom in material selection; thus, they choose the materials based on their availability, their learners' levels, needs, and interests. The materials for the private classes are handpicked by the instructors themselves; therefore, they are absolutely satisfied with them, and see no considerable shortcoming in such handpicked materials.

The final issue of the interview with the five selected instructors dealt with the extent to which they feel to have freedom in their classes as language teachers, and the extent to which they are satisfied with this issue. Considering their private classes, they mentioned to have absolute satisfaction in these regards, since they have control over every aspect of the class, e.g. number of students, topics to be covered, books and materials, financial issues, etc. They can tune everything according to their learners' wants or needs. The principle of "independent teacher" in postmethod is literally realized in such cases. Moreover and considering their typical classes at the institutes, they mentioned to have freedom and control over the class in general, but not as much as their private classes. However, they are generally satisfied with the conditions in the institutes as well; i.e. it is natural to have a framework for such academic places within which everyone should operate. It facilitates order and discipline, and might increase face-validity of the language learning conditions.

According to the obtained data from the participants, Iranian English language instructors have a great extent of acknowledgment for the postmethodological principles and thus, critical pedagogy as well. They do their best to practice these

approaches to the maximum level feasible in spite of the shortcomings they might face regarding contents of their textbooks or the conditions of their classes.

As was confirmed by the interview data, even if these practitioners do not get the chances to use the postmethodological principles, they try to create the chances themselves, and make up for the drawbacks in such cases. The interesting point is that many of the language instructors do not have very detailed or deep theoretical information in these regards. However, as they see such principles work in classes other than their own, and lead to more fruitful learning or teaching experiences, they try to imitate them and are for such techniques (it might be a matter of following the more effective trends when they compare their own classes with the other more successful ones). Ironically and contrary to the focus of the present research, it seems that in our English language learning contexts, the instructors are good at practical realization of these trends; however, the majority's theoretical knowledge in these regards suffers. This shortcoming is recommended to be dealt with seriously in teacher training courses of our country.

Discussion

Prior to conduction of this study, the researchers' assumption was that trends such as postmethod and critical pedagogy are mysterious concepts for many English language instructors and in Iran. Actually, this investigation was considered to problematize postmethod and also critical pedagogy in our country, particularly regarding their practical aspects. However, the findings of this qualitative study, turned to be a surprise for the researchers since not only these approaches are very welcomed in Iranian context, but also they are being practiced at a large scale in many English language learning communities.

Based on what was maintained above, we might conclude that the gaps between theory and practice in realization of postmethod and critical pedagogy in the case of Iranian EFL instructors are very marginal, and even in some cases there are no gaps in these regards. The researchers' supposition based on the obtained data is that the reason for such insignificant gap (besides the mechanisms mentioned above) is enhancement of communicational channels – especially the Internet and social media – making feasible a more efficient connection with other communities, English-speaking communities included as well. Such easy communication with target language communities in turn, paves the way for acquisition of more information about them and changes in social and cultural ways of thinking and acting (e.g. the form of relationship between teachers and students). These modifications, affect the way Iranian EFL instructors think and act in their language classes (whether consciously or unconsciously), and this, in turn, makes them very receptive to target language norms – norms of classroom atmosphere included as well. With regard of postmethod and also critical pedagogy as inherently western notions, such high level of receptivity on the part of the EFL instructors and smoothens realization of these notions. The only gap that might arise in practical realization of postmethod and critical pedagogy, might be in cases of some very rigid institutions with very restrictive operational frameworks for the language instructors. In such cases teachers' freedom of action might be threatened, which

prevents fulfillment of the postmethodological concept of "independent teacher". This in turn could affect realization of other principles of postmethod due to the key role the language teachers play in these regards.

Due to the fact that the gaps between theory and practice in realization of postmethod and critical pedagogy in Iran are marginal, no considerable solutions are required in these regards. The only thing to point out here (referring back to the only gap maintained above concerning more freedom of action for the language instructors in some strict institutions) is to regard more freedom of action for the language instructors in institutions that are rigid in some cases. Fortunately, it seems that the number of such institutions is not substantial compared to the more flexible ones. However, to guarantee realization of trends such as postmethod and critical pedagogy (if we are for them), we should make sure that all the institutions provide the appropriate context for realization of such trends. Of course, it should be noted out that sometimes such strict operational frameworks might be needed for inexperienced instructors. However, after they become experienced enough to cope with class management issues, it would be reasonable to allow them to have more freedom of action if we yearn for postmethodological language learning classes. By so doing, the postmethodological concept of "independent teacher" comes true, which paves the way for realization of many other aspects of postmethod and also critical pedagogy, even though further research is required to corroborate the findings of the present research.

Conclusion

As was confirmed by the findings of the present investigation, Iranian English language instructors receive postmethod and critical pedagogy with open arms, adhere to the pertinent principles, and enjoy practicing these trends. Such enjoyment is to the extent that even when there are some barriers in practicing the principles and techniques of these trends, the practitioners maneuver in ways that create the opportunities to stick to the frameworks to the furthest extent possible despite their truncated theoretical knowledge. The issue of truncated theoretical knowledge on postmethod and critical pedagogy is strongly recommended to be noticed by EFL teacher training courses in Iran so as to obtain more fruitful outcomes in these regards. The enthusiast researchers in the field are encouraged to conduct more postmethodological and critical pedagogical studies in Iranian contexts so as to shed more light on the dim dimensions of these underresearched trends in our country.

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Appendices

The questionnaire submitted to the instructors is brought here. The reader might be reminded that these thirteen questionnaire items were written based on the postmethodological frameworks (with an eye on critical pedagogical principles) mentioned above. Due to limitations of space, the interview questions (which were similar to the following items, but more in-depth) are not brought here. It should be noted out that five options of "strongly agree", "agree", "undecided", "disagree", and "strongly disagree" followed each of the questions below, besides the statement "Please provide your comment(s) or your justification(s) for your choice." The participants were supposed to choose an option, and then provide their comments or justifications in the blank spaces provided for this purpose. Once more, due to limitations of space, the mentioned parts are not brought after each of the questions below. The interested reader might email the corresponding author to have the full version of the questionnaire and also the interview questions.

Appendix

Questionnaire Submitted to the Instructors

Question 1: To maximize language learning opportunities, it is a good idea to include a wise portion of side-issues in the process of language learning as the lesson unfolds. (Examples of "side-issues": students' real life concerns related to the lesson, explanations on practical use of a new word or expression, free discussions related to the lesson, etc.)

Question 2: A justifiable occasional use of learners' L1 could serve as an efficient vehicle to minimize probable misunderstandings in the process of language learning (for example, use of L1 in explaining the meaning of abstract vocabularies or difficult grammatical rules).

Question 3: Providing the chance and encouraging the learners to initiate a topic or react to a topic initiated by other learners or the teacher would lead to a more fruitful language learning experience. (The topic of discussion could be related to their real-life concerns, or their ideas on an issue.)

Question 4: Making language learners autonomous by teaching them learning strategies or how to self-check is a good way to make sure that language learning proceeds efficiently.

Question 5: Due attention should be paid to formal (grammatical) aspects of learners' language knowledge since accuracy is no less important than fluency.

Question 6: Language learners learn about grammatical rules of English language through "self-discovery" better than through direct presentation of grammar; for example, providing examples for them to infer the grammatical rule is more effective than teaching them the rules directly.

Question 7: Contextualization of linguistic input (use of language in authentic contexts) ensures better understanding and learning of English language.

Question 8: The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing should be regarded, presented, and learned as a whole and in an integrated fashion.

Question 9: Deriving topics of language learning from learners' real-life social and personal issues uplifts learners' interests in language learning since by so doing, they realize what they study in the classroom has practical value due to its relevance to their real lives. This also leads to better language learning outcomes in general.

Question 10: Cultural knowledge should receive due attention besides the four language skills mentioned above. To this end, language learners can use comparisons and contrasts between their own culture and L2 culture.

Question 11: Total banishment of L1 in English language classes is not a wise idea. L1 could be used more frequently at initial stages of language learning, and as learners advance such use of L1 would be limited.

Question 12: Grammatical aspects and communicative aspect of a language are complementary to each other. Thus, both should receive due attention simultaneously to ensure reasonable language learning outcomes.

Question 13: Instructors need not present everything explicitly, they can leave some aspects of language to be acquired automatically by learners through subconscious processes.

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The Interplay of Gender, L2 Grit and Academic Buoyancy Among Iranian Junior High-School Students: A Positive Psychology and Control Value Theory Perspective

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Abstract

Understanding the role of positive emotions and their contributions to the learners' overall academic success and well-being is of utmost importance. To this end, by following positive psychology and control-value theory, the researchers explored the relationship between two under-researched factors dwelling within the realm of L2 emotions and goal achievement, i.e., L2 grit and academic buoyancy. To this end, 263 junior high school students were surveyed via L2 grit and academic buoyancy scales. The results of the analyses of correlation, regression, and MANOVA revealed that L2 grit is significantly correlated with L2 buoyancy with the strong predictive power of its underlying components. Analyses also indicated that males and females significantly differ in their level of grit. The findings imply that acknowledging the presence of grit and academic buoyancy in language learners would possibly lead to positive outcomes.

Keywords: L2 grit, L2 academic buoyancy, positive psychology, control-value theory, L2 emotions

Introduction

Regardless of the role that teachers and students play within the educational milieu, guaranteeing their personal best and overall well-being is of utmost importance; however, in applied linguistics, emotions as Swain (2013) put "…are the elephants in the room – poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought" (p. 195). In fact, the dominance of cognitive-based studies on one hand (Richards, 2022) and the absence of objectivity in measuring the very flowing and unpredictable nature of emotions on the other (Dewaele, 2021) were among the reasons for which this research trend was marginalized. However, in recent years, the tip of the iceberg has been revealed (Agudo, 2018). Six years after Swain's metaphor, Prior (2019) signals that the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and applied linguistics now enjoy an acceptable rate of emotion-based studies, and Dewaele (2019) argues that the so-called *room* has turned into a farm filled with flying elephants; however, applied linguists must focus on feeding and taming these elephants and prevent their transformation into fire-breathing dragons.

Theoretically speaking, the introduction of Positive Psychology (PP) (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) as a branch of humanistic paradigm and value-laden schools of thought (Prinzing, 2021) has opened a window through which researchers are able to look upon the status of emotions within various contexts. For instance, drawing upon Fredrickson's (2003) "Broaden and Build Theory", MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) announced the arrival of PP into the realm of applied linguistics by pinpointing five functions of positive emotions, namely "providing opportunities for further thinking and exploring the new experiences, enabling individuals to deal with negative feelings, building resilience within one's characteristic, promoting social bonds, and leading individuals towards greater well-being" (pp. 197-198). In addition, PP enables the scholars to tap into different realms of emotions and high-level mental attributes including empathy, meaning, perseverance, agency, time, hardiness, intelligence, character, and self-factors (MacIntyre et al., 2016). Furthermore, the discussion of educational emotions can be honed by the tenets of Control-Value Theory (CVT) which claims that "most emotions pertaining to students' academic learning and achievement are seen as achievement emotions" (Pekrun et al., 2007, p. 15), which are closely related to the students' perception of achievement and accomplishment. In this vein, positive entities such as enjoyment, pride, and hope along with negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and boredom are believed to be at work simultaneously and the interplay of these emotions leads to students' success or failure (Pekrun et al., 2007). The results of studies conducted in PP and CVT can pave the way for the nullification of anxiety provokers and tensions so that positive emotions such as hope, love, happiness, and joy find their way into different aspects of teachers' and students' lives and add fuel to their overall well-being and life satisfaction. Thus, the present study considers L2 grit and buoyancy to provide more evidence on the multidimensionality of perseverance which is a common construct within both PP and CVT frameworks. As will be discussed, grit refers to one's struggle to achieve a long-term goal by means of remaining interested and consistent in the path while buoyancy indicates one's trial in dealing with the daily challenges of life. The inclusion of grit and academic

buoyancy in psycho-emotional studies such as the present one would possibly add more depth to our knowledge regarding one's perseverance and commitment to fulfilling academic goals. Considering these issues, the present study would seek the answers to the following questions:

1) Is there any significant correlation between L2 grit and academic buoyancy?

2) To what extent are the components of L2 grit able to predict academic buoyancy?

3) Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL learners' grit and academic buoyancy?

Literature Review

Grit

Associated with determinism and zeal, grit refers to the fuel and drive behind one's efforts and consistency in accomplishing tasks and reaching long-term goals despite hardship and challenges (Duckworth, 2016). Gritty and diligent individuals "see life as a long-distance race and show a solid hard-working attitude and responsibility" (Liu, 2021, p. 2). This worldview indicates that being successful is not only a matter of IQ and congenital abilities (Ericsson & Charness, 1994), but also a matter of faith and enthusiasm in one's own abilities and efforts (Pawlak et al., 2021). The concept comprises two components, namely perseverance of effort (POE) and consistency of interest (COI) (Duckworth, 2016). The former refers to the extent to which an individual sustains hardiness and tries not to give up despite challenges, and the latter signals the extent to which a person remains interested in achieving long-term goals. The concept seems to be in relation to other determination-related factors. For instance, as far as academic achievement is concerned, the POE aspect of grit conceptualization has been found to play a more significant role than its COI counterpart (Akos & Kretchmar, 2017). The concept is also shown to be correlated with self-efficacy (Usher et al., 2019), engagement (Fosnacht et al., 2018), and motivation (Piña-Watson et al., 2015); however, there have been some findings that signal the unrelatedness of grit to variables such as math and reading ability (Usher et al., 2019).

Compared to psychology, SLA has paid less attention to grit. The relationship between motivation, anxiety, and grit among high and low achievers was the topic of Changlek and Palanukulwong (2015), where high achievers reflected more grit. In another study, Wei et al. (2019) looked at the effect of grit on foreign language performance concerning the mediating role of classroom environment and foreign language enjoyment in a Chinese context. The results indicated that grit has an effect on both foreign language learning performance and enjoyment; however, these inferences were not confirmed in the follow-up study conducted by Khajavy et al. (2020) where the researchers shed light on the relationship between grit and language mindsets among a sample of 1,178 university students in Iran concluding that easy tasks may not trigger grit and that individuals can fulfill easy tasks in the absence of grit and consequently suggested that high levels of grit seem to be

ineffective and even maladaptive if the pre-requisites such as minimum ability and self-regulation are absent. Moreover, Feng and Papi (2020) explored the relationship between grit, future L2 selves, L2 persistence, and motivational intensity among 94 university students. The analyzed data revealed that only POE had predictive power for motivational intensity and L2 persistence.

Due to inconsistent results from domain-general measures of grit, Teimouri et al. (2022) studied grit in relation to other motivation-related factors (i.e., intended effort, willingness to communicate, attention, and teacher perception). They were on the pursuit of a domain-specific grit scale, and fulfilled their goal by demonstrating that grit is positively correlated with language achievement. Their results were in line with Lee's (2022) study where grit was probed within 647 EFL learners at secondary and tertiary levels in South Korea. More recently, Thorsen et al. (2021) reported on the status of grit in different performance domains including English, Swedish, and Mathematics using path analysis on the data obtained from 4646 students. Results indicated that both facets of grit, i.e., interest and effort, predict grades in Swedish and math, but only the interest aspect of grit predicted the scores in English. Next comes the results of Li and Li (2021) who labeled general grit and L2 grit as significant predictors of language achievements. Accordingly, grit and classroom environment were jointly and independently able to predict foreign language classroom anxiety in the large-scale study run by Li and Dewaele (2021) in a Chinese context where 1526 secondary students were investigated. In yet another study using a qualitative approach, Freiermuth et al. (2021) found that "gritty L2 students enjoy learning the L2, are consistently curious about the L2, are generally not bored by the L2, are confident using the L2, are extraverted—encompassing a strong willingness to communicate, have focused L2 vision, and have had experiences and/or encounters that bolstered their L2 grittiness" (p. 133).

Academic Buoyancy

Academic buoyancy refers to one's capability in coping with everyday academic and school life tensions and challenges triggered by poor performance, competing deadlines, difficult tasks, etc. (Comerford et al., 2015; Martin & Marsh, 2020). According to Martin et al.'s (2010) "5C Model of Academic Buoyancy", the concept comprises control, confidence, co-ordination, commitment, and composure which are believed to be correlated with learning enjoyment and self-esteem (Martin & Marsh, 2006). In a broader sense, academic buoyancy is linked to resilience which similarly reflects one's tenacity and perseverance in stressful and apprehensive situations and signals one's survival strengths and thriving capabilities despite negative feelings and experiences (Connor & Davidson, 2003); however, academic buoyancy is the positive version of resilience, since it builds on strengths and proactive approaches to setbacks (Jahedizadeh et al., 2019). Moreover, the traces of academic buoyancy can be tracked within another area of positive emotions, i.e., hardiness, which signals the existential courage of the individuals in maintaining physical and mental health while facing adversities and challenges and their trial to turn stress into potential advantages (Maddi, 2006). Scholars within this research trend warn us (Zhang, 2021) about the thin borderline that exists between academic buoyancy and two other positive constructs, namely immunity and coping.

According to Hiver (2017), whenever motivation and identity are exposed to tension and challenge, one's immunity comes into play by providing defensive mechanisms to minimize the challenges and disturbances. The defensive mechanisms can manifest themselves in the form of coping strategies that are consciously utilized to nullify the stress or alter its negative effects (Herman et al., 2020).

Considering the interplay of test anxiety and academic buoyancy, Putwain et al. (2015) analyzed the data drawn from 705 students to find out whether there is a reciprocal relation between academic buoyancy and examination performance. The results were positive and indicated that academically buoyant students perform better in high-stake examinations and reflect more resistance to test anxiety. The findings of a mixed-methods research conducted by Comerford et al. (2015) in an Irish context revealed that buoyant students were able to reflect upon their experiences and believed that they had control over their success which was a function of their planning and sustained effort.

Applied linguistics, however, suffers from a dearth of research as far as language teachers' and learners' buoyancy is concerned. Yun et al.'s (2018) study is one of the first to face this issue where they shed light upon the status of 787 college-level L2 learners' academic buoyancy in South Korea by structural equation modeling to find links between buoyancy and six hypothesized predictors, namely self-efficacy, self-regulation, persistence, L2 anxiety, teacher-student relationships, and ideal L2 self-concerning students' L2 achievement and grade point average (GPA). The results demonstrated the interrelatedness of the factors and showed that the academic buoyancy of L2 learners is a strong predictor of their achievement in language learning and their grade point average. Moreover, the obtained analysis signaled that the interplay of self-efficacy, motivation, and self-regulation helps the students to "develop buoyancy despite a certain degree of anxiety" (Yun et al., 2018, p. 18).

However, since no robust measure of L2-specific academic buoyancy was available, Jahedizadeh et al. (2019) responded to this call and designed a 27-item questionnaire that probed 316 Iranian university and private institute students' L2 academic buoyancy, and the results reflected that the concept comprises four underlying constructs: (1) sustainability, (2) regularity adaptation, (3) positive personal eligibility, and (4) positive acceptance of academic life. In their conceptualizations, a sustainable learner can handle low scores, teachers' negative feedback, and language learning failures. Regularity adaptations enables one to plan and specify the goals based on personal values. Characteristics such as being autonomous and independent in accomplishing learning tasks, being proud of language learning, being a trustworthy student, etc. have been listed as the properties of positive personal eligibility. The fourth factor, i.e., positive acceptance of academic life is dedicated to "delighting the process of language learning, being able to find different solutions to a single problem, handling the undesirable situations like classmates' negative attitudes and believing in language learning meaningfulness in one's life (Jahedizadeh et al., 2019, p. 7). No significant differences were reported regarding the mediating role of gender; however, the difference has been reported to be significant in terms of sustainability and regularity adaptation and participants' academic degree, i.e., diploma, BA, and MA;

yet, the generalizability of such claims requires more in-depth analyses. Recently, Yang et al. (2022) modeled the interplay of grit, academic buoyancy, and self-efficacy among 824 Chinese and Iranian EFL learners. The results indicated that efficacy and buoyancy would fuel learners' grit and help them to achieve their goals.

Considering grit and buoyancy alongside each other would provide a better picture of one's perseverance which is a common construct within both frameworks, i.e., PP and CVT. Perseverance refers to the continuation of effort for accomplishing goals (e.g., L2 learning) despite adversities and difficulties (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, n.d.). It has been argued (MacIntyre et al., 2016, pp. 29-37) that as a positive notion, perseverance includes three underlying factors, namely resilience, hope, and optimism; however, one newly born and "poorly recognized" (Pawlak et al., 2021, p. 11) infant, i.e., grit, has been added to this family. Therefore, the foremost rationale behind the present study is to provide more evidence on the nature of two constructs, i.e., grit and academic buoyancy, which theoretically reflect one's perseverance.

By and large, the manifestations of grit vary in different educational contexts (Cormier et al., 2019), and understanding the role that it plays within various contexts "will offer a new perspective for both language teachers and learners" (Yamashita, 2018, p. 2). In this regard, the present study unravels the status of grit within Iranian junior high school contexts where not only grit but also academic buoyancy has received less attention. To the best of our knowledge, Yang et al.'s (2022) study is the only existing research that aimed L2 grit and academic buoyancy in the Iranian context; however, most of their participants were recruited from higher education context and evidence from Iranian junior high schools in which English is taught as the foreign language is lacking in the literature. Moreover, as noted by Yang et al. (2022), replication studies would help to further validate the previous findings. Furthermore, earlier studies show inconsistent results regarding the role of gender in grit discussions. Girls were grittier than boys in Usher et al. (2019) and Christensen and Knezek (2014); however, in other studies (e.g., Hodge et al., 2018), no significant gender differences were identified. The present study would equally treat each gender to see whether or not there is any difference between males and females by considering Gender Similarities Hypothesis (Hyde, 2005) according to which most psychological variables are perceived similarly across the genders. Whether the same argumentation is applicable to grit and academic buoyancy is yet to be discussed in the literature. Additionally, some scholars believe that treating grit as a higher-order construct seems to be problematic for various reasons (Credé & Tynan, 2021). In one sense, the hypothesized two-layered structure posed by grit research proponents (e.g., Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) is not confirmed through Credé et al.'s (2017) meta-analysis. In another sense, studies have demonstrated that grit is a reflection of one's conscientiousness (Roberts et al., 2009), meaning that "grit and conscientiousness are probably the same constructs with different labels" (Teimouri et al., 2021, p. 159). Further, due to the vague and misguiding nature of grit, the predictive power of its components in determining L2 achievement and performance is questionable (Credé & Tynan, 2021; Li et al., 2018) and requires more attention; therefore, this study would follow

Credé et al.'s (2017) suggestion about treating each component of grit separately to see which component outscores the other in predicting academic buoyancy of L2 learners. These unturned stones and the novelty of L2 grit and academic buoyancy in SLA research (Wang et al., 2021) triggered us to revisit the interplay of L2 grit and academic buoyancy.

Method

Participants

263 students (49.8% males, $N = 131$; 50.2% females, $N = 132$) from two Iranian junior high schools with ages ranging from 11 to 15 ($M = 13$) were conveniently drawn from 12 classes (six from each school) and participated in this study. In Iran, junior high schools consist of three levels of students labeled as 7th, 8th, and 9th grades where they are taught English as a foreign language. From each grade, two classes with 23 to 28 students were involved in this study and all the students in each class were surveyed on their perceptions of L2 grit and academic buoyancy.

Instrumentation

L2 Grit Scale

Drawing on Duckworth and Quinn's (2009) conceptualizations of grit, Teimouri et al. (2022) designed and validated a domain-specific L2 Grit Scale which taps into two underlying factors, namely (1) Perseverance of effort (POE), and (2) Consistency of interest (COI) using nine items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not like me at all*) to 5 (*very much like me*).

L2 Academic Buoyancy

Designed and refined by Jahedizadeh et al. (2019), the L2 Academic Buoyancy is a 27-item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*definitely disagree*) to 5 (*definitely agree*). The scale aims at four aspects of L2 buoyancy, namely (1) Sustainability, (2) Regularity adaptation, (3) Positive personal eligibility, and (4) Positive acceptance of academic life.

Data Collection and Analysis

Firstly, a sample consisting of 30 students was randomly drawn from the schools to participate in the process of translation and back-translation of the scales from English into Persian so that the main participants face no difficulty and ambiguity during the data collection. The results of the pilot study were further analyzed to check the reliability of the scales which were found to be .713 and .872 for L2 grit and academic buoyancy, respectively. The faithfulness of meaning and colloquialness factors were checked with the help of two translators and revised and modified by the experts in the field. After ensuring confidentiality and ethical considerations along with informing the families, the participants were briefed about the study and were added to two WhatsApp groups dedicated to each gender. Further, an electronic version of the questionnaires comprising nine items for grit and 27 items for academic buoyancy was designed using Google Forms and was distributed among all the participants. The participants of the study were expected to

provide the researchers with the completed forms in approximately 10 minutes. After data collection, answers with decreasing, increasing, and constant patterns ($N = 13$) were identified and excluded. The refined data were checked for normality and other assumptions. The final data was ready for three analyses; namely (1) Pearson correlation, (2) linear regression, (3) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) using SPSS 26.

Results

Prior to answering the questions, the reliability indices for each scale of L2 grit and academic buoyancy were estimated via Cronbach's alpha showing .739 and .885 respectively. These reliability indices can be considered "appropriate", as noted by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009), who believed that a Cronbach's alpha value of .70 is the adequate reliability index for an instrument. Next, the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity of the data were ensured by checking the status of kurtosis, skewness, and scatter plot which led the researchers to find the answer to the first question by using Pearson correlation to estimate the degree of the relationship between L2 grit and academic buoyancy.

Table 1 shows the results (r (250) = .626, representing a large effect size, $p <$ .05) indicating that there was a positive and significant relationship between L2 grit and academic buoyancy. Thus, the first null hypothesis was rejected. It is noteworthy that the strength of the relationship was measured using the guidelines proposed by Cohen (1988) who referred to "small $r = .10$ to .29, medium $r = .30$ to .49, and large $r = .50$ to 1.0" (pp.79-81). By and large, the Pearson analysis showed that L2 grit and academic buoyancy are significantly correlated in a linear and positive manner indicating that as one's grit increases or decreases, the academic buoyancy fluctuates accordingly.

Table 1

Pearson Correlation Between L2 Grit and Academic Buoyancy

		Grit
	Pearson Correlation	.626**
Buoyancy	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	250

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

The second question was answered using linear regression. As displayed in Table 2., consistency of interest and perseverance of effort entered the regression model on a single step to predict 46.7 percent of academic buoyancy ($R = .684$, $R2 = .467$).

Table 2

Model Summary for Predicting Academic Buoyancy Through Components Grit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.684[a]	.467	.463	10.681

a. Predictors: (Constant), Consistency of Interest, Perseverance of Effort
b. Dependent Variable: Buoyancy

Table 3 displays the ANOVA tests of the significance of the regression model. The results indicated that the overall regression models enjoyed statistical significance (F (2, 260) = 114.02, p = .000, η2 = .467) representing a large effect size. Moreover, Table 4 displays the unstandardized (B) and standardized (Beta) regression coefficient and their significance test. The unstandardized and standardized regression weights for the perseverance of grit were .177 and .649 respectively, and they were .222, and .088 for consistency of interest. The t-values for the perseverance of effort were significant (t = 13.50, p < .05), whereas the t-value for consistency of interest was not significant (t = 1.83, p > .05). Thus, it can be concluded that components of grit significantly predicted academic buoyancy with the perseverance of effort yielding more predictive power than its counterpart.

Table 3

ANOVA Test of Significance Components of Grit Predicting Academic Buoyance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	26014.074	2	13007.037	114.021	.000[b]
1	Residual	29659.690	248	114.076		
	Total	55673.764	250			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Consistency of Interest, Perseverance of Effort
b. Dependent Variable: Buoyancy

Table 4

Regression Coefficients[a] Components of Grit Predicting Academic Buoyance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	56.795	4.062		13.980	.000
1 Perseverance of Effort	2.384	.177	.649	13.501	.000
Consistency of Interest	.408	.222	.088	1.839	.067

a. Dependent Variable: Buoyancy

MANOVA was run to investigate any significant differences between male and female groups' means on grit and buoyance to probe the third research question. MANOVA combines the dependent variables in a linear manner to produce a combination which best separates the independent variable groups. MANOVA

requires that correlations between any two variables be roughly equal across the male and female groups, i.e., homogeneity of covariance matrices. The results of the Box's test (Box's $M = 4.31$, $F = 1.428$, $p > .001$) indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices was retained. Further, the homogeneity of variances was ensured using Levene's test showing that the assumptions were met for overall grit (F $(1, 261) = .654$, $p > .05$), and buoyancy (F $(1, 261) = 2.17$, $p > .05$).

Table 5 displays the male and female groups' means of overall grit and buoyancy. The results showed that the male group had higher means than the female group on overall grit and buoyancy. Moreover, Table 6 displays the main results of MANOVA. Based on these results (F $(2, 260) = 6.70$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta2 = .049$ representing a weak effect size), it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the male and female groups' overall means on grit and buoyancy. Thus, the fourth null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Overall Grit and Buoyancy by Gender

Dependent Variable	Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Grit	Male	4.072	.055	3.963	4.181
	Female	3.790	.055	3.681	3.898
Buoyancy	Male	4.140	.047	4.047	4.232
	Female	4.025	.047	3.933	4.117

Table 6

Multivariate Tests of Overall Grit and Buoyancy by Gender

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.984	8013.351	2	248	.000	.984
	Wilks' Lambda	.016	8013.351	2	248	.000	.984
	Hotelling's Trace	61.641	8013.351	2	248	.000	.984
	Roy's Largest Root	61.641	8013.351	2	248	.000	.984
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.049	6.709	2	248	.001	.049
	Wilks' Lambda	.951	6.709	2	248	.001	.049
	Hotelling's Trace	.052	6.709	2	248	.001	.049
	Roy's Largest Root	.052	6.709	2	248	.001	.049

Table 7 displays the results of the Between-Subjects Effects. Based on these results, and the descriptive statistics displayed in Table 5, it can be concluded that (1) the male group (*M* = 4.07) had a significantly higher mean than the female group (*M* = 3.79) on overall grit (F (1, 61) = 13.03, *p* < .05, partial η2 = .048 representing a weak effect size) and (2) there was not any significant difference between male (*M* = 4.14) and female (*M* = 4.02) groups' means on buoyancy (F (1, 261) = 2.99, *p* > .05, partial η2 = .11 representing a weak effect size).

Table 7

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects of Overall Grit and Buoyancy by Gender

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	Grit	5.248	1	5.248	13.038	.000	.048
	Buoyancy	.865	1	.865	2.990	.085	.011
Error	Grit	105.066	261	.403			
	Buoyancy	75.505	261	.289			
Total	Grit	4172.926	263				
	Buoyancy	4459.488	263				

Discussion

The domino of L2 emotions led us to a newly debated positive construct, i.e., grit, that as mentioned earlier, is discussed relative to one's overall perseverance. To study this phenomenon, we followed the tenets of positive psychology; however, instead of studying it along with a negative emotion as suggested by MacIntyre et al. (2019), we chose yet another positive and neglected variable, i.e., academic buoyancy from the scope of the control-value theory. In the final run, we had two variables common to both frameworks suffering from the paucity of research. In this journey, the predictive power of one's grit was still in need of further elaborations; hence, the correlation and regression analyses of the present study showed that grit is positively correlated with academic buoyancy and is a significant predictor of it, meaning that in the long run, grit might possibly contribute to the academic achievement of the L2 learners. The results are in line with Yang et al.'s (2022) study where academic buoyancy was reported to be a strong predictor of learners' grit; however, the present results suggest the inverse argumentation as well, implying that learners' grit is also a strong predictor of their buoyancy. Further, it can be argued that the positive significant relationship between grit and buoyancy indicates that any fluctuation in the language learners' grit would possibly lead to fluctuations in their academic buoyancy accordingly. This implies that investing in L2 grit and buoyancy in L2 classrooms possibly adds fuel to the learners' hope, resilience, optimism, etc. confirming what Martin and Marsh (2006) and Martin et al. (2010) previously found regarding the role of buoyancy noting that the construct is related to one's commitment, enjoyment, and self-esteem. From both perspectives,

i.e., positive psychology and control-value theory, positive emotions such as perseverance, enjoyment, and self-esteem are instances of positive academic emotions (Wang et al., 2021) and contribute not only to learners' academic success (Pekrun et al., 2007), but also to their well-being which is the utmost goal of research in the realm of positive emotions where the main trial is to identify and nullify the negative effects of stressors so that positive emotions are built up and broadened which in the long run guarantees both academic and life satisfaction.

It is noteworthy that the results of the current research are in line with those of Credé and Tynan's (2021) warnings where they indicated that the overall structure of L2 grit requires more evidence and reflection. It seems that perseverance of effort properly fits within the theoretical considerations of grit; however, its counterpart; i.e., consistency of interest, suffers in both theoretical and evidential aspects since similar results to Credé et al. (2017) and Feng and Papi (2020) emerged in our study. Academic buoyancy, success, and accomplishment in this regard are a matter of perseverance and mere consistency of interest does not safely guarantee one's fulfillment. A gritty learner seems to be equipped with perseverance and achievement mindset, deals with setbacks more efficiently, builds up resilience, and sustains motivation, hope, and optimism along the journey of language learning; therefore, apart from achieving some academic goals, carving a perseverant and tenacious characteristic into one's identity stone seem to be more important for the learners than being interested in a task for a long period of time. It can be argued that in this sense, grit equals to the consistency of effort, and not interest, within boring and burdensome situations and reflects the quality of one's *not giving up* mindset. The claim is in line with Credé (2018) and Credé and Tynan's (2021)'s arguments where they indicated that consistency of effort is a more reliable sub-component of grit structure due to reflecting more predictive power in different studies and contexts. In this vein, it can further be claimed that being a gritty learner is the prerequisite to being a buoyant one and vice versa. An academic buoyant person, as noted earlier, copes with academic life tensions and competes for the deadlines and tasks (Martin & Marsh, 2020) implying that both grit and buoyancy are the practical aspects of a learner's perseverance and individuals reflecting such characteristics are consciously aware of their capabilities in a learning context and rely on them in challenging situations.

It seems that demographic characteristics such as gender require more consideration in grit and buoyancy literature. As previously mentioned, grit manifests it self variously depending on the context (Cormier et al., 2019). To the best of our knowledge, as far as grit within the educational context is concerned, few studies have focused on the interplay between gender and grit. It is noteworthy that most of the studies have considered domain-general grit and the present study is among the attempts that shed light upon the construct within a domain-specific context by considering the grittiness of students in a language learning situation and treating both genders equally. The obtained analyses show that boys outscore girls in grit implying that if the long-term goal is set to be language learning, males would sustain their effort more than girls, and their fuel for achieving their goals lasts longer. This contrasts with the results of Christensen and Knezek (2014) and Usher

et al. (2019) where elementary, middle, and upper-secondary graders participated in the study and the results indicated that girls reflect more grit than boys. To justify the results, we might mention that both studies used a general-grit scale and their focus was not on domain-specific issues. The participants in Usher et al. (2019) were from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds which again implies that the conceptualization of being grit differs from one context to the other. Most of the participants in this study ($N = 152$, 57%) mentioned that they learn a language in private institutes along with their school curriculum. However; for some participants, the school environment was the only way for language learning. As far as L2 academic buoyancy is concerned, no significant differences were identified and both groups were equal in this regard and signaled similar results implying common reasons to grit despite the fact that participants in this study were at junior high school differing from university students studied by Jahedizadeh et al. (2019). Therefore, we might conclude that the perception of buoyancy might be justified concerning Gender Similarities Hypothesis (Hyde, 2005); however, the same justification might not be applicable to grit. In other words, the present results suggest that buoyancy is perceived similarly by males and females, while the perception of grit differs across the genders. To justify this, we might consider the claims that genders enjoy similar effort as far as accomplishing short-term goals are concerned. In this vein, academic buoyant students deal with daily challenges in similar vein; however, in the long-rung when envisioning the utmost goals such as L2 achievement is concerned, they differ in their grit, because maintaining effort and interest for long periods of time might not be the preferred option of all individuals.

The results of the present study and similar ones indicate that as the learners' grit increases, the perception of buoyancy, efficacy, and motivation of the learners would increase accordingly. Therefore, the domino in which grit and buoyancy are in line with other positive notions would possibly support such arguments by pinpointing that the same is true regarding teachers and their perceptions of gritty and buoyant students. However, due to the nature of the present study, one must be cautious about such generalizations, and future studies are needed to reconsider these claims.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between L2 learners' grit and academic buoyancy. The correlation analysis revealed that grit is positively and significantly correlated with buoyancy. Further, we saw that it strongly predicts learners' academic buoyancy. Studying emotion-laden constructs such as grit and academic buoyancy has its own limitation and this research is no exception. Future studies might reconsider the claims posed in the present and previous studies by utilizing more qualitative or mixed-methods solutions. Due to the dynamic and flowing nature of emotional constructs, studying them in a cross-sectional attempt and generalizing the findings might misguide us in understanding them; hence, future studies might follow the tenets of longitudinal research by providing more control over the factors or larger samples focusing specifically on L2 grit. In line with Credé and Tynan (2021), we argue that the available conceptualizations of grit in general and L2 grit in specific is flawed and are subject to reconsideration. Since the

construct has been considered in SLA studies, the more we neglect the misunderstandings rooted in unreliable measures, the more misinterpretations would emerge both in theory and practice. To fill this gap, scholars focusing on this research trend are encouraged to construct a more comprehensive and multilayered measure of L2 grit which suffers less from construct under-representation and reconsider the sub-components of the grit as postulated by the scholars and current literature. Furthermore, future studies might differentiate between the status of L2 grit among those who learn a language only from school and the students that absorb language from both schools and institutions to elaborate on the claim that L2 grit is a luxurious facet of L2 learners where those who attempted courses outside the school environment are grittier; hence, more buoyant learners are compared to the individuals that had no chance to attend supplementary courses outside their school.

Relying on the results of this study and attempts as such, one can argue that both factors are instances of one's perseverance and contribute to L2 achievement and success. In the long run, they would add fuel to the overall motivation, efficacy, and enjoyment; hence, satisfaction and well-being of both language learners and teachers; therefore, conceptualizing grit and buoyancy as the properties carved within the learners' identity and characteristic helps them to remain positive along their road to success and cope with stressful and challenging situations more effectively. This not only keeps the learners aware and immune along the path, but also triggers their teachers' awareness and might positively change their perceptions of drawbacks, adding to their resilience, and nullifying their stress so that the path toward teachers' overall well-being and happiness is paved accordingly.

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EFL Writing Skill Instruction in the Light of TBLT-Synthesized Collaborative Dialogue: Spotting Learners' Achievements and Teachers' Perceptions

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effects of TBLT-synthesized collaborative dialogue in teaching writing skills to Iranian EFL learners and also to explore their teachers' attitudes towards such an approach. Regarding the essence of the questions of the study, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design was employed. To this end, 100 conveniently sampled Iranian B.A. TEFL and Translation Studies students were identified as relatively homogeneous in terms of their language proficiency through administering Oxford Placement Test (OPT), and ten Iranian EFL teachers attended as the participants. The experimental group students were exposed to the synthetic approach of teaching writing. In contrast, the control group experienced conventional mainstream in the quantitative phase of the study lasting for 16-session treatments. As to the qualitative phase, a semi-structured individual interview was conducted with the participant teachers. The quantitative phase revealed that the synthetic initiative had comparatively significant impacts on the EFL students' writing performance, and the qualitative phase showed that the teachers adopted some positive views toward the implementation of the applied synthetic approach to TBLT and CD in writing instruction. The findings offer some pedagogical implications for the stakeholders, including syllabus designers, EFL learners, and teachers, to include task-based collaborative dialogues in EFL instruction.

Keywords: collaborative dialogue, TBLT, writing skill

Introduction

A chain of instructional guidelines has driven English language teachers in Iran over many years to implement a communicative learner-centered approach to teaching the English language (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Zohrabi et al., 2012). In addition, the progress of the productive language skills of Iranian students has grown to be the primary concern of academics who teach English in the classroom because there are rare opportunities to interact in Iranian EFL settings (Shirbagi, 2010). In support of this trend, Rajablou and Shirvan (2017) stated that the EFL context in which Iranian students grow up is insufficiently supportive of allowing them to read and speak English in their daily lives, which possibly stifles their motivation to learn English. Hence, a learnrer-orieneted approach as a special kind of teaching is supposed to fill this gap.

In line with implementing a learnrer-orieneted approach, Swain (1997), in a series of her studies, elucidated the notion of collaborative dialogue (CD) and its relation with the second language (L2) improvement. Swain et al. (2002) depicted CD as dialogic communication in which students cooperate to tackle language issues and, or co-build language or language proficiency. Based on Swain (1995, 1997, 1998), the connection between CD and second language acquisition (SLA) is according to the theory that the learners' output, specifically their spoken and written productions, can be significant to aid their L2 acquisition. Swain (1995), in her research with immersion learners, explored that immense input contact alone was not enough for students to get native-like proficiency; therefore, she proposed as her famous comprehensible output hypothesis (COH) that output can have a more impact on L2 acquisition by providing chances for students to perceive the particular L2 items that they may lack. Nonetheless, the issue with the COH is that it does not present a persuasive description of how the output via "noticing," "hypothesis testing," and "reflection" results in acquisition. To tackle this issue, Swain (2001) made an attempt to assume the relationship between output and L2 improvement by applying the Vygotskian sociocultural theory of mind, focusing on the output's reflective role (also known as the metalinguistic function of output or metatalk). Swain (2001) mentioned the output's metalinguistic function is the most significant in reflecting on the task types in which immersion learners could be involved, which may aid them to move beyond their present status of L2 improvement to more native-like proficiency. The main tenet of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of mind is that mediation is the source of all learning, that is, "the process through which humans deploy culturally constructed artifacts, concepts, and activities to regulate (i.e., gain voluntary control of and transform) the material world or their own and each other's social and mental activity" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 79). As a necessary symbolic artifact form, language mediates thinking and helps the acquisition, subsequently. The social dimension of learning is emphasized by Swain and Lapkin (2002) as a part of the Vygotskian sociocultural theory of mind, and they believed that L2 learning is mediated by output best via CD. As they maintained, learners need to talk to each other to collaborate. They engage in making meaning through their dialog and discuss the meaning.

Literature Review

In several research that explored the CD writing (CDW) implementation in ESL contexts, Storch and Wigglesworth concluded that learners in groups commonly supported each other, specifically when CD implement to circle knowledge between peers or members of the groups (Storch, 2005; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009, 2012). In addition to assessing the essence of CD, scholars in the field have also studied co-constructed written products of learners at different phases of the CD writing tasks process to specify the advantages of CD compared to individual writing (Neumann & McDonough, 2015). These research studies concluded that CD has a significant effect on writing accuracy (e.g., Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). Storch (2005) reported that collaboratively co-constructed written products are more accurate and complicated in terms of language, and their content is more well-organized. Elola and Oskoz (2010) concluded that peers could plan more meticulously before starting to write while they worked individually on the texts' structure during the writing task completion. Notwithstanding, the researchers did not investigate whether the various processes had an effect on writing organization.

In a longitudinal study, Shehadeh (2011) points out that the learners adopt positive views on CDW implementation in the class, and they believe that it is helpful and practical. Dobao & Blum (2013) maintained that collaborative writing broadened the horizons of learners concerning sharing their opinions and knowledge. In the same vein, Khodabakhshzadeh and Samadi (2017) concluded that the learners had positive perspectives toward collaborative writing usage, since this method could improve their encouragement, motivate them to implement feedback from their peers during the research, give the students a broad view regarding the topic, remove their useless writing habits, and empower the students to acquire more new vocabularies and expressions. Moreover, Alegrı´a de la Colina and Garcı´a Mayo (2007) explored preintermediate students taking part in a CDW course. The results showed that students who had a collaboration in completing their tasks (e.g., jigsaw) usually implemented the proper remedy and also correct answer in responding to problems in problem-solving tasks. In addition, Dobao (2012) explored the benefits of collaborative writing tasks and compared the output of the same writing task by groups of four students, pairs, and individual students. He explored the impact of the learners' number on their written productions' complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) and the essence of the oral interaction between the pairs and the groups during collaboration. The findings indicated that though both groups and pairs focused to some extent frequently on language items, groups generated more output than pairs. Consequently, the texts submitted by the classes were not only more reliable than those written separately but also more accurate than those written in pairs. In the same vein, Hani-Yan (2014) examined the teaching of English writing from a task-based viewpoint to the big classes in China. The study suggests a realistic linear process in the task-based classroom on how to teach English writing based on a contrast between the conventional 3Ps (presentation, production, practice) method and the task-based approach. The results indicated that the task-based strategy was successful in teaching English writing to

populated classes as it improved the awareness of the task-based strategy of the students and enhanced different writing elements. In a similar line of studies, Ameri-Golestan and Nezakat-Alhossaini (2017) compared the long-term impacts of individual and collaborative task designing on the writing performance of Iranian English language students, using the rating scale of Brown and Bailey (1985). The findings showed that time and group, as the two essential factors had a role in the treatments' effectiveness. The study group participants had gone on to maintain the impacts of task preparation. The results provided further evidence for L2 production socio-cultural theories according to which learning can be interpersonally enhanced. Similarly, Abtahi et al. (2020) studied the writing accuracy, feedback amount, and comment type (global vs. local) of EFL learners practicing peer-peer feedback on their writing in a computer-oriented and CDW procedure. Learners in the computer-oriented group received the instruction through peer-peer feedback using word processor software, and in the handwritten group, the learners presented CD handwritten peer feedback to their peers. The findings showed the CD handwritten group's accuracy improved significantly. The qualitative findings showed that the feedback amount in the CD handwritten group was remarkably higher than the amount of feedback in the computer-based one. In another recent mixed-methods study, Anggraini et al. (2020) investigated the impacts of the CDW strategy on EFL students' writing proficiency and their teachers' perceptions of the strategy. The CDW strategy was implemented in the experimental class, and the conventional teaching strategy was used in the control class. Writing tests and interviews were employed to gather the data to examine the learners' writing proficiency and their teachers' perceptions towards CDW. The findings showed that the CDW strategy could aid learners in ideas generation and background knowledge activation on the assigned topics to develop their writing skills. The interview results also indicated that the learners adopted positive perceptions toward the CDW strategy. All in all, the results of studies mentioned above suggested that CD implementation could lead to positive impacts on learners' writing performance as well as their conception of CD usage itself.

Alongside these theoretical bases and the related literature, the language teaching trend has also witnessed pertinent methodological developments, mainly in the form of communicative perspectives and task-based orientations, the latter functioning as an advanced expansion of the strategy to the former (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). The ultimate goal of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is to promote communication skills for learners by involving them in meaning-focused communication. A review of the related literature revealed that most of the research studies on task-based CD investigated oral mode more than written one (Shehadeh, 2011), and also most of the studies in this field were conducted in English as a second language (ESL) contexts (e.g., Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). The number of research studies on the effectiveness of task-based CDW in EFL setting is so scant. Not only is the incorporation of task-based instruction, collaborative dialogues, and the tenets of SCT are a new approach to developing SLA but also their utilities as to each skill in general and writing skill, in particular, is still rather worthy of consideration. In the Iranian EFL setting, the progress of productive language skills has grown to be the main concern of academics due to rare

interaction opportunities and insufficient support (Rajablou & Shirvan, 2017; Shirbagi, 2010). In addition, there was no study in Iranian EFL contexts to explore the impact of task-based CD on the writing performance of Iranian EFL students, and no research to examine Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of task-based CD. To bridge this gap in the literature, this study aimed at synthesizing collaborative dialogue with TBLT in developing writing skills on the one hand and investigating the learners' perceptions of this initiative as to learning and developing Iranian EFL learners' writing skills. Solidly speaking, this study aims first to explore if there is there any significant difference between the effects of incorporation of conventional and task-based collaborative dialogues (CD) in developing Iranian EFL learners' written modality of communication and second to investigate perceptions of the EFL teachers toward such a synthetic approach.

Method

Participants

The first groups of participants were 100 B.A. students, 38 males and 62 females, who took the Advanced Writing Course. Their age range was 18-24. They were TEFL and translation students at Islamic Azad University, North and South Tehran branches. Convenience sampling was used to select the participants (Ary et al., 2019). To select a homogeneous sample in terms of their language proficiency levels, they took Oxford Placement Test (OPT) before the start of treatment sessions. The students whose scores ranged between 30-47, according to CEFR (Council of Europe, 2009), were included as intermediate-level learners. Because of the university regulations and the small population of the classes, no random selection was possible. Hence, intact classes were taken into consideration. However, the classes were randomly assigned to an experimental group (task-based collaborative dialogue in writing) and a control group (conventional instruction for writing). In addition, the second group of participants was ten EFL teachers, who were six men and four women, and participated in the qualitative phase of the study, and were selected based on their familiarity with collaborative dialogue instruction.

Materials and Instruments

Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

The pencil-and-paper Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was employed in the present study. It is composed of grammar, vocabulary, and writings subtests. Moreover, Wistner et al. (2009) reported the OPT reliability index of .80. In addition, they confirmed the construct validity of this test. In this study, the learners whose scores ranged between 30-47 were included as intermediate-level learners.

Writing Pretest and Posttest

To measure the writing skill of the participants, the writing general module task 2 of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam was used as the pretest and posttest of the study, and they scored based on the IELTS analytic scoring system developed by British Council. To ensure the validity of the tests, two experts in the field reviewed and confirmed them. Their inter-rater

reliability indices were estimated through the Pearson correlation, and the results showed the raters' significant agreements on the pretest (r (48) = .730 representing a large effect size, p = .000) and posttest (r (48) = .636 representing a large effect size, p = .000) of writing.

Semi-Structured Interview

After administering the posttest, the first author of the study conducted semi-structured individual interviews with ten teachers. The purpose of the interview was to gain more comprehensive data on teachers' perceptions of implementing CD in advanced writing classes. The interview sessions were held face-to-face, and the language of the interviews was English. They were conducted within one month, and each session took about 30 minutes. The questions of the interview were made by the researchers. Then, to ensure the interview questions' content validity, they were reviewed and confirmed by two experts in the field. With the participants' permission, the interviews were recorded and then transcribed.

Procedure

Regarding the essence of the questions of the study, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design was employed; therefore, the present research was first run based on a quantitative approach followed by a supportive qualitative one (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Quantitative Phase

First, the OPT test was administered to four intact classes of 110 EFL students, based on which 100 students whose scores, according to CEFR (Council of Europe, 2009), fell one standard deviation above or below the mean were considered as the participants. They were then divided into two groups, namely, control and experimental groups. Next, writing general module task 2 of the IELTS exam was administered to two groups as the pretest. The writing test was rated based on the IELTS writing band score descriptors.

The notion of the task-based collaborative dialogue was explained to the experimental group, and during the 16 classroom sessions of 90 minutes, collaborative dialogue writing tasks were employed for the writing skill instruction. Jigsaw and dictogloss tasks were applied, selected from Swain and Lapkin's (2001) research, and two experts in the field confirmed them to implement in the study. Regarding the jigsaw tasks, the learners should hold, request, and supply the required information to fulfill the task (Yilmaz, 2008). The learners have different parts of a puzzle, and merely by mixing these parts, they could accomplish the task. Through the other parts of information each learner receives, the two-way exchange is ensured. It is maintained that applying this task type could present all the essential situations that allow learners to discuss mutual comprehension of peers' message meaning (Ellis, 2003). Regarding dictogloss tasks, the teacher reads a short text to students at a normal rate, and as they listen, they should write down notes. Afterward, they collaborate in small groups to rebuild their version of the primary text. Dictogloss tasks could be efficient in leading students to notice their language production as they get involved in constructing a text meaning (Ellis, 2003). These

two tasks, applied in the present study, were regarded as two-way convergent tasks in which requiring the learners to exchange the necessary information to complete tasks successfully.

The teachers divided the learners into small groups to implement the collaborative dialogue tasks. Considering both of these tasks, the students worked in small groups and discussed the subject. In doing the Jigsaw task, the teachers chose some images related to students' course book. The images were divided into two parts, in which each part worked as a complement to another one. The learners of each group were encouraged to share their knowledge to recognize what the context was about. In dictogloss tasks, the instructors read the text aloud twice. Simultaneously, the learners were allowed to jot down the text that they had heard. To reconstruct the text, the learners of each group should work together. The learners were explained the purpose of collaborative dialogue, which is modifying learners' output to be more comprehensible in terms of grammatical and morpho-syntactic aspects and also providing additional information in response to the interlocutor's feedback on the incomprehensibility or incompletion of the original utterance (Poupore, 2004). Consequently, they modified their written production where needed to ease the process of comprehension and discussion.

In the control group, the conventional type of teaching writing instruction based on the syllabus was practiced. The teachers introduced the lesson topic, and the students discussed and wrote about the topic individually. The students' errors were corrected by the teachers, and they received the required feedback from the teachers on their performance individually. There was no collaboration in the instructions of the control group. At the end of the term, another writing test of IELTS, was run as a posttest and scored based on the IELTS rubrics.

Qualitative Phase

The semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with ten teachers. Before undertaking the interview sessions, the participants were informed about the goal and the time of the interview. The interview sessions were conducted by the first author of the study. Each interview took about 30 minutes, and all interviews were recorded and then transcribed with the participants' permission. They were held at the English department of Islamic Azad University, North and South Tehran branches.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. To analyze the quantitative data, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was implemented, and SPSS version 22 was employed. The skewness and kurtosis indices and their ratios over standard errors were applied to probe the normality of the present data. The homogeneity of variances was checked using Levene's test of homogeneity of variances. The descriptive qualitative content analysis technique (Creswell, 2012) was used to analyze the qualitative data.

Results

Addressing the First Research Question

The first research question addressed "the differential effects of incorporation of conventional and task-based collaborative dialogues on developing Iranian EFL learners' writing skills", and to answer it, parametric statistical analysis (ANCOVA) was employed. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics of the two groups on the writing posttest after controlling the pretests effects. The results showed that the experimental group, after receiving task-based collaborative dialogues, had a higher mean than the control group on the posttest of writing (M = 5.59 vs. M = 5.10).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Writing by Groups with Pretests

Group	Posttests	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental	Writing	5.592	.088	5.414	5.770
Control	Writing	5.108	.088	4.930	5.286

Based on table 1, the task-based collaborative dialogue group (M = 5.59) significantly outperformed the control group (M = 5.10) on the posttest of writing after controlling for the effect of the pretest (Mean Difference = .484, p = .000, 95 % CI [.229, .740]). As Table 2 shows, the experimental group had a significantly higher mean on the writing posttest (Mean Difference = .580, p = .000, 95 % CI [.360, .801).

Table 2

Simple Effect Analysis; Posttests of Writing Between Groups with Pretest

Group	(I) Skills	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental	Writing	.580[*]	.110	.000	.360	.801
Control	Writing	.420[*]	.110	.000	.200	.641

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

Addressing the Second Research Question

The second research question addressed the perceptions of Iranian EFL teachers towards incorporating task-based CD in developing their writing skills, and to answer this question, the semi-structured interview was applied. A descriptive qualitative content analysis technique (Creswell, 2012) was used to analyze the data. The transcripts of the interviews were reviewed many times and then coded to

investigate the categories and sub-categories. The categories and sub-categories were reread several times and classified into the main themes, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

The Categories, Sub-Categories, and the Main Themes of the Teachers' Interviews

Categories	Sub-categories	Main Themes
Collaborative dialogues' effects on learners	-Peer learning -Learner's responsibility -Self-development -Reflective learners -Learners' affective factors -Learner's adaptation	-Self-development -Reflectivity -Learners affective factors
Improving the effective factors of the collaborative dialogue	-Individual differences -Community Structure -Teacher' roles -Learners' rapport	-Individual differences -Teachers' roles
Collaborative dialogue and teachers' performance	-Teaching process -Content-based teaching -Class presentation -Establishing rapport -Information sharing -Individual differences	-Facilitating teaching process -Construing a learner-based instruction methodology -Playing an effective role model for learners
Theoretical understanding of the collaborative dialogue	-Established theories -Implementation evidence -Implementation environment -Implementation frequency / uses -Current theories -Literature	-Literature-based -Evidence-based
The potentiality of the collaborative dialogue implementation	-Place conditions -Number of students / learners' time and needs -Level of the students -Course objectives -Teacher abilities or skills -Teacher or institution management	-Controlling variables of a place of implementation -Course management and objectives -Teacher / learner prerequisite participation
Learners' attitudes toward collaborative dialogue	-Safety / feeling -Happiness / fun -Shyness -Knowledge facilitation -Knowledge transformation -Self-confidence -Group learning	-Affective filters -Information processing
Learners' learning success	-Learners' rapport -Peer corrective feedback -Simplicity of new information -Cooperative task-based learning -Learners' responsibility	-Learners' process of learning -Learners' cognitive processes
Collaborative dialogue and use of learning materials	-Simplicity of the contents -Levels of the materials -Content comprehension	-Comprehensibility -Material adjustment
Assessment of collaborative dialogue	-Assessment as learning -Assessment of learning	-Diagnostic assessment -Achievement assessment

According to Table 3, the results of teachers' interviews analysis showed that self-development (including learners' responsibility, and peer learning), reflectivity (including learner's adaptation), and learners' affective variables were explored to be the facets that can be potentially positive effects of the "CD" on EFL students from teachers' views. Mohammad, one of the proficient EFL instructors in this respect, noted,

##*One of the main features of task-based CD is improving students' self-development in which they could foster their learning through interaction with their classmates in a friendly context, which would result in self-reflection since they try to adapt themselves to the current situation of the learning context.*

In this regard, Narges pointed out, "I believe that task-based CD can remove the affective filters of the learners, and consequently, it could increase their motivation to participate in the task fulfillment cycle. Accordingly, learning takes place in a non-threatening environment".

In terms of the improvement of the positive influential factors of the CD on learners from teachers' perspective, the results of the interviews revealed that the variables of individual differences as well as teacher' roles could be used as the effective factors, and the teachers believed that CD could improve teacher performances through facilitating teaching process (e.g., content-based teaching, class presentation). Arman, who is an experienced teacher in using the TBLT approach, criticized the conventional method of teaching and praised the task-based CD,

##*In traditional language teaching methods, individual differences are mostly ignored, but in the TBLT and, especially task-based CD, individual differences play an important role in the learning process. For example, I try to arrange groups in task-based CDs according to extroversion and introversion dichotomy. Therefore, reserved students could find opportunities to participate in class activities through interaction with extroverted peers.*

Most teachers argued that applying a student-centered methodology, including establishing rapport, sharing information, and engaging learners, could play an effective role model for learners in and out of the classroom. Maryam mentioned, "one of the main characteristics of the CD is engaging the whole students in the class activities; as a consequence, they can share their ideas within and across groups." Mohsen maintained,

##*One of the hot topics in the SLA field is teacher-learner rapport. In task-based CD, rapport can be easily established in a friendly environment, and the students could have a close relationship with their teacher. Consequently, it could enhance their motivation to take part in class activities.*

The results also revealed that CD could be used effectively through controlling variables, including place of implementation, course management, course objectives, and teacher / learner participation. Arman stated,

##Implementing CD in the Iranian EFL context can be challenging if the teacher is not familiar with the principles and prerequisites of CD. Besides, there are many factors, such as course objectives and place of implementation, that play a critical role in using the CD.

Some teachers argued that EFL learners accept or reject CD due to either affective filters or information processing. Accordingly, the analysis demonstrated that learners' success acceptability could be justified in terms of their learning and cognitive functions. Ali, one of the expert EFL teachers in this respect, noted,

##I applied task-based CD in my classes, and I found that the students may adopt different reactions and views toward implementing CD based on the type of the task. In other words, task type could have an essential role in learning.

Sara argued, "Regarding the use of task-based CD in a classroom setting, EFL teachers should consider the cognitive and affective aspects of tasks, and definitely, it requires a great deal of expertise."

In addition, the results showed that CD might facilitate the effective implementation of learning materials through comprehensibility and material adjustment. Mohammad noted,

##By applying CD, a teacher could adjust the instructional materials to meet the emerging needs of the learners. When I use the task-based CDs in my class, I mostly employ audio-visual materials to teach the new language items.

Students' performance could also be assessed in terms of formative assessment and achievement assessment (summative assessment). Sara, in this respect, maintained that "I can assess my students during the task completion, and it is very helpful since I could find the extent of learners' uptake in the learning process." Another factor that many teachers noted during interviews was the learner's self-assessment. They firmly believed that applying task-based CD could enhance the self-assessment ability of EFL students through constant interaction with their peers. Maryam pointed out, "Using CD could enhance the students' self-reflection, and as a result, they gradually acquire the ability to assess their performance." They also believed that task-based CD could develop the metacognition and metacognitive abilities of EFL learners through participation in groups.

The results showed that the teachers adopted positive views towards implementing CD in the class, and the results of the quantitative and qualitative data complemented each other.

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the effects of task-based collaborative dialogue on the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners and to explore the Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of task-based collaborative dialogue. Regarding the first research question, the results revealed that task-based collaborative dialogue affected EFL learners' writing performance. To understand the finding, one explanation why task-based teaching created these

results may be the fact that the students reviewed their knowledge for doing the tasks more thoroughly before completing them. This is especially true when the learners participated in collaborative task planning since they got more chances to brainstorm before writing (through spoken engagement). The participants' grasp of the subject was likely deepened by collaboration, and they had additional opportunities and viewpoints to take into account the new language items (Swain & Watanabe, 2013). In general, the findings can be addressed in relation to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural conceptions of L2 development (Lantolf, 2000). According to the sociocultural theory of L2 development, communication with other community members helps L2 learners' linguistic development (e.g., classroom). It could provide the student with the proper amounts of scaffolding, or support. The widespread consensus is that when students collaborate in pairs or groups, considerable assistance occurs in classes (e.g., Donato, 1994; Kim & McDonough, 2008; Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 2002). It is believed that the study participants benefited from this assistance in their language classroom.

The results of the present study are in line with the findings of many studies (e.g., Abtahi et al., 2020; Alegrı´a de la Colina & Garcı´a Mayo, 2007; Ameri-Golestan & Nezakat-Alhossaini, 2017; Anggraini et al., 2020; Dobao, 2012; Hani-Yan, 2014) in which their results showed that task-based collaborative dialogue affected the EFL / ESL learners' writing performance significantly.

Regarding the second research question, the findings revealed the positive effective factors of the collaborative dialogue on learners from teachers' perspective. It was found that self-development (including learners' responsibility, peer learning), reflectivity (including leaners' adaptation), and learners' affective factors could be potential. Learners' responsibility is one of the important factors in the learning process. Learners should take responsibility for their learning and try to be active learners. This responsibility can be extended to students' working in groups and make it more effective. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Conzemius and O'neill (2001), who believed that there should be shared responsibility in learning in groups so that learners can attain their utmost achievements. Furthermore, peers learning was found to be anther influencing factor. It is justifiable as learners can learn from their more proficient peer and take advantage of their knowledge to reach the same level. Hence, it can be stated that learners can reach achievements using peer learning and collaborative dialogues. Watanabe and Swain (2007) investigated that learners can learn new things from their peers and work in groups. Furthermore, Zeng and Takatsuka (2009) studied text-based peer-peer collaborative dialogue in a computer-mediated learning environment in the EFL context and found its effectiveness. Other studies (Dobao, 2012; Swain et al., 2002) were done to approve the effectiveness of peer learning and collaborative dialogue. Reflection and adaptation were found to be other affecting factors regarding collaborative dialogue. It can be stated that learners need to reflect on their performance and dialogue and the performance of their peers to adapt their type of dialogue with them. It needs to be comprehensible and sufficient. This finding is in harmony with those of Adamson et al. (2014), who found similar

results regarding the importance of reflection and adaptation in a collaborative dialogue process.

In terms of the improvement of the positive effective factors of the collaborative dialogue on learners' performance from teachers' perspective, the study showed that the variables of individual differences as well as teachers' roles could be used as the effective factors. Individual differences should be considered while using collaborative dialogue to make the process more effective. Considering the importance of the teachers' role, it should be stated that the teachers who introduced the curriculum have played a significant role in the growth of skills for the students. First, they had a positive attitude toward TBLT and were excited to teach in compliance with TBLT practices and values. Willis (1996) and Carless (2004) highlighted the teachers' role in promoting student learning through TBLT. The results of teachers' interviews revealed that collaborative dialogues could improve teacher performances through facilitating the teaching process (e.g., content-based teaching, class presentation), construing a leaner-based instruction methodology, including establishing rapport, information sharing, and individual differences, and playing an effective role model for learners in and out of the classroom. These could be accepted because, through collaborative dialogues, teachers can get aware of learners' strengths and weaknesses and provide feedback. Furthermore, using this kind of dialogue increases the rapport between teacher and students, which in turn may ease the process of teaching and learning (Khodamoradi et al., 2013). Furthermore, Groenke (2007) studied the role of collaborative dialogue in a synchronous CMC environment while examining English teachers' strategies. He found that teachers make rapport through dialogue. The results of the interviews indicated that collaborative dialogue could be implemented effectively through controlling variables of a place of implementation, course management and objectives, and teacher / learner prerequisite participation. As every method of teaching, this method requires some preparations, too. In this regard, time, place, teacher, and learner participation are required. Wasting time and difficulty in getting cooperation can be pinpointed in applying collaborative dialogue in language classrooms. Once the teacher is aware that the problem occurred, he / she can handle it immediately. This idea is in line with Brooks and Ammons (2003). They recommended that having multiple peer evaluations during the project reduced social loafing. Finally, teachers need to take the size and group composition, as well as the scope of the project, into careful consideration. The results also revealed that learners accepted or rejected collaborative dialogue because of either affective filters or information processing. According to Swain and Watanabe (2013), cognition and emotions are two inseparable parts of language learning. Hence, without emotions or affective factors like interest and motivation, it is impossible to convince learners to do the tasks or use collaborative dialogue. Other studies have shown the importance of emotions and affective factors in language learning (e.g., MacIntyre, 2002; Pishghadam et al., 2013). Another factor was information processing. McLaughlin et al. (1983) provided a model for information processing in language learning. In their model, sufficient input should be processed in the mind to be changed to the output. Using collaborative dialogue, learners can modify input to be more comprehensible for their peers and learn better. Webb (2013) also provides an information-

processing approaches to collaborative learning in which the input is modified through collaborative dialogue. Learners' success acceptability could be explained in terms of their process of learning and cognitive processes. The learning process and strategies used by the learners are important factors in the use of collaborative dialogue. Watanabe and Swain (2007) showed that learners with different processing capacities and different proficiency levels react to collaborative dialogue differently. Hence, using collaborative dialogue, learners' cognitive abilities should be considered. The results also showed that learners' and teachers' techniques could impede learning success from teachers' perspectives.

Conclusion

One important conclusion of the present study is that the theoretical significance of collaborative dialogue, which arises from the unanimity in SLA research studies on a focus on form plus a focus on meaning, is advantageous for second language learning. As collaborative dialogue is in line with the focus on form view (Doughty & Williams, 1998), it captures different methods that students to draw each other's attention to linguistic form to meet the needs that arise in the course of the meaningful task (Yilmaz, 2008). Based on the results, it can be concluded that a more social method, such as collaborative dialogues, in the language learning and teaching setting could benefit the learners' interaction and writing skills. The collaborative learning context enables the students to build their ZPD collaboratively by cooperating with their peers at the same proficiency level and conceptual comprehension. This active construction of the learning context by the learners also effectively impacts the development of speaking and writing proficiency (Ahmadian et al., 2014). As Shehadeh (2011) and Doboa (2012) stated, collaboration is essential in most EFL settings; as a result, the focus is on the instruction in which collaborative pair and group work is pivotal to L2 classes (e.g., Bygate et al., 2001; Lantolf, 2000), mainly influenced by the Vygotsky's (1978) SCT of language learning.

These findings can have pedagogical implications for applying collaborative dialogue techniques in EFL classrooms, proposing that students could remove linguistic issues more efficiently while they get help from their classmates rather than working alone (Swain, 1997, 2001). This could help EFL instructors to handle populated language classrooms. In such classes, pair or group work could be a remedy for the students in developing second language learning, specifically productive skills, and for EFL instructors in class handling (Ahmadian et al., 2014). From a pedagogical standpoint, task planning implementation offers EFL instructors and students useful perspectives. The results of the current study could aid in improving understanding of the writing process, particularly when it comes to viewing writing as a process and not a product. Indeed, from a pedagogical perspective, the study's findings offer more empirical support for the value of task planning in EFL writing classes. It could be used as a teaching tool, namely, to encourage student cooperation and create a supportive social environment in EFL lessons (Swain & Lapkin, 2002). The relationship between task planning and the acquisition and instruction of writing abilities in EFL settings is another potential pedagogical implication of the current research (Ellis, 2003). This can be significant

since most studies on task planning in a second language concentrated on L2. This study may render implications for different stakeholders like material developers. Based on the findings, the material developers could include writing CD tasks in EFL coursebooks to encourage EFL learners' collaborative dialogue so that they can take advantage of practicing this kind of dialogue in their language classrooms.

The present study had some limitations. Regarding the sample of the study, the findings have been affected as the participants cannot be representative of Iranian EFL teachers and learners. In addition, due to the regulations of the universities, the randomization of the learners was not possible. Consequently, further studies could be undertaken by applying a random sample of EFL teachers and learners. Generalizations of the results of the present study to other contexts, such as language institutes, should be made with caution. Thus, future studies could replicate this study in different contexts, such as language institutes.

Acknowledgments

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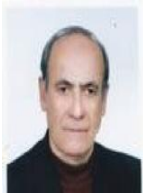
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Validation of an Ecological Model of Teacher Agency for Iranian EFL Student Teachers

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Abstract

Despite the abundance of research on language teacher education, there is a dearth of ecologically informed instruments for measuring teacher agency. To this end, this study aims to fill this gap by designing and validating a questionnaire for assessing the agency of student teachers. Thirteen facets were identified and developed, including instructional beliefs, supportive beliefs, collaborative learning, and competence, which represent an iterational dimension. The practical-evaluative dimension is represented by opportunity to make choice, opportunity to influence, support, equality, trust, institutional context, and professional community. Long- and short-term purposes manifest projective dimension. A 22-item questionnaire on a 7-point Likert scale was developed and administered. Altogether, 210 EFL student teachers from four branches of Farhangian University through convenience sampling participated in the survey research design study. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis was employed through AMOS 22 to examine the validity of the theoretical model. In doing so, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were administered, and the ecological framework of student teacher agency was confirmed. The results revealed that the questionnaire had an acceptable fit with the empirical set of data, suggesting that this scale has the potential to be useful in assessing student teachers' agency and raising their awareness of the agency construct. The study has implications for policymakers regarding how the ecology of professional education may influence teachers' practices, actions, and decision-making processes.

Keywords: agency, Farhangian University, student teacher, teacher education, pre-service

Introduction

Teacher agency performs an indispensable character in the development of knowledge about teaching and learning in professional development (Heikonen et al., 2020). According to Sen (1999), agency associates with individuals' active participation and making a difference by which their actions can be judged in terms of their goals and values in a working environment and other spheres of life. Agency refers to individuals' capacity to critically shape their reactions to complex situations (Billett, 2008). Concerning teachers, agency means efforts to accelerate the implementation of reforms in many ways (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). If teachers perceive the goals as important, they will be more likely to exercise agency in support of changes (Van der Heijden et al., 2018). Teachers make key decisions and intentional choices at schools through their agency (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015).

The professional agency of teachers plays a crucial role in describing their teaching practices (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). It seeks to broaden knowledge of teaching careers (Turnbull, 2005). Professional agentic teachers deem themselves as active learners and pedagogical experts who can take principled actions, enact changes, and make decisions in problematic situations (Anderson, 2010). It is considered as a capacity that is constantly advanced regarding contemporary actors and contexts and previous personal experiences (Greeno, 2006). It advances through conscious participation and decision-making in new and creative ways to organize, adapt, and experiment with instructional practices of new learning at both community and individual levels (Soini et al., 2015). It highlights the ability to teach given the sources and obstacles of the operating environment and considers teachers' values, beliefs, and properties (Brevik et al., 2019).

The ecological framework of teacher agency, proposed by Priestley et al. (2015), includes three facets: iterational, which is engaged with past personal and professional experience; projective, which is informed by future goals; and practical-evaluative, which is oriented towards present opportunities and constraints. From an ecological perspective, professional teacher agency occurs within the possibilities of settings in which actors act upon their ideologies, values, and traits in connection to a specific circumstance. The degree of agentic acts varies. For example, teacher agency can be filled with autonomy and initiative acts in some situations, while in others, hierarchical planning and authoritative administration can be the reasons for the lack of agentic acts (Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

Even though the teacher is a critical factor, it should be borne in mind that such a claim is about a wide range of other elements. A successful teacher with one group of students may not necessarily be helpful with another group, given that factors such as multiple intelligences, gender, and age vary from one student to another (Mazandarani & Troudi, 2017, 2022). To sum up from an ecological perspective, agency is not an innate ability; it is achievable through the active commitment of individuals in the settings. Therefore, the consequence of agency will often be the product of the interaction of available resources, structural and contextual factors, and individual efforts as they come together through specific and, in some respects,

often unique circumstances, rather than functioning as an intrinsic feature within individuals and being absent in others (Biesta & Tedder, 2007).

If educators who teach pre-service student teachers call for trained teachers who are the agents of change, not those who simply convey the educational program, they should also pay attention to the cultures and structures of schools and questions about how one can work on creating enabling cultures and structures (Riazi & Razavipour, 2011). So, to develop academic experiences for learners, it is vital to understand and evaluate student teachers' agency in learning environments.

The first problem is that pre-service English teacher education centers in Iran need to inspire student teachers to move beyond relying on textbooks and conventional teaching and learning methods. They need to make them aware of their agency roles, provide them with self-assurance to make their voices heard and share their views, while most teachers assume the only activity they need to do is to inspire their learners to learn English so they can pass assessments safely, despite their dissatisfaction with the educational system (Izadinia, 2012).

Another problem is the lack of a consistent teacher agency conceptual framework in most of the literature (Pyhalto et al., 2012). Describing the construct of agency from different perspectives, including Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration, Archer's (1995) realist social theory, and Bourdieu's (1977) theory of habitus, is certainly troublesome since they view agency as something that people possess at different levels as a result of their personal traits. In other words, they are tempting to suggest an extremely individualistic view of agency as a human capacity (Priestley et al., 2015). Hence, the researchers pursue an ecological view of teacher agency, in which agency is regarded as an emergent phenomenon from the interplay between the physical environment and individual capacity through which it is enacted. Furthermore, the limited number of empirical studies on teacher agency (e.g., Jääskelä et al., 2017; Soini et al., 2015) and the need for developing robust tools to assess and monitor the dynamics of teachers' agency throughout pre-service teacher education have made the researchers develop and validate the agency of Iranian EFL student teachers to fill the gap of empirical research in the Iranian EFL teacher education context. This research aims to elucidate the potential contribution of Farhangian University towards enhancing the value and sufficiency of students' academic experience, as well as their holistic personal development. The researchers hold a firm conviction that the fundamental objective of Farhangian University is to instill a sense of agency and power in student teachers to grow into caring and responsible individuals rather than those who consider themselves too powerless to do more than transferring language content to learners and tend to ignore their agentic role to contribute to the improvement of conditions and create positive changes.

Literature Review

### The Theoretical Framework of Teacher Agency

The ecological framework considers teacher agency fundamentally as a decision-making process that is influenced by three dimensions: previous personal

life histories (iterational dimension), future orientations (projective dimension), and the material, cultural, and structural context of a practical situation (practical-evaluative dimension) (Leijen et al., 2021). Overall, practical-evaluative factors affect professional decision-making processes that rely on acquired knowledge and are driven by projective goals (Priestley et al., 2015). The iterational and projective aspects of ecological agency are concerned with how teachers bring their experiences to their classroom interactions. The iterational dimension is concerned with personal life experience and previous perception and action patterns (Beijaard et al., 2004), while the projective dimension is concerned with the long- and short-term innovative generation of potential action trajectories (Leijen et al., 2021). The practical-evaluative aspect, which differs between the cultural, structural, and material realms, is eventually incorporated into the present. The cultural aspect is concerned with concepts, traditions, opinions, and discourses. The structural aspect is concerned with relationships, duties, tasks, and trust. The material aspect is concerned with the tools and physical environment in which teachers work (Priestley et al., 2015).

The ecological viewpoint of teacher agency indicates that agency is realized by dealing with particular contextual circumstances involving either constraints or affordances in decision-making rather than functioning as an intrinsic feature within individuals and being absent in others (Tao & Gao, 2017). In this view, agency is regarded as an emerging experience of ecological circumstances rather than seeing it as a property or capability located in individuals (Biesta et al., 2015). Therefore, agency is not an innate capacity that people should possess; instead, it is what individuals achieve (Biesta & Tedder, 2007).

Figure 1

Three-Dimensional Framework of Teacher Agency (Based on Priestley et al., 2015)
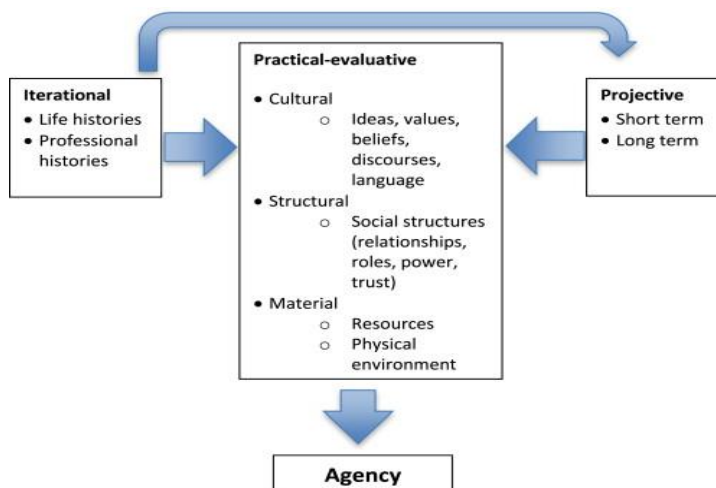
Professional Agency of Student Teachers

Professional agency is described as a group of people discussing work-related issues and forming, choosing, and taking positions that affect their achievements and professional identities (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). The professional agency within the professional community includes school professionals such as assistants and teachers, specially trained teachers, psychologists, nurses, and social workers who make constructive and intentional attempts to promote community learning (Toom et al., 2017). Peers and teacher educators commonly provoke the professional community for student teachers, which reflects their competencies to smooth the process of their education and the education process of those around them through teacher training. As a result, both the individual student teacher characteristics and common interactions among teacher educators and classmates in groups affect the agency of student teachers in the academic community (Greeno, 2006).

Soini et al. (2015) demonstrated that teacher agency includes judgments of student teachers about their teaching ability, transformational and collective exercise, reflections in the classroom, and interested person modeling as having a learning orientation to encourage proactive learning among peers and classmates. Peer relationships in teaching and teacher education, in particular, show a strong link to a sense of professional agency.

At the beginning of the teacher education program, student teachers' agency can be quietly fragmented, and they may establish perceptions and ideas of themselves as collective professionals without ever being able to cultivate classroom social management or application and development of pedagogical strategies in the classroom (Soini et al., 2015). Student teachers should be motivated from the beginning of their teacher education program to construct their agency in the academic community by role modeling, examining, and enhancing it with classmates and their professional teacher educators (Edwards, 2007). The agency of student teachers seems to be facilitated by the numerous learning environments and the strong relationship among student teachers through teacher education (Van velzen et al., 2012). Student teachers' sense of agency can be facilitated or hindered throughout a variety of interactions and courses of pedagogical practice during teacher education (Toom et al., 2017).

International Empirical Studies

One well-known study that is often cited in research on professional agency is that of Leijen et al. (2020). The researchers conducted a key research on teacher agency and ecological approaches, paying attention to how it is attained, its elements, and the way it might be gradually strengthened. The ecological approach highlighted professional capacity, structural, material, and cultural environment, and career goals as the vital factors in attaining agency. They determined three kinds of reflection to enhance situations for achieving teachers' sense of agency. These include technical reflection, which focuses on improving specific skills or strategies; practical reflection which considers the broader context in which teaching occurs; and critical reflection, which involves questioning assumptions and power dynamics within educational systems. Taken together, the strength of this paper is its emphasis

on the importance of considering multiple factors when examining teacher agency. By recognizing the complex interplay between individual characteristics, social and cultural contexts, and institutional factors, they provide a more nuanced understanding of how teacher agency is achieved and sustained. However, the weakness of this paper is its limited discussion of potential barriers to teacher agency. While the authors acknowledge that institutional structures can constrain teachers' decision-making abilities, they do not fully explore how power dynamics within schools or broader societal forces may limit teachers' agency. Furthermore, the importance of teacher agency for promoting effective teaching and learning was discussed by Molla and Nolan (2020). While they suggest that schools or policymakers should prioritize creating conditions that enable teachers to exercise agency in their work, they did not address any potential risks associated with teacher agency. For example, if teachers are given too much autonomy without adequate guidance or oversight, they may make decisions that are not aligned with best practices or educational goals. Van der Heijden et al. (2018) discussed the views and effects of primary teachers as the agents of change regarding their personal and contextual dimensions. They suggest that teachers have a positive self-perception as change agents, and they believe that they can make a difference in their students' lives. However, they also face various challenges, such as lack of support from parents and colleagues, limited resources, and bureaucratic constraints. Their study shed light on an important aspect of teacher identity and highlighted the challenges faced by teachers in fulfilling their role as change agents. It also provides insights into how teachers perceive themselves in this role and how they can be supported to overcome these challenges.

Agentic Teachers in the Iranian EFL Teacher Education Context

Through qualitative research, Rostami and Yousefi (2020) discussed the agency construction of novice English teachers in Iran from a complexity dynamic / system perspective. The study found that novice teachers' agency construction is influenced by various factors, such as their personal beliefs, cultural background, and institutional policies. The strength of this article is its use of a complexity dynamic / system perspective to analyze novice teachers' agency construction. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the various factors that influence teacher agency and highlights the interconnectedness between these factors. However, the article does not provide practical recommendations for improving teacher education programs or supporting novice teachers' professional development. Additionally, the study only examines the agency construction of novice teachers and does not explore how experienced teachers' agency may differ. Riazi and Razavipour (2011) discussed the negative impact of centralized tests on the agency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The authors argued that these tests limit teacher agency by imposing strict guidelines and curriculum, leaving little room for creativity and personalization in teaching. This can lead to a lack of motivation and job satisfaction among teachers, which ultimately affects student learning outcomes. The article suggests that teacher agency can be enhanced by providing opportunities for professional development, encouraging collaboration among teachers, and promoting autonomy in decision-making. This can help

teachers feel more empowered and invested in their work, leading to better outcomes for both teachers and students. However, some critical viewpoints may argue that while centralized tests may limit teacher agency in some ways, they also provide a standardized measure of student achievement and ensure that all students are held to the same standards. Additionally, some may argue that too much emphasis on teacher agency could lead to inconsistency in teaching quality across different classrooms. In their case study, Sahragard and Rasti (2017) analyzed how two teachers from the Iranian Ministry of Education operated with agency and taught in the Iranian EFL academic context according to the requirements of the regulatory processes that govern school districts. During academic year courses, they analyzed qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and emails according to the Priestley et al. (2013) ecological framework. However, while the study addressed the resources and experiences of teacher agency of two in-service teachers, it failed to shift the focus of professional education from the acquisition of knowledge to engagement and voice. The study also did not provide comprehensive insights into the formation of student teachers' agency. Finally, while the authors emphasize the importance of promoting teacher agency, they do not provide concrete recommendations for how this can be achieved in practice. It would be beneficial for future research to explore effective strategies and interventions that can help teachers develop their agency and provide practical recommendations for teacher education programs and policies.

Altogether, the ecological understanding of teacher agency reframed the theoretical basis of this study, which aims to explore how student teachers' agency is interrelated with Farhangian University programs. With this end in view, the aim of this research was to develop and validate an instrument that measures student teachers' agency in relation to individual capacity, resources, and structural and contextual variables. To the researchers' best of knowledge, no empirical study has developed or validated such an inventory, at least in an Iranian context. Hence, the present research is helpful in filling the gap in contemporary studies and contributing to the literature on second language teacher education, agency, and Farhangian University in the Iranian EFL context. So, this research aimed to answer the following questions:

1. Does the newly-modified student teachers' agency survey have an acceptable model fit in an Iranian context?

   1.1 What are the dimensions characterizing the formation of teacher agency from ecological model perspectives?

   1.2. What is the role of iterational dimension in cultivating student teacher's agency?

   1.3. What is the role of practical-evaluative dimension in cultivating student teachers' agency?

   1.4. What is the role of projective dimension in cultivating student teachers' agency?

Method

Participants

Altogether, 221 student teachers participated in the survey research design study. During the phase of scrutinizing the submitted questionnaires, 11 incomplete surveys were neglected, as they were not fully filled out (for example, those in which an answer was systematically chosen). Of the remaining participants, 117 were female and 93 were male student teachers from four Farhangian universities. To investigate the mediating role of Farhangian University, which is part of a larger study, the target sample in this study consisted of 73 fourth-year and 137 first-year student teachers. The highest proportion of participants were aged 18-25 and were selected based on convenience sampling from Farhangian University's branches in Sari, Ghaemshahr, Tehran, and Mashhad. More detailed information on the distribution of participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Group	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	117	55.7
Male	93	44.3
Year level		
Freshman	137	65.2
Senior	73	34.8
Farhangian University branches		
Ghaemshahr	53	25.2
Sari	25	11.9
Tehran	97	46.2
Mashhad	35	16.7
Total	210	100

Instrument

Questionnaire

Overall, construct definition or conceptualization plays a dominant role in research (MacKenzie, 2003). To define the construct underlying the components of student teachers' agency from an ecological point of view, this research draws upon related literature on teacher agency. An item pool was designed based on the concepts derived from the literature. Criteria for keeping items in the questionnaire were established in association with the opinions of an expert panel. The experts

evaluated the suitability of the statements on a three-point scale (1 = appropriate, 2 = marginally appropriate, 3 = very appropriate). The items were also examined for relevance and focus, redundancy, clarity, simplicity, readability, and conceptual consistency with the specific component in the model. Based on the experts' input, the researcher rewrote and rephrased statements with ratings under 3. In the piloting phase following the experts' review of the questionnaire, the initial 40-item version of the questionnaire was checked in terms of aspects of wording such as the clarity of instructions, item length, item comprehensibility, and soundness of examples within each of the three dimensions of the theoretical framework. Subsequent to the piloting phase, the final adaptation of the questionnaire was administered to a sample of 221 student teachers, comprised of 117 female and 93 male student teachers from four Farhangian universities. The ultimate questionnaire consisted of 22 statements with some revision and clarification to capture all three dimensions of agency from the ecological perspective. Thus, the content validity and the face validity of the questionnaire were investigated before estimating the reliability.

The student teachers' agency questionnaire utilized in the present research was adapted from four English versions of the agency scale: Malmberg and Hagger (2009), Jääskelä et al. (2017), Toom et al. (2017), and Leijen et al. (2021). The questionnaire was modified according to the ecological approach and piloted in Sari Farhangian University before data collection.

The conceptual framework of an ecological approach to student teachers' agency consists of three dimensions; namely, iterational, practical-evaluative, and projectivity, as proposed by Priestley et al. (2015). This framework was used to formulate items for the ecological approach to student teachers' agency questionnaire. For each dimension, the researchers identified primary features representing that dimension. Based on the researchers' theoretical conceptualization, the ecological model of teacher agency in Farhangian University was adapted to gauge the iterational elements, such as instructional (2 items) and supportive agency beliefs (2 items) (Malmberg & Hagger 2009), sense of teaching competence (1 item) (i.e., skills & knowledge) and collaborative knowledge building (1 item) (Toom et al., 2017).

The researchers assumed that the following factors represent the practical-evaluative dimension of agency: opportunities to make choices (2 items), opportunities to influence (2 items) (Jääskelä et al., 2017), social support (2 items), equality (2 items), trust (2 items), professional community (2 items) (Toom et al., 2017), and institutional context (2 items) (Leijen et al., 2021). The items related to the projective dimension supplemented with using Information Communication Technology in teaching as a short-term and long-term goal (2 items) (Leijen et al., 2021).

The final version of the questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section consisted of demographic questions that aimed to determine general characteristics of student teachers such as age, gender, and year level. The second section included the 22 statements assessing 13 elements of student teachers' agency in Farhangian University.

The content validity of the questionnaire was assessed through discussions with three TEFL experts who held a Ph.D. As presented in Table 2, the coefficient alpha for the entire questionnaire and its components was .94, indicating a high level of internal consistency for the survey with the sample. The descriptive statistics for the dimensions were also reported in Table 2.

Data Collection Procedure

The survey was conducted electronically via Google Forms with 221 participants. Instructors asked students to allocate a reasonable period of time during class to fill out the online questionnaire using their cell phones. Ethical approval was obtained from different branches of Farhangian University, and all participants answered the questionnaire anonymously and voluntarily. Data from 210 student teachers were collected electronically and archived for later analysis. In the process of developing and validating the questionnaire, various careful steps were taken. First, the fundamental assumptions of ecological student teachers' agency were designated. Then, a bank of items related to the content domain of agency was arranged, coded, and reduced. Finally, CFA was conducted to establish the factor structure of the adapted questionnaire. For the present research, a meticulous examination of the related literature focusing on teachers' agency in academic environments was conducted.

Data Analysis

The construct validity of the newly designed questionnaire to assess student teachers' professional agency was estimated through both EFA and CFA. The Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 22.0) was used to fulfill the aim of this research. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the overall fit of the model, and in addition to the scaled chi-square statistics, tests of absolute fit including Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were also used, as well as tests of incremental fit including Comparative Fit Index (CFI). There is no universally accepted criterion for assessing model fit yet (Heubeck & Neil, 2000). Generally, an adequate to good fit is suggested by a chi-squared statistic of less than 3, with GFI exceeding .90, and an RMSEA of less than .06. Additionally, CFI values with cut-off values > .90 were also calculated to estimate model fit.

Results

The outcome of the first research question serves as the foundation for the subsequent four questions. The statistical test conducted for the first research question provides a quantitative analysis of the data, which is then used to inform the descriptive elaboration of the other questions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of the first research question provide a critical starting point for understanding and exploring subsequent research questions in this study.

To check the reliability of the survey, the coefficient alpha index was estimated for the overall scale and each dimension. As displayed in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha index for the overall scale is 0.94, showing satisfactory internal consistency among the elements of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha estimates for each factor ranged

from 0.72 to 0.92 (projective = 0.72, practical-evaluative = 0.82, iterational = 0.92), which demonstrated that the survey and its three dimensions attained the desired reliability index. The results propose initial support for the practicality of measuring agency with the present items; therefore, no alteration was needed for the statements.

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha for the Ecological Agency Survey

Items	No	Cronbach's alpha
Iterational	6	.921
Practical-evaluative	14	.835
Projective	2	.725
The whole questionnaire	22	.920

Factor Analysis

The scale for evaluating EFL student teachers' agency in the current study was modified from four valid and reliable instruments. The appropriateness of data for factor analysis was measured through two statistical tests. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.934, higher than the cut-off point of .6 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (p < 0.05) meets the acceptable fit thresholds which supports the factorability of the statistics in the model. Table 3 presents the results of these two tests.

Table 3

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Student teacher agency questionnaire	Bartlett's test sig.	KMO
1-22	0.001	0.934

To be assured about the normality of the variables involved in the next step (factor analysis), the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was employed. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

One Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test

Variables	N	Absolute	Positive	Negative	Test statistic	K-S significance
Iterational	210	.178	.178	-.090	.178	.001
Practical-evaluative	210	.083	.083	-.082	.083	.001
Projective	210	.110	.110	-.083	.110	.001

As is indicated in Table 4, the obtained K-S significance for all dimensions is less than 0.05. Thus, it is proved that the data distribution is normal.

Table 5 demonstrates the results of factor extraction which gives detailed information about the amount of statements of the survey shared before / after factorability. As can be seen, all 22 statements of the questionnaire are higher than the cut-off value (i.e. 0.3), so no modification was necessary for the items.

Table 5

The Amount of Items of the Questionnaire Shared Before / After Factorability

Items of the questionnaire	Initial	Extraction
It1	1.000	.763
It2	1.000	.762
It5	1.000	.727
It6	1.000	.673
It7	1.000	.616
It8	1.000	.609
Cu12	1.000	.656
Cu15	1.000	.329
Cu16	1.000	.312
Cu18	1.000	.477
St19	1.000	.593
St21	1.000	.439
St22	1.000	.473
St23	1.000	.493
St27	1.000	.582
St28	1.000	.643
Re29	1.000	.600
Re30	1.000	.468
Re33	1.000	.486
Re34	1.000	.603
Pro37	1.000	.603
Pro38	1.000	.479

EFA was conducted with the method of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and the Varimax rotation to check the appropriate number of dimensions to maintain. The result of Kaiser's criterion is presented in Table 6. which yielded three extracted factors and explains 56.308% of the total variance. Factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1 are retained in the analysis.

Table 6

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.098	41.354	41.354	9.098	41.354	41.354	6.352	28.873	28.873
2	1.756	7.981	49.335	1.756	7.981	49.335	4.273	19.422	48.295
3	1.534	6.973	56.308	1.534	6.973	56.308	1.763	8.013	56.308
4	1.116	5.071	61.380						
5	.895	4.070	65.449						
6	.865	3.932	69.381						
7	.760	3.454	72.835						
8	.679	3.086	75.921						
9	.646	2.937	78.858						
10	.555	2.523	81.381						
11	.498	2.261	83.642						
12	.480	2.180	85.822						
13	.419	1.906	87.728						
14	.388	1.765	89.493						
15	.378	1.718	91.211						
16	.362	1.646	92.857						
17	.349	1.588	94.444						
18	.320	1.456	95.900						
19	.270	1.225	97.125						
20	.237	1.076	98.201						
21	.214	.974	99.175						
22	.181	.825	100.000						

The result of Catell's scree test run by SPSS was indicated in Figure 2 confirmed the number of extracted factors in the previous step. Factors above the break have remained which explain the most variance in the scale.

Figure 2

The Scree Test
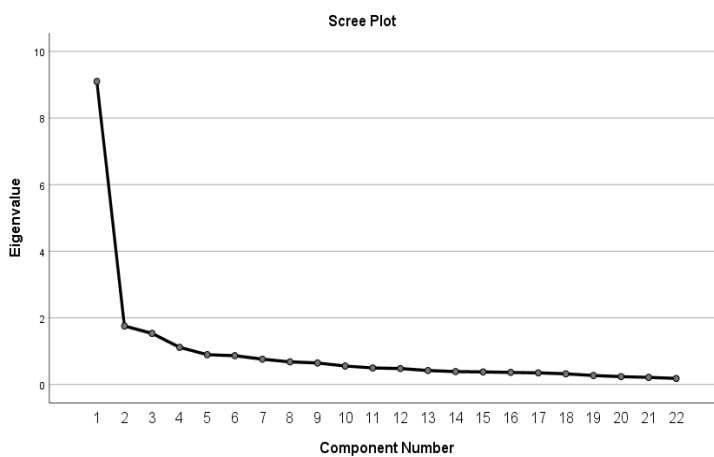
To check which statements have high loadings on which variables, the rotated component matrix was employed. The benchmark is 0.3, therefore just factor loadings higher than 0.3 are displayed in Table 7. The rotated matrix presented that the factor loadings were from 0.48 to 0.82 exceeding the benchmark Table 7.

Table 7

Rotated Component Matrix

Statements of questionnaire	Rotated components		
	1	2	3
1	.829		
2	.828		
3	.814		
4	.774		
5	.763		
6	.744		
7	.699		
8	.660		
9	.640		
10		.796	
11		.714	

Statements of questionnaire	Rotated components		
	1	2	3
12		.701	
13		.615	
14		.600	
15		.590	
16		.529	
17		.524	
18		.486	
19			.682
20			.671
21			.642
22			.536

As presented in Table 7, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 loaded on the first factor which was labeled as the iterational dimension, items 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 loaded on the second factor to form practical-evaluative dimension, and items 19, 20, 21, and 22 loaded on the third factor to form projective dimension. The results of factor loading demonstrated some cross-loadings to the classifying of items. Items 19, 20, 21, and 22 which were from the second factor (i.e., practical-evaluative), were loaded on the third factor (i.e., projective). Items 7 and 9 which were from the third factor (i.e., projective), were loaded on the first factor (i.e., iterational). Item 8 which was from the second factor (i.e., practical-evaluative), was loaded on the first factor (i.e., iterational). As for the cross-loaded items, it was decided to be neglected after consulting with domain experts.

The factor of iterational dimension, explaining 28.873% of the total variance, embodies 9 items associate with three different dimensions in the theoretical framework. Variances of items 7, 8, and 9 were incorporated under the practical-evaluative and projective dimensions in the conceptual framework, considering that the remaining items of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were classified under the iterational dimension. The second factor, explaining 19.422% of the total variance, embodies 9 items associated with practical-evaluative dimension in the theoretical framework. The third factor, explaining 8.013% of the total variance, embodies 4 items associated with different dimensions in the theoretical framework. Variances of items 19, 20, 21, and 22 were incorporated under the practical-evaluative dimension in the conceptual framework. Therefore, these items did not load on their respective factor.

Structural Equation Modeling

CFA was implemented on the data to substantiate the validity of the scale. The purpose was to check how much of the theoretical framework of factor analysis for the student teachers' agency was in line with the extent students were answering the statements. To validate this model, the dataset was subjected to the model fit

analysis. As shown in Table 8, the goodness of fit indices were acceptable ($\chi2$ = .234, df = 180, $\chi2$ / df = 1.07, RMSEA = .019, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, and NFI = 0.92). The modified model is presented in Figure 3.

Table 8

Model Fit Indices

Fit indices	RMSEA	χ^2	χ^2 / df	GFI	CFI	NFI	IFI	RFI
The adequate value	$0.08 \geq$	> 0.05	$3.00 >$	$0.9 \leq$	$0.9 \leq$	$0.9 \leq$	$0.9 \leq$	$0.9 \leq$
The obtained value	.019	.234	1.074	.992	.994	.923	.994	.902

As is apparent from the goodness of fit indices table, it can be determined that the suggested model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data. Ultimately, the validity of the scale was confirmed by CFA.

Figure 3

The Schematic Representation of the Model of Student Teachers' Agency
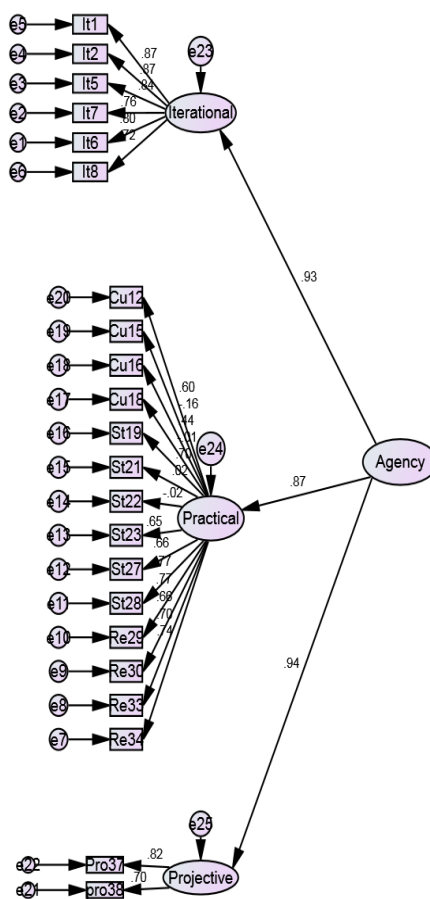
Discussion

To accomplish the purpose of the first research question, two complicated procedures were conducted. During the initial stage, the congruency of the questionnaire with the ecological teacher agency theory in the literature was thoroughly checked. This phase's purpose was achieved by repeatedly checking the questionnaire elements with the studies in the relevant literature. Then, EFA and CFA were used in two separate administrations to statistically validate the questionnaire. The hypothetical model of Priestley et al. (2015) was confirmed in the context of this study. The SEM validation process results showed that the thirteen-factor scale provided sufficient conceptual support for gaining the means of agency among student teachers ($\chi2 = .234 > 0.05$, GFI = 0.99 > .9, CFI = 0.99 > .9, and RMSEA = .019 < .08). Although some items had low factor loadings, the model fit was acceptable, and the researchers did not omit any factors.

The present research aimed to design a questionnaire to closely monitor the formation of agency in student teachers. Within the ecological model adopted in this research, Leijen et al. (2021) state that no validated scale could be utilized to assess student teachers' agency in a higher education context. For instance, among quantitative studies, Jääskelä et al. (2017) developed a questionnaire based on the sociocultural view of agency, while the one developed by Soini et al. (2015) focused on psychological aspects. Many studies conducted in Iran have mainly focused on qualitative tools. For instance, Rostami and Yousefi (2020) used complexity dynamic / system theory and focused on semi-structured and focus group interviews to manage teacher agency.

The statistical tests conducted for the first research question corroborated that the answer to the second research question is consistent with the hypothetical model, confirming the three dimensions of the ecological approach to teacher agency. The results of the present study substantiated the adopted theoretical framework, showing that the three dimensions of agency are interwoven and highly necessary for the formation of agency. In other words, the three aspects of the ecological model of agency are in a mutually constitutive relationship and cannot be reduced to one individual behavioral feature. The iterational dimension shapes the projective and practical-evaluative dimensions, and the projective dimension also shapes the practical-evaluative dimension. To understand agency, it is impossible to consider just one dimension and not the others. These findings are well-aligned with the previously proposed three dimensions of teacher agency by Leijen et al. (2021) in all three investigated domains.

The third research question aimed to explore the temporal-relational nature of agency, where past experiences may shape and influence present habits and efforts. The researchers hypothesized that student teachers' previous personal and professional experiences, such as their beliefs, values, and competency, may impact their agency and professional skills, thereby reflecting the existence of the iterational dimension of teacher agency. The findings of this study are in line with Lortie's (1975) "apprenticeship of observation," which suggests that student teachers' observations and evaluations of professional activities during their childhood may

shape their approach to teaching. However, gaining professional agency is not always easy, even with teaching and teacher training programs (Munby et al., 2001). The study by Sahragard and Rasti (2017) found that some student teachers may face challenges during their university programs, such as struggling with certain courses, not receiving encouragement or support from teacher educators, or finding it difficult to adjust to the new environment. These challenges forced them to reflect on their experiences and consider how they could improve their situation for change. Therefore, the iterational dimension of teacher agency plays a crucial role in shaping and developing student teachers' agency over time. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that previous personal and professional experiences may have a significant impact on student teachers' agency and professional skills, highlighting the importance of considering the iterational dimension of teacher agency.

Fourth research question confirmed that however agency is actively involved with the previous personal / professional histories and the future aspirations, it can just be performed in the present, as expressed in the practical-evaluative dimension. The findings supported the hypothesis that while student teachers have more opportunity to influence and to make choice, while they treat respectfully and equally, while they receive support from peers and teacher educators, they perform their agency in school / university. Additionally, Leijen et al. (2020) suggest that there are in with a good chance that student teachers will begin to understand their crucial role in decision-making regarding education as part of a broader political and societal context.

Regarding the practical-evaluative dimension, the results of this study corroborated the findings of Toom et al.'s (2017) work, in which it was shown that support from either teacher educators or colleagues is a central feature for the agency construction of student teachers. Student teachers presupposed that collegial support would help them when confronting conflicts. Moreover, teacher educators also share their experiences and expert perspectives by organizing frequent professional gatherings to collaborate in constructing student teachers' professional agency. On the contrary, the findings of this research are in contrast with those of Soini et al. (2015), who found a non-significant role for teacher educators in forming their student teachers' agency, while quality of peer relations is a key regulator for student teachers' sense of professional agency. This rather contradictory result may be due to student teachers experiencing teacher educators and faculty as being more distant than their peers.

Consistent with Jääskelä et al. (2017), to shed light on the practical-evaluative dimension of the ecological model of agency, this study confirmed that gaining more freedom to exert influence and more opportunities to make choices helps student teachers in their course to construct their professional agency. It can be speculated that senior students are provided with more autonomous procedures, such as during taking part in practical projects like apprenticeships or seminar courses, whereas at the beginning levels of education at the university, much more support is needed for students to utilize active agency, particularly if they did not have opportunities to be autonomous during their studies at high school. These issues, which accentuate student teachers' agentic acts, significantly contribute to their

professional skills. It shows that agency begins to boost with experience during years of studying at Farhangian University. It can be speculated that seminar courses, which commonly involve students sharing their thoughts and feelings with each other and receiving feedback, are highlighted in Farhangian University's pedagogical design principles during teacher studies. Such practices advance mutual collegial discussions that may assist student teachers' sense of belonging to the professional community, which further presents contexts for student teachers' education in the professional community (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014).

The fifth research question aimed to find the role of the projective dimension of the ecological model of agency. Student teachers were concerned about using technology to become prospective professional members of their educational community. This feature is associated with the character of the projective dimension of the ecological model of agency, in which student teachers coped with the changes in different agentic ways to refine their visions for the future. This finding was in keeping with those of Leijen et al. (2021), who found that utilizing Information Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching helps student teachers improve their agency construction. Moreover, Priestley et al. (2013) believed that teachers are individuals who play a significant role in promoting their students' lives in various ways. This importance is particularly evident during the widespread outbreak of COVID-19, which demonstrates that it is time for agentic collective actions. Therefore, teacher training universities need to address this changing and uncommon situation that teachers and students are confronting in these unprecedented times to inspire conditions that give teacher educators and student teachers agency and flexibility to act collaboratively.

Conclusion

The findings of the first research question were foundational in setting the stepping-stones for the subsequent questions of this research. From the exploratory and statistical findings of this study, it can be concluded that the components found in this study as the underlying components of student teachers' agency include factors related to the ecological aspects of teacher agency. Each component has unique features that facilitate the active learning efforts of student teachers. The findings suggest that the construction and development of teacher agency cannot be confined to a single behavioral trait. This also means that student teachers' agency is intrinsically relational. Hence, to promote student teachers' agency in Farhangian University, it is necessary to facilitate all of the elements simultaneously. Although teachers are the main characters in the educational context, they can only gain professional agency through cultural, structural, and material resources that are designed for them. This supports the significance of the ecology of academic settings such as schools / universities (Leijen et al., 2020).

More specifically, the researchers found that gaining valuable academic experiences is associated with two dimensions of ecological teacher agency that potentially target overall competencies (iterational dimension) and academic aspirations (projective dimension). Furthermore, the findings of the practical-evaluative dimension revealed that teacher agency was not constant, as social aspects and physical environmental contexts played leading roles in constructing it.

It showed that agency begins to improve with experience during years of studying in Farhangian University. It can be speculated that seminar courses, which commonly involve students sharing their thoughts and feelings with each other and receiving feedback, are highlighted in Farhangian University's pedagogical design principles during teacher studies. Such practices advance mutual collegial discussions that may assist student teachers' sense of belonging to the professional community, which further presents contexts for their education in the professional community (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014).

The findings may help us better understand that if teacher agency is strongly influenced by previous experiences, then it can be concluded that present situations will have an impact on the subsequent agency of student teachers. Such consequences have further implications for policymakers, particularly when the aim is to promote teachers' capacity, such as their capability to implement a new national curriculum. Academic policy related to teacher development needs to focus on advancing the ability of teachers as individual actors, while the ecological view tends to focus on the structural and cultural realms that shape teachers and their environment. Hence, policymakers in the Ministry of Education in Iran should be aware of the significance of teacher agency and recruit teachers who are professionally competent and tend to collaborate more as they work together to exercise their collective agency and improve teaching and learning in their schools.

Another implication of the study is that the ecological approach would be considered crucial for constructing professional associations that encourage student teachers' agency. The professional associations for student teachers assume to be their peers and teacher educators in which they can learn how to take advantage of their skills to foster reciprocal co-regulative learning (Edwards & D'Arcy, 2004). Moreover, to boost student teachers' agency, teacher educators should clearly and collectively pinpoint the complexity of cultural and structural elements that hinder or facilitate student teachers' professional learning. They should examine their own curricula, their own willingness to act as agents of change, and their roles and responsibilities in supporting pre-service and in-service teachers' understandings of agency (Flessner et al., 2012). As a result, it is also crucial for EFL teacher education curriculum developers and syllabus designers to consider these elements in planning and administering EFL teacher education curricula and syllabi.

Finally, the researchers have identified potential limitations of the newly designed scale. Despite the generally constructed statements, the researchers wondered whether the results would be the same with more specific questionnaire items. For instance, in the present study, we had a general item in the questionnaire about the competency of student teachers, but we did not specify various fields of competency. Thus, forthcoming studies should focus on instruments with both general and specific questionnaire items. In the future, it would be better to conduct the questionnaire as part of mixed-methods research to examine the individual conditions in which student teachers tend to act as professional agents.

Acknowledgments

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Interpersonal Skills in the Development of Translation Competence: A Model

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Abstract

The current dynamic, rapidly changing labour market is influenced by the constant development of new technologies, globalisation, the changing nature of the economy, and changed demands on employees. In this context, university graduates are expected to be flexible, dynamic, and able to adapt effectively to new, rapidly changing conditions in the labour market, changes in individual job positions, and the changes and challenges that 21st-century society is undergoing. These circumstances force universities to respond to the situation as employers point to the disconnect between students' university training and practice. According to them, students come unprepared to a contemporary working environment, their skills and knowledge not corresponding with the needs of practice. The field of study of philology is no exception in this regard. The position of the translator (in the near future) will be different, their tasks will be more diverse, and they will be required to have different competencies and skills. The translator will have to interact with other experts or participants in the translation process and will have to be a team player who is proficient in using IT. This paper focuses on the role of interpersonal skills in the development of translation competence. The first part defines key terms: knowledge, skills, and interpersonal skills; in the second one, a teaching model for specialised translation is introduced. This model also enables the monitoring of the development of interpersonal skills in the process of acquiring translation competence, while also revealing a change in the paradigm of teacher–student interaction.

Keywords: competences, CAT tools, interpersonal skills, teaching model for specialised translation, transferable skills

Introduction

Today's dynamic and rapidly changing labour market is influenced by the constant development of new technologies, globalisation, the changing nature of the economy, and changing demands on employees. These changes are resulting in a global transformation of civilisation. This is an objectively observable process that affects every aspect of human life, bringing both positives and negatives to communities. The aforementioned turns also change thinking about education, emphasising the need to build a sustainable knowledge society. In this context, university graduates are expected to be flexible, dynamic, and able to adapt effectively to new, rapidly changing conditions of the labour market, to the changes in individual jobs, and to the transformations and challenges that society is going through in the 21st century. They are expected to contribute to a company's development by applying their technical skills and theoretical knowledge in practice. Ideal graduates, in order to meet the needs of today's companies, should be able to work in a team, know the principles of effective communication, exhibit a high level of critical thinking, have IT and problem-solving skills, and be able to work in an intercultural environment.

These circumstances force universities to react, as employers very often point to a disconnect between students' university training and practice. Students arrive unprepared, as the skills they have (not) acquired through university training do not correspond to the needs of practice. When we talk about the link between education and practice, i.e. the link between theory and practice, it should be remembered that reflecting on this link is not just a newly arisen necessity or a recent innovation. As early as the last century, American philosopher John Dewey (1938), a representative of the Chicago School of Pragmatism, a representative of reform pedagogy, advocated the importance of learning-by-doing. He urged the avoidance of learning dead facts, stressing the need to develop skills and impart knowledge that help students as human beings, professionals, and citizens. Steiner (1937), the Austrian (also referred to as German) philosopher, founder of anthroposophy, and founder of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart in 1919, thought along similar lines, emphasising that the goal of education is to balance the intellect, the emotions, the heart, and practical skills to educate individuals who are then effective servants of society.

Demands on university graduates from practice and employers are natural and legitimate, but it is questionable to what extent university education must primarily meet the demands of practice and employers. In my opinion, higher-education institutions must reflect the requirements of practice, but this reflection also raises legitimate questions:

- To prepare graduates only for a particular industry or for a particular area of social practice?

- To prepare an independent-minded graduate with an adequate level of critical thinking and a high degree of creativity, able to further develop their skills in different areas of socio-economic practice with the help of teamwork?

- To prepare graduates by limiting their education to certain basic competences required by the present?

- In today's rapidly evolving world of technology, is it even possible to prepare an explicitly narrowly specialised graduate according to the dictates of practice?

So what is the role of the university, then? In my opinion, a university should prepare a translation graduate who is comprehensively equipped for working life, not narrowly specialised, because the makeup of national economies, for example, can – and certainly will – change, not to mention changes at the global level. How then will a highly specialised professional, without the ability to think freely and creatively, be able to switch to another area of socio-economic practice and find employment? In a way, globalisation is getting out of hand, and it is therefore difficult to predict the future and trends of the development not only of society but also of national economies.

These considerations also apply to students in humanities-oriented fields of study. I will consider the study field[1] of philology, more specifically the specialisation of translation and interpreting. From the foregoing it follows that it is impossible to predict exactly what competences, skills, and knowledge will be needed in the near future, even for graduates of a philology degree programme specialising in translation and interpreting. Currently, we see different types of markets with many different profiles and, as a result, different needs. Is it not then the role of the university to develop, first and foremost, the talent and creativity of students, their ability to communicate and work in a team (as teamwork is considered a key competence for the 21st century), and their ability to self-reflect and evaluate others, i.e. to cultivate, in particular, the interpersonal skills of graduates? Let us not forget humanity, which universities should cultivate as well. In addition, it appears that developing students' creativity has taken a back seat in recent times. We do not pay enough attention to it, because practice requires us to educate mainly with the help of technology and within the framework of technology. However, let us be honest and admit that technology largely deprives human beings of skills such as the aforementioned creativity, humanity, and the ability to communicate, especially in an intercultural environment.

Technological development, market needs, and employers' needs equally influence humanities-oriented fields of study, in our case the field of study of philology, specialisation translation and interpreting, which also has to respond flexibly to the needs of employers. In the near future, the position of the translator will be different, their tasks will be more varied and, in this context, different competences and skills will be required. As I have already stated, the translation market is also changing. This market will no longer need a translator who works only with source and target texts and uses only dictionaries and acquired knowledge in their work. They will need to interact with other professionals or participants in the translation process, and they will need to be a team player who is proficient in the use of IT. It is likely, if not certain, that their role will also include post-editing of texts produced by their human or technological colleagues.

Educational Consequences

University training of translators must reflect these realities. The aforementioned technological developments force us to change the ways in which knowledge is transferred in the education process. This also entails changes to the interaction between teacher and student. It should not be forgotten that every educational context is still strongly influenced by the educational traditions that have been shaped in its given geographical context. The national education systems of the EU member states are also based on the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (adopted in 2008 and revised in 2017), which in Slovakia is reflected in the National Qualifications Framework. In Slovakia, the National System of Occupations (NSO), defined by Act No. 5/2004 Employment Services, is a nationwide, unified information system for describing the standard labour market requirements for individual jobs. The NSO specifies the requirements for professional skills and practical experience necessary to perform work activities on the labour market. At its core is the Register of Occupations, created from the National Occupational Standards, which describes employers' requirements for skilled job performance (https://www.sustavapovolani.sk/o_portali). The requirements for a quality management system in translation services are, in turn, specified in the International Standard ISO 17100. The European Union's priorities for the higher education of translators are defined by the European Master's in Translation, which is intended to enable those who have completed such training to become more employable in the labour market.

Theoretical Framework

Since the focus of this article is the development of soft skills in the process of training future translators, it is necessary for the sake of further considerations to define my understanding of the term *skill*. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (European Commission, 2008) considers knowledge, competences, and skills as learning outcomes. The notions of competence (from Lat. *competenia*) and skill are often defined variously by scholars in Slovakia and elsewhere, and some consider them to be synonymous. I will therefore try to formulate their definition for the purposes of this article.

Knowledge is defined by the European Commission as "the result of the acquisition of theoretical or factual information through learning" (European Commission, 2008). According to Klieme (2004), knowledge at a higher level develops into skills. Thus, knowledge can be considered as the starting point for skills development, while skills are the practical outcomes of learning (European Commission, 2008). In my view, knowledge is the result of both conscious and unconscious learning as well as the starting point for further development of an individual in many ways.

Competence is defined as "the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or learning situations, in the context of professional and personal development" (European Commission, 2008, p. 13). Thus, in summary, we can say that competence is associated with responsibility and autonomy. I understand this as a definition in a broad sense, but in

relation to translation there are a number of definitions of translation competence, which in this context we understand as a competence in a narrower sense. Since the subject of my interest is a skill, I will limit myself to the definition of translation competence according to the EMT (2009)[2] (European Master's in Translation) standards, which state that a translator is required to have the following competences:

- ✓ competence to provide translation services

- ✓ linguistic competence

- ✓ intercultural competence

- ✓ information competence

- ✓ technological competence

- ✓ thematic competence

For more detailed definitions of translation competence see Bell, 1991; Gromová, 2003; Hutková, 2019; Kiraly, 1995; Koželová, 2018; Neubert, 2000; Nida, 1964; Pacte, 1997; Pym, 2003; Wilss, 1982.

Skills are generally divided into soft skills, also known as interpersonal skills, and hard skills. According to some authors (e.g. Kolář & Nehyba, 2010), soft skills are part of emotional intelligence, while others consider them cognitive and practical, defining them as the ability to apply knowledge to performing tasks and solving problems (European Commission, 2008). We are born with these skills and can refine and develop them throughout our lives (Mühleisen & Oberhuber, 2008). They are unmeasurable and characteristic of each individual.

To generalise, we could say that soft skills are related to the ability to communicate, work together, resolve conflicts, organise, make decisions, etc. They are complementary to professional, i.e. hard skills.

Recently, there have also been reflections and discussions of transferable skills. These skills are transferable across many sectors and occupations (mostly) within the economy. They are important for people's wider employability in the labour market. In the global labour market, hard skills are considered to consist of technical and administrative skills related to the sector in which an organisation operates or directly to the given occupation. As a rule, they are easily observable, measurable, and acquired naturally; when new such skills are acquired, there is no need to unlearn skills already learned. We can therefore also describe them as vocational or professional skills. Soft skills, on the other hand, are skills that are also needed in everyday life (not only in the world of work) and are harder to measure and observe (European Commission, 2008).

The list of soft skills (and their naming) varies from author to author; the German scholars Gabriele Peters-Kühlinger and Friedel John, for example, give the following list: communication skills, self-esteem and empathy, teamwork skills, ability to accept criticism and criticise effectively, analytical and critical thinking,

trustworthiness, discipline, self-control, curiosity, the ability to manage conflicts, and the ability to assert oneself.

My attention has been drawn to a list of soft skills compiled by ANTEA CONSULTING, s.r.o., a consultancy firm, because they correspond to my ideas of the soft skills that a translator should possess. The firm lists the following top ten soft skills: communication and presentation skills, teamwork, stress management, time management, conflict management, flexibility and proactivity, positive thinking and positive attitude, responsibility, self-motivation, and assertiveness.

The model of interpersonal skills development in the process of acquiring translation competence

From the foregoing, it follows that the content and organisation of instruction in translation and interpreting study programmes should be defined to reflect basic translation competence, as well as the requirements of the translation market and the labour market as such, and thus to produce as many prerequisites as possible for graduates to find employment.

For a long time, I have been thinking (along with my former PhD students Marianna Bachledová, Zuzana Angelovičová (Kraviarová), Matej Laš) about a model of teaching translation which would allow students to develop, in parallel, translation competence and the technical sub-competence of using CAT tools, while also reflecting the requirements of practice and modelling real translation practice in the education process. Gradually, while using this model, I have realised that it also allows us to develop students' soft skills, including teamwork, which is considered a key competency for the 21st century. Thanks to this model, I have also become aware of a changed paradigm of teacher–student interaction. Consequently, I have also started to deliberately target the development of soft skills in translation instruction as well as investigate the resulting changes to teacher–student interaction. The focus is on the development of the following soft skills: communication, teamwork, conflict resolution skills, assessment of team members, acceptance of evaluation, criticism, justification of evaluation, analytical thinking, critical thinking, decision making and organisation, self-esteem, empathy, discipline, self-control, curiosity, and the ability to assert oneself.

The model is focused on the translation of specialised texts, as such texts are prevalent in current translation production, constituting the sole activity of "as many as 70.3% of practicing translators in Slovakia" as of 2015 (Djovčoš & Šveda, 2017, p. 76).

To write about translation and translator training is impossible without acknowledging that the translation process is a creative process, one where the translator is the creative author of a final product – a translation. This basic theoretical axiom is also fully applicable to the translation of a specialised text, despite it being different from a literary text in its nature and function(s). Specialised texts are, too, the results of creative processes, and it is therefore necessary to treat them accordingly.

Courses in translation of specialised texts are compulsory for first- and second-year students of master's programme[3]. They build on previous translation courses (including topics such as the methodology of translation, the history of translation studies, the specifics of literary and specialised translation, and the Slovak language – as the training of interpreters and translators focuses on both target and source languages) in the bachelor's programme. Language training focused on the native language, Slovak, provides students with the possibility of employment as editors, copyeditors, or copyeditors of translations. This range of positions attests to the versatility of translation and interpreting graduates as well as their preparedness for professional life. The aim of our study programme is to provide graduates with both practical and theoretical skills – rather than just foreign language experts, our graduates should be autonomous subjects with cultural literacy. It needs to be said that our students are also provided with courses in literary translation. Many universities have dropped their literary translation courses, rationalising that the market does not need such translators. However, our university is not considering taking such steps, and we continue to educate students in this area. Despite the much greater demand for specialised (i.e. non-literary) translations, one should not limit oneself solely to the translation of specialised texts – education in literary translation is necessary, too, because it serves many beneficial functions, such as broadening students' horizons and developing their creativity and intercultural competence.

Our model for specialised translation courses has two main goals. On one hand, we strive to meet the demands of practice by simulating translation practice and the trade in the education process. On the other hand, we aim to develop students' soft skills. In our courses, they experience various functions within a translation workflow – a useful experience, as our graduates are often employed at translation agencies.

Our specialised translation courses are divided into two seminars: Specialised Translation 1 and Specialised Translation 2. Each seminar is 80 minutes long and takes place once per week. Specialised Translation 1 takes place in the spring semester and is offered to first-year students of the master's programme. It proceeds as follows: first, students are acquainted with the term "specialised translation" and the particularities of specialised texts, after which they learn the typology of specialised texts and the terminology used to describe them, with particular emphasis on the special features of Slovak and foreign-language terminology. The curriculum also includes the history and development of specialised translation in Slovakia. When translating particular specialised texts, students make use of intra- and extratextual text analysis à la Christiane Nord[4], having already been acquainted with her model during their bachelor's studies (of course, there are other theoretical tools used to analyse texts; nevertheless, we prefer Nord's intra- and extratextual analysis). They are taught to mine and verify terminology, also using their knowledge acquired from the bachelor's-level course Specialised Terminology and learning to anticipate translation problems related to specialised texts. In addition, they learn to use CAT tools[5]. During the course, two CAT tools are used – MemoQ and Trados. Instruction in Specialised Translation 1 and 2 is carried out in a computer classroom where 20 PCs with MemoQ and Trados licenses are provided to students. Each student works on a single computer.

The organisation of Specialised Translation 2 differs not just from typical seminars, but also from Specialised Translation 1. While in Specialised Translation 1 students learn to use CAT tools and improve their technical competence and reflective interpretation skills, the structure of Specialised Translation 2 is based on that of a translation agency. Students work on translation projects. Over the course of a semester (13 weeks), students work on three different translation projects, each consisting of a single translation. Students (approximately 15–20 per group) are assigned job positions in translation teams. Each translation team has five job positions. The project manager (PM) draws up a timetable taking into consideration the time demands for the individual positions within the team and the deadline set by the teacher. Then the PM acquaints the teacher with their plan, divides the text into several parts for translation (depending on the number of translators in the team) and coordinates the separate activities of the translation process. A key role is also played by terminologists. The terminologists analyse the original text, conduct an intra- and extratextual analysis, compile glossaries in Excel, and search for parallel texts with a similar topic published in the target language. During the whole process, the terminologists have to be ready to explain any term to the rest of the team. After terminologists come translators. They study the intra- and extratextual analyses, import the glossaries into MemoQ, and begin to translate. They then export the translated text as a bilingual file (including both the original and the translation) and send it back to the project manager. The PM then sends this file to the editors, who import it and compare the translation with the original text. The edited text is then sent to the copyeditor. The copyeditor checks the whole document, corrects any grammatical or stylistic errors, and checks the formatting. If serious errors are found – errors that cannot be corrected by the copyeditor – the PM is notified and sends the text for revision back to whomever is responsible for the error. After the copyediting phase is complete, the PM checks a random part of the text as part of the quality control process. The team members can only communicate via the PM. Upon completing a task, they must always send the results to the PM, who has to document their progress.

At the end of the project, all team members have to write a team evaluation report and send it to the PM, who evaluates the teamwork and any issues that came up in the process, gives advice on how to improve the process, writes down what they have learned, and assesses their general satisfaction with other team members. The PM then assembles the project as instructed (document name, team makeup, intra- and extratextual analyses à la Nord, glossaries, translated text, and evaluation reports from each team member) and sends the complete set of documents to the teacher. Only then does the teacher begin to assess the work of the individual team members and the overall translation quality. The number of students in each position depends on the given translation team – the only conditions are that there be only one PM and one copyeditor, and that there be an equal number of translators and editors.

Such a model simulates real working conditions in translation agencies, which is to say in real translation practice. Throughout the process students use MemoQ, which they are trained to work with in Specialised Translation 1. The course aims to improve their analysing skills (which are also trained early on in the bachelor's programme) and their work with terminological databases and parallel texts; upon

completing the course, they are able to apply various translation strategies and assess translation quality as well as the performance of each team member. The course also aims to improve their ability to work in a team. In each project, students change their job positions, eventually becoming acquainted with each one.

Advantages and disadvantages of the model

The advantage of this model is that it simulates real work experience in a translation agency (the model was created in cooperation with Slovak translation agencies). The whole process is carried out with the help of the CAT tool MemoQ, thus developing students' skills at working with such tools. A significant benefit of the model is that in parallel with the training of translation competence, soft skills are also developed: communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, evaluation of team members, acceptance of evaluation, criticism, justification of evaluation, analytical thinking, critical thinking, decision making and organisation, healthy self-esteem, empathy, discipline, self-control, curiosity, and the ability to assert oneself.

We recognise that full mastery of these skills is not possible in one semester, but we are confident that beginning the process of their acquisition will help students become aware of and reflect on the demands and requirements of practice.

We recognise that achieving full mastery of these skills is not possible in a single semester, but we are confident that getting the process started will help students become aware of and reflect on the demands and requirements of practice.

The disadvantage of the model is that one semester is too short for students to complete all the positions in a team. Another disadvantage is the fact that not all students are team players, as there are those who prefer to work independently. They participate in teamwork, but it does not fulfil them; unable to trust the quality of the previous position's output, they instead work out and verify everything on their own, which can cause deadlines to be missed.

A changed paradigm of teacher–student interaction

The model of teaching and organisation described above disrupts the traditional relationship between teacher and students, as well as their roles in the education process. Here, the role of the teacher differs from the traditional teaching role in a traditional class. Their role goes beyond that of intermediary and controller. The role of the controller (Homolová, 2004, p. 47) is based solely on traditional teaching methods and the traditional role of the teacher. According to teaching methodologist Eva Homolová, the teacher in the role of controller is at the centre of students' attention – in the majority of cases, the teacher stands before them in a classroom and dictates the entire didactic process. In our model, the teacher acts more as a guide of the didactic process. They are its facilitator, organiser, and manager, while also acting as a tutor. As a facilitator, the teacher takes students' goals and individual needs and abilities into account and creates the conditions conducive to achieving such goals; they also provide students with motivation. In this role, the teacher leads students towards independence and autonomy (Homolová, 2004, p. 47). The role of the teacher as an organizer / manager is possibly their most important as well as most difficult role. Achieving the goals and completing the tasks of a lesson is only possible by means of effective organisation. In other words, students should be perfectly aware of what is expected of them (Homolová, 2004, p.

48). If the teacher takes the role of a tutor, students are deeply involved in the self-teaching process or work in teams, as in our case. On the basis of Homolová's classification of students' roles, students in these courses can be designated as student–investigator, researcher, or student–discoverers (Homolová, 2004).

Figure 1

The teacher–student relationship and the process of developing individual roles, forming an active, critically thinking personality (diagram by Vladimír Biloveský, based on Homolová's classification of student roles)
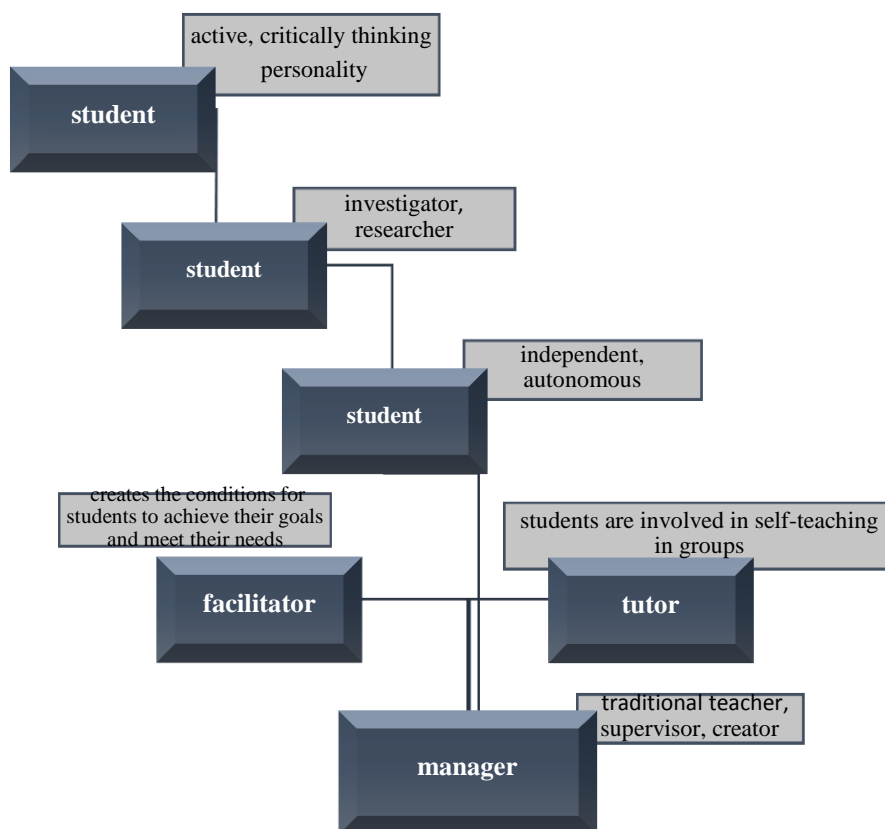
We do not consider our model to be fixed and static, because the translation market is constantly changing, and, similarly, each teacher is different, accentuating the individual skills in different ways and focusing on their development to varying degrees when teaching them.

Conclusion

So how can we summarise the considerations of translation competence? The model we have presented is such a superstructure, because, in parallel with the

development of the base (translation competence), it also develops interpersonal skills, comprehensively shapes the translator's personality, and develops their abilities according to the needs of the changing translation market of the 21st century. In addition to interpersonal skills, the model also develops market and (meta) critical competence (e.g. through the positions of project manager, editor, copyeditor).

One of the goals of university training of future translators is *homo translator* – a being capable of independent, creative, analytical, and critical thinking, technologically proficient and at the same time able to work in teams. This term has also been creatively elaborated by Slovak translatologist Jana Rakšányiová in her study *Homo translator* (Rakšányiová, 2012), in which she critically, and above all warningly, points out the phenomenon that, instead of the ideal, educated, relatively autonomous *homo translator*, the current translation market is dominated mainly by *homo oeconomicus*: "…the market distorts our naive ideas about the victory of education and wisdom over stupidity" (Rakšányiová, 2012, p. 45).

However, if we were to classify the work of a translator as a craft or service on the basis of the wide range of general, specific, professional, and linguistic competences required, we would have to conclude that it is an extremely demanding "intellectual craft", requiring, in addition to all the competences analysed as well as those not yet identified or described, a keen intellect and the whole range of interpersonal skills that a *homo translator* should possess.

In this study, I have not arrived at an exhaustive definition of translation competence and soft skills; this is obviously not entirely possible, since both translation competence and the translator are variable factors. In this regard, one is reminded of this remarkable quote: "The person and personality of a translator resembles in its entirety a mosaic, refined by years and practice, made up of many pebbles. The mosaic should be seen holistically as an aggregate of fragments, each of which has its own quality and justification" (Rakšányiová, 2002, p. 42).

The study of translation competence, the whole translation process, and the translator themselves as a creative being is a complex and dynamic process, as all the variables that enter into the individual processes are constantly evolving. This is why it is necessary to continue to deepen translational research, to improve didactic methods, and to seek new inspirations that should be directed towards improving the quality of translator training.

Notes

1 In Slovakia, higher-education programmes are categorised according to a system of fields of study (študijné odbory), issued in the form of a ministerial decree. A field of study is an area of knowledge that can be studied at one of the three levels of higher education. Fields of study are defined by their content, which are characterised more particularly by the areas and range of knowledge, skills, and competences that make up the graduate's profile.

2 The European Master's in Translation (EMT) was founded in 2006 as a joint project of the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) and the European Commission (EC) with various European universities. In general, its goal is to (in accordance with EU priorities regarding university education) improve the quality of translator training and to create better conditions for the trade. The EMT is a certificate of quality granted by the European Commission to universities whose master's degree programmes meet the EMT's conditions and norms. The EC does not take into account the education of interpreters – it has separate directorates for interpreting and translation. Unfortunately, given the relatively small Slovak market, it would not make sense to separately train translators and interpreters. Some European universities have separate study programmes for translators and for interpreters. However, the EMT merely functions as a brand that can attract applicants and help graduates find a job. There is no financial or material aid included.

3 The programme is offered by the Department of British and American Studies, the Faculty of Arts, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia.

4 (Nord, 1991): EXTRATEXTUAL FACTORS (sender, intention, recipient, medium, place, time, text function); INTRATEXTUAL FACTORS (subject matter, content, presuppositions, text composition, non-verbal elements, sentence structure, suprasegmental features)

5 CAT tools – Computer-assisted translation, or computer-aided translation. The most widespread CAT tools are Trados, Wordfast, MemoQ, Déjà Vu, etc. Broadly speaking, such software uses a translation memory and terminology databases. According to Djovčoš and Šveda (2017), 66% of Slovak professional translators use computer-assisted tools.

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The Encounter with the Cybersemiotic Real in Alice Books

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to incorporate the three Lacanian orders in Søren Brier's cybersemiotic theory in the context Lewis Carroll's *Alice* texts. As an interdisciplinary framework that emphasizes the role of the observer and its symbolically-generated hieroglyph-like universe of "signification sphere" in which any attempt at accessing the objective world of information seems nonsensical, cybersemiotic is an invaluable tool for re-visiting the three orders by which, according to Lacan, we develop our sense of self and the world. Certain elements such as dream-like states, impossible word plays, paradoxes, and nonsense in the *Alice* books, which follow the titular character into the fantastic realms of Wonderland and the Looking Glass World, can allow for registering the Real by disclosing the self-referential nature of language and debunking the seemingly integrated façade of an imaginary and metaphoric reality founded upon the Symbolic and the Imaginary. For an in-depth analysis of how a creatively self-reflexive handling of language can evoke a space where the three Lacanian orders emerge simultaneously as one collapses onto the other, a cybersemiotic formulation of nonsense in the *Alice* books is introduced as the linguistic moment in which signifier-in-isolation (the Real) and signifier-in-relation paradoxically appear on the same cognitive horizon, revealing the underlying dynamics of the signification process which involves an arbitrary development of differentiated signs rendered meaningful due to a tacit consensus agreed upon over the temporal axis.

Keywords: cybersemiotics, nonsense, the Real, Lacan

Introduction

"There will be nonsense in it," (p. 3) predicts Secunda in the prefatory poem to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* written by Carroll (1865 & 1871 / 2009). The prediction proves accurate for all of Carroll's literary works, including *Phantasmagoria and Other Poems*, *The Hunting of the Snark*, and *Sylvie and Bruno*, but most famously for his great fantasy books, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and its sequel *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, published in 1865 and 1871, respectively, follow the uncanny experiences of a little girl called Alice supposedly in her imaginary dream world. The books are rife with incoherent sets of bizarre events such as sudden changes in Alice's frame of mind and body shape, counter-intuitive use / abuse of logic, creative employment of nonsensical language and gibberish, and freakish encounters with shrewdly insane characters. All these features in the *Alice* books allow for a linguistic coding of the Lacanian Real by accentuating the whimsical and arbitrary nature of the Symbolic.

The main objective of this paper is to emphasize the significance of that which cannot be signified in order to make more sense of the signifying process. A cybersemiotic reformulation of the three Lacanian orders explains that, as autopoietic systems, the biological, communicational, and social systems reflect the inaccessible objective world out there, or the Real, unto their own signification sphere via the Symbolic and Imaginary orders upon which all the participants have developed a tacit agreement over time based on their evolutionary needs. Language, as a component of the Symbolic order, contributes significantly to the dynamic process of forming the signification sphere. Specific linguistic moments such as nonsense, however, act as miniature models of the way the Real can be registered at the threshold of Imaginary and Symbolic in certain literary texts where an exhaustive mastery over the elasticity and limitations of language creates an opportunity for getting a whole picture of how we make sense of the world and ourselves. This miniature model will help us assimilate the Real into the cybersemiotic framework in a limited manner since a complete analysis of the Real in the entirety of the *Alice* books with regard to cybersemiotics would have been beyond the scope of this paper.

Literature Review

As the title of Brier's book *Cybersemiotics: Why Information Is Not Enough!* suggests, out of context information, detached from the interconnected web of the intricate Symbolic networks, does not signify anything. Brier offers the interdisciplinary framework of cybersemiotics to establish a ground whereby the concept of information is extended beyond mechanistic views that seek the elimination of subjectivity as much as possible. It focuses, instead, on the process of meaning-making across a signification sphere (Brier, 2021, p. 18). Such an approach, however, does not imply that the framework necessarily must ignore the chaotic Real that is consolidated through the signification process into the Symbolically-arranged signification sphere of an organism.

In his essay "Cybersemiotics in the Information Age," Marcel Danesi clarifies the cybersemiotic framework as an agenda that encompasses both the fields of biosemiotics and cybernetics (Brier, 2021, p. 2). He traces the roots of the term cybernetics to Plato in the sense of governing and control, later to André-Marie Ampère, and finally to Norbert Wiener in his book *Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and Machine*. Biosemiotics is mainly concerned with various forms of semiosis across species. Cybersemiotics, as an interdisciplinary field dealing with these two fields and more, accentuates the conceptual distinction and the relationship between a theoretically defined form of objective information and the semiotics-oriented sense of meaning or signification across all systems, including the communication system of language (Brier, 2021, p. 2). Central to this discussion is the human-level consciousness and how impossible it is to imagine the concept of information independent from the dynamics of interpretation and meaning-making, concepts that are, in turn, related to embodiment and survival needs of an organism or any other autopoietic systems. Lacan's conception of the idea of the Real finds relevance to the cybersemiotic agenda in this context as evidenced by Danesi's explanation of how cybersemiotics strives for the yet unsignified:

> We make veritable discoveries, we explore space, and, in a sense, we go beyond semiosis, reaching for something that no word or sign can ever really capture, just record in part. Cybersemiotic analysis has, ultimately, the aim of showing how humans, in their apparent quest for large-scale meaning, have the capacity to generate their own evolutionary momentum. (Brier, 2021, p. 14)

The ambition to go beyond that which our autopoietic systems allow into our signification sphere, probably because to do so would be unnecessary or even threatening to our blind survival needs, can open up new cognitive horizons such as posthuman consciousness.

It may not be easy to get in touch directly with the unregulated Real world out there, but the nonsense of Alice books allows for rare moments of comprehending the process of solidifying the Real into Symbolic as the unfamiliar signifier-in-isolation and the familiar signifier-in-relation turn into each other on the vibrating edges of language.

Lacan (1966b) acknowledges in his "Hommage rendu à Lewis Carroll," broadcast in 1966 from the French radio France Culture, that "le symbolique, l'imaginaire et le réel" are "at play in the purest form in their simplest relation" (author's translation) in Carroll's texts. This remark is elaborated by Marret-Maleval (2013) in her densely critical essay "'And, as in uffish thought he stood'" where, in addition to providing an enlightening Lacanian criticism of Lewis Carroll's texts by addressing the issues of knowledge and truth, nonsense, the impossible, the unconscious, and subjectivity in their relation to the real and the symbolic, she confirms that "Lacan noted how the text breaks through beyond this dimension [the imaginary level], which it interrogates, making the articulation among the three

registers of the symbolic, imaginary, and real come to light" (p. 104). In other words, the sense of the Alice stories, where the three Lacanian orders are found to be interwoven in the texture of the text, emerges in the nonsensical meltdown of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, allowing for a semiotic study of the Real.

Bloom's *Modern Critical Interpretations: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* contains a number of essays about the brilliant but shadowy figure of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. It also provides some basic historical facts, background information, and critical clues – not to mention controversial rumors – revolving around the *Alice* books. Elizabeth Sewell's foundational essay "The Balance of Brillig", included in Bloom's (2006) book, closely examines nonsense and its various types, parts of speech, and definitions in the context of the nonsense poem Jabberwocky and Humpty Dumpty's commentary on its peculiar vocabulary from *Through the Looking-Glass* in comparison to the gibberish found in Carroll's other literary productions with the conclusion that "[n]onsense is a game with words. Its own inventions wander safely between the respective pitfalls of 0 and 1, nothingness and everythingness" (Bloom, 2006, p. 79). In Lacanian terms, nonsense can be used as an instrument to inquire into the Lacanian Real and Symbolic as it disrupts the ruling order and webs of network in the latter, allows glimpses of the former, and, being language-bound, doubles back into the realm of the Symbolic, though with startlingly fresh frames of reference.

In *Philosophy of Nonsense*, Lecercle (1994 / 2002) points out that by wresting language away from the myriad of its semantic networks, nonsense turns the text into an interrogation of itself, making it reflexive (p. 2). Since language constructs the subject, it can be inferred that a text rendered "en abyme" (Lecercle, 1994 / 2002, p. 134) by nonsense can also goad the subject to take regressive steps and deconstruct itself.

Results

This paper demonstrates how certain elements such as dream-like states, impossible wordplays, paradoxes, and nonsense in Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books can allow for registering the Lacanian Real by disclosing the limited and self-referential nature of language and debunking the seemingly integrated façade of an imaginary and metaphoric reality founded upon the Symbolic and Imaginary orders. For an in-depth analysis of the manner in which a creatively self-reflexive handling of language can evoke a space where the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real simultaneously emerge as one collapses onto the other, a semiotic formulation of nonsense in the Alice books was introduced as a linguistic moment in which signifier-in-isolation and signifier-in-relation paradoxically appear on the same cognitive horizon, revealing the underlying dynamics of the signification process that involves an arbitrary development of differentiated signs rendered meaningful due to a tacit consensus agreed upon over the temporal axis within the closed loop of a specific "signification sphere," to use the terminology of Brier's (2008, p. 32) cybersemiotics.

Discussion

To establish that the ingenious and anomalous manner of wielding language in nonsense leads to the recognition and examination of the Real by manipulating the Symbolic into a self-reflexive identification of its limitations and metaphoric nature, a rigorous scheme based on semiotics can help substantiate the rather abstract and elusive relationship between the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real in the light of scientific and technological findings.

To examine the concept of the Lacanian Real with reference to semiotics, while taking human cognition and language into account, we have analyzed Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books to determine the encrypted linguistic codes that signify the possibility of a semiotic formulation of the Lacanian Real. To this purpose, we have adopted the framework of cybersemiotics, defined by Søren Brier, Professor of semiotics for information, cognitive and communication science at Copenhagen Business School and author of the groundbreaking and comprehensive book *Cybersemiotics: Why Information Is Not Enough*, as "a transdisciplinary approach to information, cognition, and communication studies" (Brier, 2008, p. ii). Brier's book has been composed based on a grand "vision" seeking to establish "a transdisciplinary information science that encompasses the technical, natural, and social sciences, as well as the humanities, in its understanding of understanding and communication" (Brier, 2008, pp. 3-4).

Cybersemiotics posits that even the outside world perceived by the organism is nothing but a sign-mediated world that is reflected in the organism's inner world symbolically or metaphorically based on the said organism's biological and survival needs across the temporal axis. As an interdisciplinary framework that seeks to merge cognitive theories with the more objective sciences of information and communication, cybersemiotics cannot help but to reach out for that which refuses to be symbolized in any signification system. In this light, nonsense, as the linguistic moment in which the Real and the Symbolic exist at a rare balance proves a valuable research tool for analyzing how the Real's refusal for signification in everyday modes of communication could get accentuated and even punctured by the encrypted linguistic codes in literary language.

In his book *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze (1990) describes "the esoteric words which are characteristic of Carroll" (p. 44) in the following manner:

> [I]n principle, it is the empty square, the empty shelf, the blank word... This word therefore is "called" by names which indicate evanescences and displacements: the Snark is invisible, and the Phlizz is almost an onomatopoeia for something vanishing. Or again, the word is called by names which are quite indeterminate: *aliquid*, it, that, thing, gadget, or "whachamacallit." (See, for example, the *it* in the Mouse's story or the thing in the Sheep's shop.) Finally, the word has no name at all; it is rather named by the entire refrain of a song, which circulates throughout the stanzas and causes them to communicate. (Deleuze, 1990, p. 44)

The detailed specification above corresponds to and reveals Eyers's (2012) formulation of Lacan's "the signifier-in-isolation," which "designates the signifier as Real, isolated in its material element away from the networks of relation that render it conducive to meaning" as opposed to the "signifier-in-relation" which "designates the signifier as it exists negatively, defined purely by relation to other signifiers and producing meaning as the result of its perpetual displacement along the axes of metaphor and metonymy" (p. 38).

Paralleled with Brier's cybersemiotic re-interpretation of Peirce's triadic semiotic paradigm, Wittgenstein's language game theory, von Foerster's second-order cybernetics, and Maturana and Varela's autopoiesis theory, the "signifier-in-relation" (Eyers, 2012, p. 38) can "stand for something else for somebody in a certain way" (Brier, 2008, p. 28) and be meaningful by distinguishing itself as "a difference that makes a difference" (Brier, 2008, p. 24), because the system of language is a closed (though neither fixed nor finite) system (Brier, 2008, p. 25) "of conventional signs" (Brier, 2008, p. 28) functioning through a "sign process" that operates within the "signification sphere" (Brier, 2008, p. 32) of an observing system's (Brier, 2008, p. 24) cognition which is capable of forming a "structural coupling" (Brier, 2008, p. 24) between the observer's "autopoietic system" and "perturbations from the environment" (Brier, 2008, p. 24). In contrast, "signifier-in-isolation" falls short of meaning since the Real is "undifferentiated" (Evans, 1996 / 2006, p. 162) and fails to be part of the "sign process" (Brier, 2008, p. 27) that needs difference and "networks of relation" (Eyers, 2012, p. 38) to function.

To incorporate the Lacanian Real in the cybersemiotic framework, we can reframe it in the following manner:

1. The Undifferentiated;

2. Objective information (a self-negating concept according to Brier);

3. Some difference that does not make a difference to the human observer because our structure in terms of embodiment and survival needs does not allow it;

4. Some difference that does make some difference to the human observer and cause changes in it, but can hardly be assimilated into any of the sign systems adopted by humans for the following reasons:

   a. It poses a threat to our survival

   b. It cannot be symbolized in any of the sign systems available to us for communication.

Understandably, the encounter with the Real entails trauma and confusion. The implications of the "discomfort" (p. 45) experienced by Deleuze (1990) in approaching Carroll's idiosyncratic language due to the uncanny presence of the Real "as the 'ex-timate' limit point inherent to, but disruptive of, all Symbolic logics" (Eyers, 2012, p. 36) come to the fore once we contemplate various forms of nonsense, madness, and logical-linguistic confusion in the *Alice* books with more precision.

The Imaginary and the Symbolic at the Threshold

The oscillation between the three Lacanian orders is prevalent throughout *Alice* stories. While some critics such as William Empson and Florence Becker Lennon believe that Alice's fall down the rabbit hole is a symbol of birth (Bloom, 2006, pp. 33-51), others associate it with the fall of / through the Imaginary and Symbolic orders by upturning the rules of nature, language, and social habits (Walker, 2001, p. 7).

Tired of sitting on the grass by the river on a "hot day" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 9) with her older sister, little Alice spots a rabbit hurrying by. She follows the rabbit when it jumps into a hole in the ground, and down she falls into a well. To examine herself about some of the lessons she has learned in her private classes, Alice wonders how many miles she has fallen. She then begins puzzling over her location in terms of "latitude" and "longitude" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 11), words and concepts she has only heard of but does not really understand. The fall takes so long that Alice assumes she will come out eventually through a hole on the opposite side of the planet earth "among people that walk with their heads downward," who would be the "antipathies" (a malapropism of antipodes) (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 11). The absurdity of her reveries during the fall climaxes when, remembering her cat, Alice keeps asking, "Do cats eat bats?" and "Do bats eat cats?" while the narrator comments that "it didn't much matter which way she put it" since "she couldn't answer either question" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 11).

Rules of grammar are defied when Alice, having grown larger by eating a cake, forgets "how to speak good English," exclaiming: "'Curiouser and curiouser!'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 16). Examples of the "subversion" (pp. 105-106) recognized by Marret-Maleval (2013) are not scarce. Alice has to admit she is speaking "nonsense" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 17) when she catches herself planning to send Christmas presents to her feet in the process of body expansion. Too large to get through the door, Alice starts wondering whether the changes in her body size mean she is a completely different person now. Her attempts to resolve this identity crisis aggravate the situation when she fails to remember "all the things" she "used to know" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 19).

Although Alice's confusion over her geography, mathematics, history, language, and didactic lessons may be Carroll's way of criticizing the weaknesses and absurdities of the Victorian educational system for children, the general mood of temporal and spatial disorientation, as well as linguistic obfuscation, points towards a collapse of the regulating forces of the world by constant breaks in the Symbolic order. Alice's bewilderment and identity crises indicate to what extent our identity and understanding of the world is predicated upon the Symbolic.

Wonderland strikes us as curious and wonderful because the exaggerated and absurd state of things in it highlights the imaginary and alien state of the world in which we are living. For example, the scene of Alice's encounter with the Caterpillar, preceded and followed by violent - and violating - body expansions and contractions, is significant since it can be considered as a reference to the mirror stage. Alice's identity is audaciously questioned by the caterpillar smoking hookah on a mushroom. It is well known that the caterpillar transforms during a process of

metamorphosis, eventually maturing into a butterfly that would be designated as its imago. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the "imago," or "the image of the self," as the editor's note indicates, is developed in the mirror stage as "the transformation," leading to "an identification," which "takes place in the subject when he assumes an image" (Lacan, 2007, p. 1124). The "consistency" of this image is "precarious" though (Eyers, 2012, p 161). Indeed, Alice struggles to properly answer the Caterpillar's persistent question, "'Who are you?'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, pp. 40-41) because, in the dismantling of the Imaginary order in Wonderland, her body image, and consequently her image of self, has been impaired by the constant body changes. The main question is not whether "to be, or not to be" (Shakespeare, 1603 / 2003, p. 158), but the more fundamentally significant "who" and "what" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, pp.18-39). The imaginary status of the self is underscored in Wonderland because Alice hardly knows who she is anymore once her exterior point of reference, her body image, that is "constituent" (Lacan, 2007, p. 1124) of her identity, has been confounded by "being so many different sizes in a day" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 41).

Any process that unmasks the imaginary and symbolic nature of the regulating orders of the human psyche leads to a deconstructive self-reflexivity. After her fall down the rabbit hole, Alice experiences a deconstruction of her sense of identity: "'Who in the world am I?' Ah, that's the great puzzle!" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 18). She is confused while trying to decode herself as a sign because all the points of reference that used to anchor her to a unified sense of self were dislocated at the threshold of the Symbolic and the imaginary. Alice's encounter with her self-as-the-other results from engaging with the Real at the threshold of the Symbolic and the Imaginary where their nonsensical inconsistencies come to the fore.

Word plays can sometimes bring us to the threshold of the Symbolic to expose its limits. For instance, to get "dry" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 25) after getting out of the pool of tears, the Mouse delivers a "dry" history lesson on William the Conqueror. When the Mouse reaches the part in which "'the patriotic archbishop of Canterbury, found it advisable-,'" the Duck is confused about what the word "it" refers to: "I know what 'it' means well enough, when I find a thing," said the Duck: "it's generally a frog, or a worm. The question is, what did the archbishop find?" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 25). As suggested in the "Introduction to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" from the book *CliffsComplete™ Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by turning the rules of nature, language, and social habits on their heads (Walker, 2001, p. 7), Carroll manages to affirm the often-stated argument in semiotics that the signifiers conceived as significant in these systems would prove nonsensical or unrecognizably warped once they are cut off from the chain of signifiers that bring into action the sign play in everyday contexts. With no common ground to communicate, the meaning of the signifier "it" seems so proliferated at this point that the Mouse has no choice but to ignore the Duck's question and go on with the story, which, dry as it may be, still leaves everyone "'as wet as ever'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 25). Here, the Dodo proposes the Caucus-race, a race with no rules that cannot be explained but only performed. This is one of the examples in which the metaphoric and metonymic nature of language is

paradoxically underscored through the defamiliarizing force of undermining this inherent quality of language.

All the misunderstandings over homonyms and homophones with polysemic qualities show how unreliable the Symbolic order, which happens to have a constructive role in forming our understanding of the world and self, can be. Perhaps, if Plato knew how far removed from truth language is, he would have expelled all language users from his Republic.

After coming out of the wood "'where things have no names'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p.155), Alice is relieved to remember that her name is Alice, though she is vexed by the loss of the Fawn, her "dear little fellow-traveler" that, remembering it is a fawn and Alice is a "'human child'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 157), flees from her as soon as they emerge out of the wood. The poignant scene is reminiscent of the loss of pure signified as we adopt the Symbolic order. In *Looking Glasses and Neverlands*, Coats (2004) explains "this lack" (p. 79) in the following manner:

> In simplest terms, the word is not the thing, so that whenever we use words to talk about objects or experiences, there is always a gap, a mediation of the referent through language that necessarily makes the referent other than what it is. (Coats, 2004, p. 80)

Alice could not feel comfortable about being nameless in an amalgam of nameless things. She needs her masks and needs to know what these masks are. She cannot do without the different and differentiating signifiers that separate her from her environment and help her communicate with her surroundings, and she is willing to pay the price (Lane, 2011, p. 1029) by a perpetual sense of loss and an eternally suspended desire. She cannot taste the pure sweetness of the marmalade but has to be content with the empty jar labelled "'ORANGE MARMALADE'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 10). The label takes its own virtual course without being equal to the thing it represents. The signifier is separate and independent from the signified. Still, Alice feels lost in terms of identity and her sense of being in the world when she is cut off from the Symbolic.

To remain in the Symbolic, signifiers have to be in relation to the other signifiers in the Symbolic network. Otherwise, we would have what Eyers (2012) calls "the signifier-in-isolation," which "designates the signifier as Real" (p. 38). The source of confusion over the meaning of words such as "it" in the Mouse's tale comes to light in this context. Isolated from a Symbolic network over which the sender and receiver of a message agree upon, meaning is rendered moot, and communication does not occur. Cut off from the chain of signifiers that enables communication through sign play in everyday contexts, even signifiers conceived as significant would prove nonsensical or unrecognizably warped as manifest in the *Alice* books. Among the extreme examples of signifiers isolated from the signification chain are the obscure neologisms invented by Carroll, particularly the semantically impossible ones (Marret-Maleval, 2013, p. 110), such as "toves" that, according to Humpty Dumpty, "'are something like badgers—they're something like lizards—and they're something like corkscrews'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009,

p. 192). They are instances of the way language tends to bend upon itself and circle around a gap in human understanding. Borrowing from Deleuze, Marret-Maleval (2013) suggests that Carroll's neologisms disclose the arbitrary and abstract nature of the relationship between the signifier and the signified: "The Carrollian neologism unveils the fact that meaning is founded on "an empty square," on the basis of which signifier and signified articulate on the surface of language and being" (p. 107).

The Real at the Threshold

From unimaginable neologisms, ineffable notions, and insurmountable puzzles of logic, to the gaping gap of nothing, nobody, and the pure self, we are dealing with the impossible, and as Lacan has stated: "the real is always the impossible" (Marret-Maleval, 2013, p. 116).

Based on the myriad forms of impossible, along with the numerous instances in which the Imaginary and the Symbolic have been presented as highly problematic, the *Alice* texts can be counted as the example of a writing capable of supporting the Lacanian Real as elaborated by Thurston: "Access to a real conceived as ex-sistence, irreducible to any image or signifier, can only be afforded for Lacan by a writing which is ultimately incommensurable with the symbolic order, beyond metaphor" (Nobus, 1999, p. 158).

Engaging with Carroll's text can be perceived as an opportunity to consider how Lacan's "Borromean knot" can be "a writing" that "supports a real" (Nobus, 1999, p. 151). In "Ineluctable Nodalities: On the Borromean Knot," Thurston explains that "the symbolic, the imaginary and the real" (Nobus, 1999, p. 66) constitute the three rings of Lacan's Borromean knot. This happens when a writing does not shy away from betraying the contradictions of the Imaginary and the "hole" (Nobus, 1999, p. 151) of the Symbolic. The *Alice* texts in their entirety justify their own logic and significance by showing how illogical and unreliable the process of signification is. This explanation corresponds to the idea of the Lacanian Borromean knot in Thurston's observation that "its representation of the real does not conform to the logic of the signifier. The signification it entails is ultimately identical with the thing signified" (Nobus, 1999, p. 151).

A Lacanian Reformulation of Nonsense

According to *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, nonsense, as distinguished from "gibberish," "has a kind of internal lunatic logic of its own" though it "is never intended to make formal sense" (Cuddon, 2013, p. 475).

In her essay "Fantasy, Nonsense, Parody, and the Status of the Real: The Example of Carroll," Shires (1988) reflects on how "Carroll dissolves the realist relationship between signifier and signified" in the nonsensical examples from the *Alice* books (p. 274). In terms of semiotics, nonsense is "not" comprised of a consensual relationship between the signifier and the signified. Rather, it is a "knot" in two different ways: it ties a signifier to a whole new unexpected and unstable signified, while at the same time, it is a blind spot where the signifier and the signified fall flat on each other, leaving no dimension, a complication in which "the

encounter with the impossible" (Gutermann-Jacquet, 2015, p. 48) is revealed as the Symbolic keeps cracking down at its threshold. This example from *Through the Looking-Glass* illustrates the point just argued:

> 'That's right,' said the Queen, patting her on the head, which Alice didn't like at all: 'though, when you say "garden" —I've seen gardens, compared with which this would be a wilderness.'
> Alice didn't dare to argue the point, but went on: '—and I thought I'd try and find my way to the top of that hill——'
> 'When you say "hill,"' the Queen interrupted, 'I could show you hills, in comparison with which you'd call that a valley.'
> 'No, I shouldn't,' said Alice, surprised into contradicting her at last: 'a hill ca'n't [sic] be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense——' (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 143)

Alice declares that the Red Queen's statement is nonsensical because even the smallest hill cannot be designated with the signifier "valley." According to the general consensus, a valley is a lowly area compared to the surface of the rest of an area, which is the opposite of the definition of the signifier "hill" as a higher area. No amount of exaggeration on the part of a language user can turn a well-defined signifier into its opposite. Indeed, along the metonymic axis of language, the signifier "hill" means what it does partly because it is not the signifier "valley." Still, the Red Queen has the audacity to assert she has "'heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 143), and we shall see how she may have a point in saying that below.

In the Introduction to *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Bloom (2006) refuses to recognize Carroll's work as containing nonsense, insisting that what Carroll produced were "riddles" and "enigmatic allegory" (p. 4). Others, including Elizabeth Sewell, provide evidence to the contrary.

It cannot be denied that even for a nonsense poem like Jabberwocky, a level of understanding can and does take place. After reading the Jabberwocky poem, Alice believes that it fills her head with ideas, even though she does not know what they are (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, 136), since, as Sewell points out (Bloom, 2006, p. 73), nonsense must sound familiar to us syntactically, morphologically, or phonologically to be distinguishable from pure gibberish. Take the following stanza of Jabberwocky for instance:

> 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
> Did gyre and gimble in the wabe (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, 134)

We may not know what "brillig," "slithy," "toves," and "gyre" mean, but their parts of speech are clear in each single case. "There is," as Shires (1988) has recognized, "a metonymic sliding of signifiers with no referent" (p. 274). Besides, "slithy" sounds like a familiar word bringing to mind words like "'lithe and slimy'", and gyre can easily be a verb associated with the gyroscope. As for the "wabe," the closest thing we have to a riddle in this context, the lower case b in certain

handwritings can resemble a sundial, and once read as "way *be*," Alice's guess that it is "'the grass-plot round a sun-dial'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, pp. 191-192) is confirmed because it goes a long way *be*fore, *be*hind, and *be*yond it.

Sewell's golden statement that "nonsense is maintaining some kind of balance in its language" (Bloom, 2006, p. 73) indicates that, unlike riddles, nonsense is not meant to be solved or resolved in any way. It is "a space of uncertainty" (Shires, 1988, p. 267). There is a constant oscillating movement between recognition and alienation in all the examples of nonsense listed above. It is never brillig in everyday situations in life, and slithy toves that gyre and gimble in the wabe will never mean anything to people who are not familiar with Humpty Dumpty's interpretation of Jabberwocky. Even to those who have read the *Alice* books, these "esoteric words" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 42) hardly bring a comprehensive image to mind. They can mean nothing, while at the same time, they can mean anything. Shires (1988) declares that the Jabberwocky poem "is both all and nothing, a state of all-being, without meaning" (p. 275), and López-Varela (2014) contends that "[t]he words in the poem are combined in such a way that their meaning is multiplied" (p. 4).

Certain textual moments, such as the following awkward conversation between Alice and the Duchess in Wonderland, can be nonsensical in their entirety due to their special illogicality that occurs because some logic at an irrelevant level is at work.

'Only mustard isn't a bird,' Alice remarked.
    'Right, as usual,' said the Duchess: 'what a clear way you have of putting things!'
'It's a mineral, I think,' said Alice.
    'Of course it is,' said the Duchess, who seemed ready to agree to everything that Alice said: 'there's a large mustard mine near here. And the moral of that is—"The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours."'
(Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, pp. 80-81)

As demonstrated in the example above, the significant play on the words "more", "moral," "mine," and "mineral" does not necessarily entail that, on the whole, the conversation makes any sense. There is always an oscillation between the meaninglessness of the entire conversation with the deviant juxtaposition of statements and the meaningful play on the elements that make up this conversation. Here, as in the other instances of nonsense, we are witness to the mental extrapolation Sewell recognizes "between the respective pitfalls of 0 and 1" (Bloom, 2006, p. 79).

Interestingly, sometimes, when Alice feels threatened by death and annihilation, she invokes the word "nonsense" as her shield to ameliorate her distressed state of mind and drift towards life. For instance, when the Queen of Hearts in Wonderland orders her head to be cut off, Alice silences her by crying: "'Nonsense!'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 72). When Tweedledee and Tweedledum in the Looking-Glass world tell her she is not real but "only a sort of thing" in the Red King's dream who will "go out – bang! – just like a candle" once the King wakes up, Alice consoles herself by thinking "'they're talking nonsense!'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 168).

Even though nonsense is ineffable as a signifier-in-isolation, or signifier as the Real in Eyers' formulation, at first, it can still turn into a signifier-in-relation, only some aspects of the relation in question are not supposed to be the ones established conventionally in the Symbolic network, so the esoteric quality still holds in this perspective. Alice's conversation with Humpty Dumpty about the nonsense poem Jabberwocky makes this point quite clear.

After the hallucinatory episode of the boat trip with the Sheep concludes, Alice finds herself in the Sheep shop again, where she feels obliged to buy an egg. As the egg receded farther away from Alice, the Sheep shop scene gives way to another one with the egg having gradually grown larger and sitting precariously on a narrow wall. Alice immediately identifies the egg as the nursery rhyme character Humpty Dumpty. Absurdly, it is "'as if his name were written all over his face!'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 185). After contradicting Alice on various points, Humpty Dumpty boasts of his ability to make words mean whatever he wants them to mean. When Alice expresses her doubts about "'whether you can make words mean so many different things,'" Humpty Dumpty says that it is a matter of "'which is to be master'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 190).

As Fink explains in his essay "The Master Signifier and the Four Discourses," the master's discourse in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory espouses "the master signifier," which is also "the nonsensical signifier" (Nobus, 1999, p. 31) since it is supposed to impose it upon things to be what it wants them to be. Humpty Dumpty seems to be the master signifier in himself because he assumes there is an inherent relationship between the form that constitutes his being and his name. He assumes that the signifier "Humpty Dumpty" falls flat on its signified, which is the creature itself, leaving no dimensions on any axis to allow it to be symbolic at any level. Meanwhile, he dismisses the name "Alice" as just a designation that can refer to "any shape, almost" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 186).

Not only does Humpty Dumpty make already meaningful words such as "glory" mean entirely different from what they conventionally mean - "a nice knock-down argument" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 190) in this case - but also he "can explain all the poems that ever were invented" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 191), including the Jabberwocky, a nonsensical poem Alice has read in the looking-glass house. He decodes neologisms such as "'Brillig'" and "'toves'" and employs the metaphor "'portmanteau'" to define "'slithy'" as "'lithe and slimy'" and "'mimsy'" as "'flimsy and miserable'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, pp. 191-193). It does not take Alice long to follow suit and make a guess at the meaning of the word "wabe." But even Humpty Dumpty knows that he has to "'pay'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 191) something for being the master signifier, the price being that he is dependent on the other (of the Symbolic in this case) for its existence (Nobus, 1999, p. 32). Humpty Dumpty is balancing himself precariously on a narrow wall (Bloom, 2006, p. 73) because he is a product of language, and the whole course of his life and death, from sitting on a wall to his great fall and annihilation, has been chronicled in a nursery rhyme. The circle is complete now. With a "'belt'" / "'cravat'" around his "'waist'" / "'neck'" (Carroll, 1865 & 1871 / 2009, p. 189), the egg that purports to be the master signifier becomes the split

subject, represented by Lacan with the matheme $ or the barred subject, who is castrated by the Symbolic. To avoid the annihilating force of the Real, the master signifier hides its precarious ontological and epistemological subjection to the Symbolic by remembering to forget that the Symbolic is sustained through the general consensus in a community to make a thing stand for something else. The uncanny resemblance between the nonsensical signifier and the human subject is at full force here. The precarious and arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified in meaningful human communication is only different from the relationship between the signifier and the signified in nonsense in that the former has been solidified into an established consensual association while the latter brazenly exposes the precariousness and arbitrariness of such a relationship on purpose.

Unlike Humpty Dumpty, however, the human subject does not necessarily have to fall to pieces even if it suspects the imaginary and symbolic nature of its grasp on reality. From the world outside Plato's cave, to Kant's Ding an sich, Schopenhauer's wille, Nietzsche's das rätselhafte X, and Lacan's le réel, it is evident that we can recognize and play with the Real outside the Imaginary and Symbolic constitution of our reality in a controlled manner. As has been demonstrated in this paper, certain literary texts like Carroll's Alice books, which are endowed with the element of nonsense, can interrogate the Real and unhinge our supposedly certain grasp of reality.

A Cybersemiotic Formulation of Nonsense

According to Brier (2008), "potential information" (p. 87), transmitted from a sender to a receiver, becomes meaningful information only when there is a consensus between the sender and the receiver as to what that which now has turned into a signifier refers to metaphorically. Language, therefore, functions as a network in which signifiers mean what they mean because there exists an agreement as to their meaning. Taken out of the "context" in which a "system" lives and organizes itself, we would merely have what Eyers (2012) calls "signifier-in-isolation" (p. 38), which is no signifier at all but the Real.

But how does such a consensual context emerge among the members of a particular living system? Brier (2008) answers this question by invoking Maturana and Verela's autopoiesis theory and von Foerster's second-order cybernetics. In response to the "perturbations" received by "the sensory surface" of a living system, some "changes" (p. 88) have to emerge in the system because, as an "autopoietic system," i.e. "a closed organization, the main concern of which is to stay organized" (Brier, 2008, p. 180), it needs to maintain the balance within itself that has been disturbed by perturbation from the environment. A "repetition" (Brier, 2008, p. 88) of the same perturbations and the same changes in the living system establishes certain habits in the system, leading to a "structural coupling" (Brier, 2008, p. 89) with the environment that enables the system to communicate with its surroundings within the "signification spheres" (Brier, 2008, p. 100).

According to Maturana and Varela, these changes and habits in living systems depend on their structure, which means that the perturbation received by the sensory surface cannot be merely the objective information of Wiener's objective first-order cybernetic. In the cybersemiotic framework, information is considered to be what Bateson refers to as "difference that makes a difference" (Brier, 2008, p. 26) and, more precisely, a difference that makes a difference to an observer (in the form of a living system) in von Foerster's second-order cybernetics. Since the members of a particular living system, humans for example, share the same structure, embodiment, and survival needs, a structural coupling in the form of "signs and meanings they have attained through habits of the mind and body" can be established among them over time. "In humans," explains Brier (2008), "these signs are organized into language through social self-conscious communication" (p. 100).

The shared context of the human language system operates as a medium of communicating meaningful information. Still, as Brier (2008) explains in discussing Luhmann's system's theory, language is closed, not only to other organisms with different signification spheres, but to the other "independent systems" (p. 25) within the human organism, the three closed systems of Luhmann's system's theory being the biological, the psychological, and the socio-communicational.

It is important to note here, however, that unlike other living systems known to us, humans constantly make new codes (Brier, 2008, p. 236). Lacan (1966a / 2007) also accentuates the self-reflexive, constructive, and creative nature of language in the following noteworthy quote from *Écrits*:

> it was certainly the Word that was [etait] in the beginning, and we live in its creation, but it is our mental [esprit] action that continues this creation by constantly renewing it. And we can only think back to this action by allowing ourselves to be driven ever further ahead by it. (Lacan, 1966a / 2007, p. 225)

Language, even if considered as a closed system, is so productive and creative that sometimes it can reflect its own irregularities, absurdities, and limitations, as evidenced in literary texts exemplifying Lacan's Borromean knot.

Because in nonsense, "language foregrounds itself as nothing but language" (Shires, 1988, p. 275) minus the metaphorical and metonymic aspects, it turns into a "metalanguage" (López-Varela, 2014, p. 4) that can be regarded as a model to reveal the tacit conventionality of meaning that emerges in language based on the shared signification sphere of human beings which is constructed in their own particular "biological and social contexts" (Brier, 2008, p. 87).

Conclusion

Instead of having a regulating effect, as the Symbolic and the Imaginary do, nonsense confounds communication, resulting in more complexity and chaos in the process. It neither perfectly follows nor totally defies the rules of the language games, but takes advantage of their rules to play its own game. Nonsense starts

making some sense in an esoteric manner only when a shared context is created at special textual moments such as the above mentioned examples of nonsense in *Alice* texts. Cybersemiotically explained, nonsense operates in a particular context by referring to itself and creating its own value, a process that brings to mind the self-referential way in which language has been organized self-referentially in a closed loop.

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*D*ynamics and *A*dvances

Novel of Collective Decay: Prefabricated Identities, Spiritual Void and Excluded Existence in Margaret Drabble's *The Ice Age*

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Abstract

The transitional period of the 1970s Britain being fictionalized in Margaret Drabble's novel, *The Ice Age* (1977), provides the ground for theoretical discussion of the present paper that is based on the insights of Giorgio Agamben. It will inspect the way Drabble interprets socio-political issues dominant in the 1970s and the way these issues affect her outlook. In this paper, considering the figure of an excluded existence in *The Ice Age*, Agamben's biopolitical insights are examined to see how they may contribute to understanding of the dark side of sovereignty and the potentiality to transform democracies into totalitarian states. Taking the precariousness of the emotional, political and, ontological faculties of "love", "homo sacer", and "bare life" allocated to human being by sovereignty, it offers a different view of Drabble's subjects on love and socio-political problems, maintaining that Agamben's account of these issues supplies an underlying structure of the form-of-life. The paper also, through the striking features of Agamben's discourse, approaches the concept of bare life and knits it to the concepts of instrumentalism, labor, slavery, and life, and fundamentally presents the awareness of self in political view. The characters examine some potentialities that may help them to break away from the prevailing deadlocks of the era. It is eventually shown that these practices, which according to Agamben may lead to a form-of-life that is called a happy life, conclude in the exclusion and spiritual void of the individuals.

Keywords: Agambenian love, whatever being, homo sacer, bare life, form-of-lif

Introduction

One of the controversial debates in British history is the 1970s, an era when a sense of ending prevailed. It is remembered as a decade of embarrassment and tastelessness, a period of repression and difficulty. Britain, once being the global ruling power, after the two wars has lost its grace and now, in the seventies, the shifts of global power, some old and sold terminology on humanity, are redefined and presented in literary works portraying man's ontological position within society. One of the prominent writers of this period is Margaret Drabble who explores England's condition and the individuals' non-smooth trajectory in that decade. She is considered as a novelist who writes about women's concerns, expectations, and mid-life female identity. "From the middle seventies onwards, Margaret Drabble became increasingly occupied as a novelist with representing and explaining the state of an increasingly-troubled nation" (Harper, 2014, p. 235). *The Ice Age* (1977) is one of these novels that highlights the condition of people in the 1970s, and this paper intends to analyze the literary and socio-political views of it by Giorgio Agamben's insights relevant to this matter.

The relation between Drabble's novel with some methodological statements and highly sophisticated insights of Giorgio Agamben constitutes a crux for commentary on the relation between life and form. In order to accomplish this matter, a widely discussed insights of Agamben such as, "love", "homo sacer", and "bare life", which have been used in political, philosophical, sociological, literary, and legal issues, are considered as efficient tools for excavating the novel under study. Although Drabble's focus on the subject of personal and emotional struggles of the individuals in the chaotic world around them is evident, this article aims to dissect these emotional struggles under the light of Agambenian love to see whether it will act as a means of escape from the dire state and to notice whether it will lead them to a happy life. In order to shed new light on this emotional practice, these vulnerable individuals through social conventions and political structures are evidently transformed into a form of being that Agamben calls *homo sacer*. The argument also observes Agamben's paradigm of "concentration camp" to apprehend the above-mentioned struggles of individuals in a camp-like life and also to illustrate that they are transformed into a constructed bare life. These prefabricated identities may banish the individuals of Agambenian form-of-life.

The present study gains significance as the findings can shed more light on Agamben's objective to construct a form-of-life, a life that is inseparable from its form, and, in this manner, to provide the reader with an account of biopolitical view to claim that the purpose of ruling sovereignty, either democratic or totalitarian, is alike, that is to construct a bare life. In this case, there will be no difference between a camp and a city, and every human being – citizens, refugees, immigrants, ethnic groups – in any settings may experience the potentiality of being a homo sacer suspended of their basic rights. This paper intends to consider the setting of Drabble's novel, *The Ice Age*, as a paradigmatic concentration camp to analyze the characters, as an individual and collective, in British society. It is rather an invitation to read Agamben that dares to show the originality of his political thought in contemporary matters, and offer new perspectives on the key political issues of modern time.

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Review of Literature

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Agambenian Criticism

Terms such as sovereignty, the exception, biopolitics, and life are used today with reference to Agamben. His widely-read book, *Homo Sacer* (1998) is one of Giorgio Agamben's thought provoking books about being and its connection with politics. In *Homo Sacer* (1998), Agamben aims to connect the problem of pure possibility, potentiality, and power with the problem of political and social ethics in a context where the latter has lost its previous religious, metaphysical, and cultural grounding. For Agamben, there are some aspects of human life that are informed by political conceptions. He investigates with great depth and acuteness the implicit presence of an idea of biopolitics in the history of traditional political theory. He argues that from the earliest times, say, in Aristotle's notion of man as a political animal to the history of Western thinking about sovereignty, it implies the power of sovereignty over human being and life. In this book, he wants to understand how ideas and plans enter into the realm of politics that is also the main goal of this study, too. As a whole, Agamben probes into human rights abuses, and invasion of personal freedoms or any other form of personal harm.

Also, in *The Use of Body: Homo sacer* (2016), Agamben approaches the concept of bare life through a political point of view and knits it to the concepts of slavery, labor, instrumentalism, and life and fundamentally presents the awareness of self in political view. First, he differentiates between human being and other living beings and calls him a unique being that is capable of a "political life". In other words, by "politicizing" its life, he renders it "self-sufficient" of taking part in the polis. He continues, "what we call politics is above all a special qualification of life, carried out by means of a series of partitions that pass through the very body of *zoè*" (Agamben, 2016, p. 203). Agamben, additionally, states that in modern languages the opposition between zoe and bios gradually disappears and in fact, the term "form-of-life" indicates a life that cannot be isolated from its form, "a life in which it is never possible to isolate and keep distinct something like a bare life" (Agamben, 2016, p. 207).

After the attacks of 9/11, the Bush administration authorized the indefinite detention of non-citizens suspected of terrorist activities and their subsequent trials by a military commission. In *State of Exception* (2005), Agamben uses such circumstances to argue that this unusual extension of power, or "state of exception", has historically been an under-examined and powerful strategy that has the potential to transform democracies into totalitarian states. The sequel to Agamben's *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998), *State of Exception* (2005) is the first book to theorize the state of exception in historical and philosophical context and deals with the concept of Homo Sacer in relation with the state of exception. Agamben argues that the state of exception has become in the contemporary society a paradigmatic practice of the West, which transforms individuals into subjects prone to exclusion or extermination.

Watkin (2014), in *Agamben and Indifference: A Critical Overview,* studies Agamben's insights on biopolitics and mentions

Biopolitics as a formation reveals the archaeology of power, which is division into two opposing categories of condition (common) and conditioned (proper) distributed across time and different discourses through the signature of life, which operates at various points as common, proper and now, in our age, the commonality of the proper or the individual's universal right to life. (Watkin, 2014, p. 184)

Then, Watkin concludes that,

Agamben radicalizes Foucault's project by arguing that "the inclusion of bare life in the political realm constitutes the original—if concealed—nucleus of sovereign power. *It can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power"*, meaning of course that biopolitics is at least as old as sovereign exception. (Watkin, 2014, p. 185)

Whyte (2013), in her book *Catastrophe and Redemption: The Political Thought of Giorgio Agamben,* considers Agamben's critical account of contemporary politics—his argument that Western politics has been "biopolitics" since its inception, his critique of human rights, his argument that the state of exception is now the norm, and the paradigmatic significance he attributes to the concentration camp—and shows that it is in the midst of these catastrophes of the present that Agamben sees the possibility of a form of profane redemption. According to Whyte, in Agamben's view, a politics premised on substantive identities fixes its subjects, and makes it a process of apportioning rights and representing pregiven constituencies rather than a field of possibility and transformation in which we could hope to be other than we are. (Whyte, 2013, p. 145)

A politics, with the help of sovereign power and under the mask of the state of exception, regulates rights and produces fixed, under-controlled identities. Whyte considering Agamben's beliefs mentions that

In order to escape such a politics, it is necessary to contest both the fixity of personal identity and the substantivization of community as a community *of* (women, Australians, etc.), which, in his view, brings into operation the mechanism of inclusive exclusion of the sovereign ban. (Whyte, 2013, p. 145)

This generated self which is neither universal nor particular is termed by Agamben as "whatever being" and is seen as "marking the possibility of a human community free of any essential condition of belonging, common destiny or work, or principle of inclusion and exclusion" (Whyte, 2013, p. 145).

Studies on Margaret Drabble and *The Ice Age*

As a transitional period when the optimism of the 1960s deteriorates into the socio-political stability and consent of the 1980s, the seventies starts with the effects of the movements of 1968 and ends with the election of Thatcher in 1979. The state of collapse, in this decade, draws on a variety of causes; Black (2004) refers to the number of labor-relations crises of the 1970s that provide England with the loss of more working days than in the 1960s. These crises discourage investment and make it harder to maintain productivity increases and economic growth. This situation discredits the postwar social democratic consensus (Black, 2004, p. 101). Among

other social transitions of the decade is the decline of religion that draws the state to the decline of the general social values. In Black's words, "the church appeared divided and unsure of itself" (Black, 2004, p. 110); there is an apparent gap between the church and the state that reflects the general social values (Black, 2004, p. 110). Considering the condition of Britain in this decade during which a sense of ending prevailed, Margaret Drabble wrote some novels that are known as pathologic novels. *The Ice Age*, being one of them, has drawn the attention of critics; it has been analyzed from manifold approaches such as gender, class, cultural and feministic points of view to mention some of them.

Harper (2014) in chapter eight of his book, *Culture in Crisis: The English Novel in the Late Twentieth Century,* "Margaret Drabble and the State of Nation" explores the relationship between politics and literature in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s. He examines the "state of the nation" novels by Drabble in terms of their contribution to the political discourse of this significant period in British post-war history which witnessed the transition from the post-war social-democratic settlement to the establishment of the Thatcherite hegemony. Harper considers Drabble's *The Ice Age* as a realist novel in which the image of frozen time that functions as a "perfectly plausible metaphor for social paralysis" (Harper, 2014, p. 236).

Stovel (1994) in her essay, "Rebelling Against the Regency: Jane Austen and Margaret Drabble", studies Drabble's novels and the influence they get from the novelist Jane Austen and mentions that Drabble criticizes Austen for her view about the subjects of marriage and maternity. She believes that

These are the very powers that Drabble does choose to pursue; however, her novels present the problems of marriage and motherhood. Drabble is one of the first novelists to take us behind the curtain of comedy, as she follows her heroines beyond the happy-ever-after ending. (Stovel, 1994, p.164).

Stovel concludes, "Drabble is one of the first novelists to take us beyond the altar to show us the reality of matrimony through gritty domestic detail" (Stovel, 1994, p. 165).

Duran (2006) in her paper, "Fiction, History and Philosophy: The work of Margaret Drabble", claims that in many ways, Drabble's work about contemporary (or recently past) Britain is exemplar of the sort of historically-oriented fiction. Here she is concerned largely with Drabble's *The Ice Age,* about a post-seventies' Britain responding to another turn in the boom and bust cycle. She argues that history is profoundly important in the work of Margaret Drabble. Moreover, Hatrigova (2009) in her thesis, "British Society from the 1960s to the 1990s in Four Novels by Margaret Drabble", maintains that Drabble's novels, traditional in style, display the allegiance to realism which is depicted through the eyes of various protagonists set in different times and places. The unpleasant state of affairs of the nation consequently has also a negative impact on the main protagonists who then seem to be imprisoned in their situations with little chance of improvement. The bad conditions of the country restrict the people and mirror their limited degree of freedom. All these studies are genuine academic enterprises in their own field; however, no analysis has so far addressed Drabble's *The Ice Age* from Agambenian

biopolitical perspective to introduce human being as a mere homo sacer who is turned into a constructed bare life by sovereign power.

Discussion

As a novelist, Margaret Drabble writes exhaustively on the subjects of contemporary English society and also portrays the domestic life including love, marriage, and maternal subjects. The bulk of her work is about the nature of English society and culture; Harper (2014) claims that her novels are "pathological" that portray "the state of nation" (Harper, 2014, p. 235). *The Ice Age*, one of these novels, depicts a society in which the characters, mainly Anthony and Alison, through a non-smooth trajectory struggle to survive. Drabble herself regarding the title, *The Ice Age*, explains to a reviewer that it is "shorthand for economic depression - everything frozen including wages" (As cited in Cronan Rose, 1980, p. 117). In this novel, England is experiencing an ice age; its traditional and social structures are breaking down, and the characters are introduced to the reader as suffering beings; however, they endeavor to stay safe and sound, to be able to have a happy life.

Agambenian Love vs. Frozen Hearts

Throughout history, the concept of love has been one of the integral subject matters in novels, for love seems to strengthen the emotional part of life that brings along mirth and excitement. Giorgio Agamben, being engaged with the concept of "love", is concerned with its consequences in individuals' personal and social life. Even though he does not write about it directly, love can be inferred everywhere in Agamben's writings. The main feature of Agambenian love is that it should not be confused with either desire or any erotism; in Julian Wolfreys' words, "love must be maintained as other to them (desire or erotism)" (Wolfreys, 2008, p. 149). Love is also a concept evident in Drabble's fiction, *The Ice Age*. The novel starts portraying some public and private complications that control the characters' morals and values in life; accordingly, these issues lead individuals to a completely different model of intimacy and love. Actually, love, in this novel, is carried out as a struggle to survive rather than experiencing the warmth of any emotions.

The "other" is crucial to the matter of love. As Wolfreys, in his essay, "Love and the Other: The Example of Giorgio Agamben", mentions, there is a singular relationship between a "self" and an "other", wherein "the self is the other, for the other, an other self already" (2015, p. 47). The fascinating point that Wolfreys indicates is that our otherness to others is not the same for every "other" whom we confront. This concept of otherness can be closely touched with "love" that leads in the clarification of the question of self. At first glance, the concept of love introduced by Drabble in her novel indicates the isolated individuals who try to make connections with each other. The novel introduces Anthony Keating, the male protagonist, as an isolated character "who had not died of his heart attack" (Drabble, 2013, p. 1); he lives in his suburban house far from London and "had been forbidden sex as well as butter, nicotine and alcohol" (Drabble, 2013, p. 2). He is a property developer that due to some inflation "had paid a great deal for this most undeveloped view" (Drabble, 2013, p. 2). The setting of the novel suggests that

overnight everything turns from the boom to the bust and most of the once middle-class families have lost everything: property, health, and even identity.

Alison Murray is another major character who endures various problems in different stages of her life. She, once having been an outstanding actress due to her beauty, now is divorced with two daughters one of whom is mentally retarded; she is Anthony's intimate partner. Her too much attention to her mentally retarded daughter, Molly, keeps her other daughter, Jane, away from her: "Jane, as cross and perverse as she had ever been" (Drabble, 2013, p. 36). This puts Alison into trouble because she cannot share her equal attention with both of them: "she could not divide herself in two. She could save Jane, or Molly, but not both. So, she had committed herself to saving the one that could not be saved" (Drabble, 2013, p. 171). This makes her vulnerable to embitter manner of Jane because she believes her mother "always put her [Molly] first … never gave a fuck about [Jane]" (Drabble, 2013, p. 127).

Related to the matter of identity which is the core of the characters' struggle in this novel, Whyte (2013) examines Agamben's attempt to found a community without identity based on an experience of love and sets forth that Agamben's "Global Petty Bourgeoisie" or "coming community" goes beyond the possibility that the commodity itself could be redeemed, and plays a central role in his account of the new form of singularity without identity that he terms "whatever being" and in the potential community he terms the "coming community". (p. 144)

The Agambenian "whatever being" is clearly noticed in *The Ice Age* by examining the social, political, and economic condition of beings in society; the nature of male-female orientation, including power, sexuality, and class, reveals the overthrow of human values that may be the prophecy of a collective decay. More pertinently on this account, Drabble portrays "a shabby, mangy old lion" (Drabble, 2013, p. 76) and writes "a novel devoted to unemployment, shocking prices, critical conditions of property market, cutback in marriages and consequent widespread hardship" (Hartigova, 2009, p. 7) rather than a whatever being devoted to an experience of love. Love, introduced in *The Ice Age*, illustrates the isolated individuals who try to make connections with family, lovers, and as a whole with the world. Accordingly, in the novel, the central characters show conflicting social, financial, and family backgrounds that influence their values and morals. These whatever beings, quite confused in the world around them, reflect that the least highlighted concern for them is the matter of intimacy and love.

The Ice Age is a novel of frozen hearts; nevertheless, as love is the evidence of one's happiness, the characters make an effort to initiate it into their lives. As concerned, Julian Wolfreys (2015) elaborates on Agambenian concept of love as something whose possibility of occurrence is not necessary for the existence of the being. He mentions that love is the name of the "other"; when you find yourself "in love", you "see the other's being in its most naked state" (Wolfreys, 2015, p. 48); in other words, you are affected by this state of being "in love" in a way that you cannot be repaired or corrected because your ontology is interrupted. Thus, love is not instinctive; it is something "crafted", and yet the least apparent; as it should not

be confused and conflated with "either desire or any erotism", as a result, "love as other is unavailable to definition or determination" (Wolfreys, 2015, p. 48). In *The Ice Age*, Anthony Keating due to a heart attack is forbidden to sex, smoke, and alcohol, but, as Hartigova claims, even the heart attack had not been the final blow aimed by fate at Anthony Keating. The heart attack had proved to have compensations, the chief of which was Alison, who stood by him, slept by him, diverted him, and paid him more attention than she usually thought his due, making him, for once, her first priority. (Hartigova, 2009, p. 9)

Anthony and Alison, both having experienced unsuccessful marital life, think they can love each other because they have many things in common and can make a good match:

She, like Anthony, had an unsatisfactory and feckless spouse, an actor of pathologically jealous and pathologically unfaithful temperament; like Anthony, she had been through a process of slow disillusion with her past life. She was an actress, but had abandoned the stage on the birth of her second daughter, who suffered quite severely from cerebral palsy. (Drabble, 2013, p. 28)

Their love, in fact, due to their special conditions, lacks any desire or erotism and is not a passionate one. Furthermore, love has a "phantasmatic character" and is always at risk of "ending up like Narcissus (who succumbs to his own love for an *ymage)* or like Pygmalion (who loved a lifeless image)" (Agamben, 1993, p. 121). It could be argued that when you are in love, you cannot consider the other as an object, and for this reason, it cannot be determined by desire or erotism. Love can be regarded as a temporal event that only in the time of being experienced, one can apprehend one's self in the form of the other. Accordingly, as Anthony and Alison's love is not based on erotism and as they do not consider the other as an object of desire, it can be contemplated to and compared with Agambenian love.

Wolfreys (2015) confirms, being "in love", you may not consider the loved one as the object of desire nor may it be seen as a property. When Alison meets Anthony, due to her vexing past experiences, she has turned into a "mean, embittered, angry, contemptuous woman" (Drabble, 2013, p. 29); they met each other at a party in which she felt herself to be standing in the last ditch of pleasantness, smiling faintly and politely and hopelessly, resolving never to smile at another adult again, knee-deep in an intense dislike of almost everybody she had ever met, or might ever meet, including the good people of her professional life. (Drabble, 2013, p. 29)

Anthony is attracted by "the nonsexual aroma of her unhappiness" and also by her "undisguised boredom", and as he is a "good talker, a good listener, a man of tact and feeling" (Drabble, 2013, p. 29), Anthony succeeds to interest her. They have much in common even in their feelings of being defeated. Alison understands Anthony, she is willing "to listen to Anthony's financial problems and ambitions with some real understanding" (Drabble, 2013, p. 29). This mutual understanding may lead to gain knowledge of self that is the ideal of Agambenian love.

To elaborate more, love is a kind of relationship in which a space is created between self and other. Within this space, first they know the other and then this

knowledge ends up in knowing the self. What is more, this space does not belong to anybody; it is a kind of circuit; they start their journey to know and identify their self. It is in this sense that love is seen as "the pre-condition of knowledge" (Wolfreys, 2015, p. 49). Anthony and Alison love each other devoid of any sexual desires; however, their affinity is not a joyless one based on materialism and money. Alison is a pretty woman and Anthony finds her a kind of woman that one could take anywhere: "She dressed well, looked after herself, kept herself in excellent condition, and devoted much energy to preventing herself, successfully, from growing fat, gray, and wrinkled" (Drabble, 2013, p. 30). Despite her beauty, she is not a "vain woman" and not a "flirtatious one"; she finds "sexual admiration" something "genuinely boring" and this makes Anthony feel "very pleased with himself for having overcome it" (Drabble, 2013, p. 30).

Similarly, Alison finds Anthony sweet and believes that Anthony was a spontaneously affectionate person, that he was generous with his praise and his money, that he often opened doors for her, that he frequently had a worried expression that stirred her maternal spirit. That he recognized that she was *the* beautiful woman, rather than *a* beautiful woman. He was also extremely sweet to her defective daughter, Molly. (Drabble, 2013, p. 30)

It is what Agamben calls a singularity "in its being *such as it is*" (Agamben,1990, p. 1). In other words, "The lover wants the loved one *with all of its predicates,* its being such as it is" (Agamben, 1990, p. 2). What is lovable in Anthony is his manner that refines him from such-and-such property. "She would not have left him during the past year, while ruin was hanging over him, nor would she have left him had ruin, bankruptcy, and disgrace overtaken him" (Drabble, 2013, p. 180). Then, when Anthony starts drinking again, Alison thinks she is free to reconsider her situation -to leave Anthony and start anew-, but she knows that "she could not face a repetition of the past years" (Drabble, 2013, p. 180). She considers the rough conditions she would endure in case she stayed with Anthony. They have walked together "the narrow path, unable to risk a glance to right or left. Now, they stood in a flat and featureless plain, older, wiser, but somehow diminished" (Drabble, 2013, p. 180). Finally, she decides: "I do not want Anthony to kill himself. We must be able to work out some better way of living" (Drabble, 2013, p. 183). That is what Agamben remarks as "The singularity exposed as such is whatever you *want,* that is, lovable" (Agamben, 1990, p. 2).

For Agamben (1985), the idea of love is something like the following experience: "To live in intimacy with a stranger, not in order to draw him closer, or to make him known, but rather to keep him strange, remote: unapparent" (Agamben, 1985, p. 6). It is this way that individuals, falling in love, experience the mentioned strangeness and remoteness and gain the knowledge of the self. Anthony, by means of love, at the end of the novel, seems to reach some points of knowledge and self-awareness. Alison also reaches some level of understanding of self; however, her transgression is not as visible as Anthony's at the end of the novel. Drabble moves us "into Alison's consciousness long enough to establish her awareness of how frail her power is in a man's world" (Cronan Rose, 1980, p. 113). Living in a patriarchal world where women are observed as an object of desire, "for Alison Murray, beauty

had for years been identity" (Drabble, 2013, p. 94). Hence Alison, a middle-aged woman, decides to continue an intimate life with Anthony as he observes her as a companion rather than an object. In fact, the purpose of Agambenion love is that both self and other get to know themselves. This "experience of the other" or love cannot be framed to any system; in other words, this "temporal event", being touched by love, transforms selfhood from within and it is what Agamben refers to as the souvenir of the other which is neither "present" nor anymore "available"; something that is kept as "a memory trace" (Wolfreys, 2015, pp. 48-49).

Anthony is filled with "the revelation of the self to itself in the self-showing" (Wolfreys, 2015, p. 51) that is given to him by Alison. Actually, the being in love is in a kind of quest to gain knowledge by means of which his ontology is interrupted. Anthony thinks: "I can really do without all this. I think I can manage on my own" (Drabble, 2013, p. 168). Later, in his frozen prison in Wallacia, Anthony strives to cling to life in order to survive. He is fascinated with watching birds that shows his hope for a better future, a sense of recovery. At the end of the novel, Anthony comes to terms with his unpleasant situation. On the other hand, Alison will not recover completely; she is doomed to remain dependent on others, not being able to survive without the help of a male figure. Her prison is even colder and worse than Anthony's and hinders her from any recuperation and improvement.

Characters, portrayed in *The Ice Age*, reflect a life that ends up in misery; even love cannot save them thoroughly from their downfall. *The Ice Age* shows the collapse of culture and economy that lead to the collapse of human beings and is the sign of collective decay. "People should not get together. They are more attractive in smaller groups. Collectivity corrupts. Man is a social animal, but only at a great risk" (Drabble, 2013, p. 169). Even an emotional life cannot help them to survive in the loop of camp-like life. Even though love is a means of escape from the socio-political issues that are dominant in society, and makes life tolerable for individuals, it cannot save them completely from the turbulent modern world, a world that creates politicized homines sacri.

Homo Sacer: Excluded Existence

"You are either homo sacer or potentially homo sacer; there is no in-between" (Ek, 2006, p. 371). *The Ice Age* depicts Britain's economic and socio-political matters and can be considered as a novel on the state of constructed identities and excluded bare lives. The novel begins with introducing Anthony Keating who has survived a heart attack. He has received a letter from a friend, Kitty Friedmann, that morning. The letter starts with this sentence: "These are terrible times we live in" (Drabble, 2013, p. 1); Anthony knows that it will be full of an "unbearable goodness, in the face of a tragedy too horrible to think of" (Drabble, 2013, p. 2); Max, Kitty's husband has been killed and Kitty has lost a foot in a bomb incident by the I.R.A. Then, Anthony thinks about the past one year, about his own destruction due to the economic recession. The seductive profits at the time of the boom, now, have changed to his collapse at the time of the bust that is followed by a heart attack at the age of thirty-eight.

So, there it was. A terrible year, a terrible world. Two of his acquaintance in prison, one dead by assassination, himself in debt by many thousands. It had all

looked so different, four years ago, three years ago. So hopeful, so prosperous, so safe, so expansive. (Drabble, 2013, p. 14)

Actually, the novel highlights an age of artificial prosperity in which characters struggle to earn more. The bodies, entrapped in the principles of the capitalist society, turn to be homines sacri.

The established systems dominant in Britain such as gender, class membership, and consumerism label every individual and attribute specific traits to them. Homo sacer is a figure who indicates a distinction between politicized life (bios) and natural life (zoe). This distinction is considerable in the modern political condition. It is in the course of the regularization of state's power that homo sacer is produced and the differentiation of forms of life appears (Agamben, 1998). To elaborate more, Agamben has proposed that "the politicization of bare life … constitutes the decisive event of modernity" (Agamben, 1998, p. 4). What is more, in modern life, in the case of political state of exception, homo sacer becomes the norm and people can likely be arrested, imprisoned, or executed without any trial. Related to this issue, De la Durantaye elaborates on the concept of "state of exception" in which bios and zoe are no longer separable - nor are "right and fact" - but instead enter into a "zone of irreducible indistinction". This zone of indistinction characterized by a state of exception is one in whose shadows Agamben sees the fragile figure of the homo sacer that plays a fundamental role-and offer a surprising paradigm. (De la Durantaye, 2009, p. 210)

Evidently, a life that is bare (naked) is what the state of exception produces. This "bare life" is neither zoe nor bios, but the intimate and indistinguishable border between them which Agamben calls "form-of-life". According to Agamben, "form-of-life" is "a life . . . in which the single ways, acts, and processes of living are never simply facts but always and above all possibilities of life, always and above all potentiality" (Agamben, 2000, p. 4). Related to this matter, *The Ice Age* defines the troubled state of nation: "the body is the body politic", and the novel is an attempt "to understand the pathology that afflicts late twentieth-century Britain" (Harper, 2014, p. 235). The seminal question that arises is how it is possible to form a political bare life in the modern life of Western democracy. The answer can be traced in the formation of biopolitics which means "the individual's universal right to life" (Watkin, 2014, p. 184). Actually, biopolitics localizes the bare life in the camp "where the division, the distinction and the opposition of the founding terms of politics are indistinct" (Watkin, 2014, p. 184). As Anthony thinks: "Men and women are machines" (Drabble, 2013, 179).

The terms of politics lose their meaning when they enter into the domain of biopolitics. Therefore, the distinction between democracy and totalitarianism or fascism disappears. All of them share biopolitics as their political origin. Accordingly, the production of a biopolitical body or bare life is the original activity of sovereign power (Watkin, 2014, p. 185). The same way, Anthony is directed by the dominant ideology in society; at his first stage of life, he despises money: "One had to have some to live on, of course, but one ought not to concentrate too much upon the matter" (Drabble, 2013, p. 17). Like most of art students his politics is left-

wing and he disapproves establishment and believes in equal shares of wealth among people; however, it is sovereign power that decides what is good for a living being; it becomes a power that controls bare life in any situation. According to Agamben, life is the process by which . . . the realm of bare life—which is originally situated at the margins of the political order—gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, *bios* and *zoe*, right and fact, enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction. (Agamben, 1998, p. 9)

In this light, homo sacer, in the Western world, is not limited to the sphere of dictatorship but applicable to the modern democracy as well. Actually, the modern Western democracy includes sovereignty, exceptions, homines sacri.

The Ice Age covers the time span of the 1970s England when economic recession affects people's lives dramatically. Government, in this critical decade, regulates bodies in order to survive. It portrays the characters' different reactions as the participants of society toward the economic recession:

Not everybody in Britain on that night in November was alone, incapacitated or in jail. Nevertheless, over the country depression lay like fog, which was just about all that was missing to lower spirits even further, and there was even a little of that in East Anglia. All over the nation, families who had listened to the news looked at one another and said, "Goodness me", or "Whatever next", or "I give up", or "Well, fuck that", before embarking on an evening's viewing of colour television, or a large hot meal, or a trip to the pub, or a choral society evening. (Drabble, 2013, p. 59)

The ways characters are developed in the course of the novel "signal a change in the structure of British society, and its overview of itself, but the development - and self-reflection - of each character pushes along the same path" (Duran, 2006, p. 41). The structure of British society leads characters to act and experience new ways and in doing so endure lots of hardships. Anthony, an educated middle-class individual, decides to change his standard of existence to a risk-taking financial path of property developer that eventually brings him close to physical and financial ruin.

The change in his lifestyle and career changes Anthony's manner, too. Now he is a money-minded man who after visiting his old friends feels he has no longer any thing in common with them and their social class. Actually, he moves to "a state classlessness" with a "love of moneymaking" that is in contrary with the genteel styling of his upbringing and those who were brought up in the same milieu. Incredibly enough, as Anthony reflects, all of these changes had happened to Britain and her citizens within the course of a very short period of time. (Duran, 2006, p. 41)

Anthony, being brought up and educated in old British culture and society, now, confronting this shabby culture, transforms into a bored and a "restless Londoner". It is in this context that we see Agamben's argument gaining ground where he points to the state of classless society, petti bourgeoisie, as the product of capitalism. Individuals feel lost and fallen apart from the standards of the past followed by a moneymaking community most of whose plans are illegal. Anthony within a decade turns from a middle-class civil servant to a classless petti

bourgeoisie. And as Duran elaborates, "The newer British history is a potpourri and hodgepodge of classes, races, genders, and creeds. Drabble captures all of this in *The Ice Age*" (Duran, 2006, p. 44). Absolutely, man turns to be a plaything in the hands of political, cultural, and economic changes in Britain.

Incited by what surrounds Britain, Anthony criticizes himself and his middle-class generation for having failed to accomplish "the new bright classless enterprising future of Great Britain" (Drabble, 2013, p. 259), and resolves that "[they] had produced no new images, no new style, merely a cheap strained exhausted imitation of the old one. Nothing had changed" (Drabble, 2013, p. 259). Considering the camp-like life in modern society, man endures a life which has no political significance; in fact, he is beyond the law and cannot represent himself. It is in this zone that man experiences the indistiction between zoe and bios, life and death, and survivor and victim. Actually, man, feeling included in social life, turns to be an excluded existence, a being devoid of identity in a collective sense. It is exactly the zone that one cannot distinguish between democracy and totalitarianism in modern life. Therefore, this camp-like life clearly explains what Agamben mentions as the paradigm of political space within which homo sacer may be mixed up with the citizen, a space where everyone is living. According to Somerton (1998), "Anthony's inability to free himself from tradition and act in new ways has dire consequences for him in Wallacia where he is first held hostage and then imprisoned" (p. 137). Obviously, "[H]e looked what he was, an English gentleman of the middle classes" (Drabble, 2013, p. 282) who has only "old-world possibilities" to descend on (Drabble, 2013, p. 283).

Apparently, a series of decisions are made to bound and define this politicized life and every society regulates the limits as a result of which bare life appears. As Agamben argues, "every society – even the most modern – decides who its 'sacred men' will be" (Agamben, 1998, p. 139). Politics, concerned with bare life (unpolitical life), creates a space (camp) in which bare life and the state of exception enter into a verge of indistinction and proves that every one finds himself in a camp regardless to the kinds of crime they have committed. In fact, the camp is the hidden form of politics in which we are living and this structure is recognized everywhere in our city with all its metamorphoses (Agamben, 1998, p. 175). In this manner, in the camp of British society and in a time of economic recession, people turn into a constructed bare life. Anthony having tried different ways, some of them illegal, exercises moneymaking system to get what he wishes; however, this system brings him down from the state of transient prosperity to that of adversity, and by selling his property, he escapes prison. Along with Alison, his only companion, he lives in their country house:

they were alone, in a desert of their own making, in their own fortress. Anthony Keating, man of leisure, in his country house, and Alison Murray, ex-actress, ex-mother, unemployed. It could not go on like this forever, but what next, what next, what next. (Drabble, 2013, p. 181)

Eventually, the economic recession of Britain leads him to be abandoned as a bare life, yet it is not all. It is followed by another form, political one, in Wallacia

where he finds himself behind the cell bars. Humphrey Clegg encourages him to go and bring Jane, his step daughter, back from Wallacia, and "that was how Anthony Keating became a British spy" (Drabble, 2013, p. 196). Anthony, never having been involved in any political matters, trusts Clegg even though he is not clearly informed about the nature of his act. Anthony tries to forget the "wild surmise, that the whole affair was a gigantic fake, that Humphrey Clegg was some kind of double agent, that nobody had ever had the slightest intention of releasing Jane Murray" (Drabble, 2013, p. 197). Finally, Anthony decides to travel there; he is able to save Jane and sends her back home, but in exchange for his imprisonment in Plevesti camp. It is exactly the incident that turns him into a homo sacer. His life, now, is a constructed bare life in the camp. There, he has time to think about his past - the society and organizations - such as public school, Oxbridge, the BBC, and ITV that conditioned his life:

This was the new line of the new Anthony, Oxbridge Arts graduate turned property dealer. In the early seventies, he no longer woke up in the small hours asking himself, What is it? What is what? He was usually too tired to wake, and when he did, he occasionally asked himself with horror, What on earth have I done? It seemed a better question. At least he had done something. He had made thousands of pounds, but had borrowed many thousands more. He had tackled the modern capitalist economy. He was a modern man, an operator, at one with the spirit of the age. (Drabble, 2013, p. 28)

With regard to the organizations whose aim is to abandon citizens to excluded existence, Anthony, in the course of his life, perceives that his education in Oxbridge has "conditioned" him to conduct in "the world that had gone" (Drabble, 2013, p. 259). He considers himself as "a child of lost empire, disinherited" (Drabble, 2013, p. 260). And for that reason, he is not able to handle the crisis of this lost empire. Somerton elaborates on this matter and mentions,

Anthony himself is aware that he ends up imprisoned in a foreign country because his class and education conditioned him for "the world that has gone". What he does not seem aware of is that his nationality may be perceived as reason enough to keep him imprisoned. (Somerton, 1998, p. 140)

On account of his nationality, Anthony endures the unpleasant behavior of his fellow prisoners which seems to be "as revenge for England's past arrogance in claiming not only material but moral superiority for itself". Actually, "British people were now tried and imprisoned in countries that had been British colonies" (Somerton, 1998, p. 140). Not only is Anthony turned into a homo sacer, an excluded existence, by his own paradigmatic camp-like society, but also he experiences the unpleasant exclusion in a real camp in Wallacia. Anthony, as a tragic character, promotes self-awareness when he is carried from one camp to another and is posed into various public and private situations. However, his final scene depicts he has a desire towards happy life.

The state of exception in modern world day after day strips man of all their civil liberties and provides man a life analogous to concentrated camp; it also deprives them of sociopolitical identity, of human rights, and as a result is abandoned to be the bare life. As human rights are the rights of the citizen rather

than the rights of the homo sacer, the sovereign power, which is the legal power, will decide on the distinction between the two. Therefore, homo sacer is a being who seems not to be separated from the nation but bereaved of his rights. *The Ice Age* intensifies a society in which "all over the country, people blamed other people for all the things that were going wrong—the trades unions, the present government, the miners, the car workers, the Arabs, The Irish" (Drabble, 2013, p. 50), and Drabble identifies England as transforming "into a shabby country" (Drabble, 2013, p. 31).

Evidently, a form-of-life is a style of life in which bare life is undistinguished and undistinguishable; it characterizes a condition of immediate contact between the body and what destroys it, a condition in which "power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation" (Agamben, 2000, p. 171). Anthony, as an exemplar of constructed bare life in society, can be generalized to all characters in the novel and, taken in a broad sense, to all humanity. In this way, in the circumstances of modernity, the destruction of bare lives is not condemned; indeed, the bareness of the bodies is left to the sovereign power to be led to a form-of-life. Thus, the notion of the form-of-life is a counter-figure to the notion of bare life; capitalism is one of the forces that produces and exploits bare lives, so it seems to be inspired by a natural life, zoe, which would also be a politically qualified life, bios. Eventually, examining these criteria show how the categories of bare life and the use of bodies fail to live up to their promise of happy life.

Conclusion

In the present paper, Margaret Drabble's novel, *The Ice Age*, was analyzed to inspect what aspects of the novel may associate with Agamben's concepts of love and homo sacer. It also constructs an extended understanding of Giorgio Agamben's philosophy applicable in the period of the 1970s Britain in order to provide readers with new observations into this novel. Based on these ideas, the characters of Anthony and Alison are evaluated based on Agambenian love to see to what extend they gain self-awareness. Also, the nature of homo sacer is noticed to explicate dominant view of individuals along with concepts such as identity, self, and autonomy to name some of them. Moreover, the distinguishing and the prominent family issues in *The Ice Age,* encountering both male and female characters, consider the educational, socio-political, and judicial systems that can be connected to the concept of homo sacer.

All in all, *The Ice Age* illustrates the individuals whose success and failure depend upon limited number of potentialities. In every step of analysis, excluded existence is the sole guidance to the methodology of this study. It requires that every existence must be approached in a way that portrays itself as a constructed bare life. The goal is to show that a constructed bare life is the transformation of zoe and bios within the state of exception ruled by the sovereign power. The characters find themselves caught in a limiting network of the financial status, the class membership, the family relationships, and, the most important of all, the authoritative organizations. Actually, the protagonists try to reestablish their form-of-life; they strive hard to survive; they attempt to get along with the social crises affecting Britain and also with the class distinction and social status imposed upon them by the sovereign power. *The Ice Age* concludes with neither happy ending of

the recovery of her characters and of England nor sad ending of inevitable downfall of them. Apparently, the subjects' actual self never appears; what remains of them is a kind of bare life, homo sacer, that can be generalized to all humanity within the camp of Britain.

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A Study of the Art of Seduction in *Richard III*: A Baudrillardian Analysis of Shakespeare's Master Simulator

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Abstract

Shakespeare's eponymous character's movement in *Richard III* towards the peak of power passes through his art of simulation which is induced by seduction and annihilation. Richard's playacting skills in feigning innocence and brotherhood while hiding villainy along with his persuasive oratory in dismantling others' suspicions, ultimately leading to numerous murders on his behalf, entangle him in a labyrinth of a hyperreal state of being, in a Baudrillardian sense, from which no escape is possible. Richard III is seduced into a vertiginous power struggle which is but an essential form of reversibility that leads him to his own ruin. In this regard, this paper tries to study Richard III, as a character, in light of the concept of "simulacrum" in Baudrillard's philosophy to show how he becomes the victim of a self-made loop which leads to his downfall. This study encourages similar investigations to discover hidden layers of meaning in Shakespeare's tragedies, the ones including villains as their protagonists.

Keywords: Baudrillard, Richard III, seduction, Shakespeare, simulacrum

Introduction

When we talk about monarchy, it is simultaneously about both the position as well as the personality of the monarch. A monarch, Platonic or Machiavellian, might have become one either through heritage or despotism, the former mostly imposing his / her personality upon the kingdom in advance through his / her presence in the royal line and the latter acting like a chameleon as the conditions change. However, the problem is when the nominee of the latter kind, through his / her tyranny and treachery, rises up to power and establishes a kingdom of lies where the fact is sacrificed to the fiction, and as Shakespeare has put it in his similar story, *Macbeth*, "fair is foul and foul is fair" (1993, I. i, 11).

The fellow who is capable of despotism succumbs in essence to what Jean Baudrillard terms "simulacrum" and "seduction". "Simulacrum" for Baudrillard typically takes the problems of "falsity and untruth" into consideration (Pawlett, 2010b, p. 196), while "seduction" refers to the constant deferment of meaning, truth or the signified, through "the infinite and involuted games of appearances and illusions" (Gilloch, 2010, p. 55). In case of pursuing power through conspiracy, for example, the despot makes his best to engage himself and those involved in his despotism in constant deferment of his immoral intentions or in a despotic maze from which there is no escape. In this regard, through a complicated world of simulacra and false images, the despot tries "seduction", or, to speak for Butler (2010), the "reversibility or exchangeability of power" based on which the dominator cannot be separated from the dominated (p. 78). Notwithstanding, the different forms of power, including seduction, are considered to be imaginary, seduction being merely only the ability to "dissimulate," thus entangling the despot in a kind of "void" (Baudrillard, 2007, p. 54) or a chasm of power. For Baudrillard, power systems are involved in a sequence of illusions from which escape is impossible; hence, illusion is imaginary, that is, it is something that not only originates from imagination but affects imagination also. It is in this regard that Baudrillard, making sense of the etymology of *ludere*, holds that, "*Il- ludere* is … to put oneself into play," for which humans "have to create the rules of the illusion" (Baudrillard & Noailles, 2007, p. 44). To escape from a seductive void can only be achieved through a self-annihilation. As he explains elsewhere, "the internal logic of the sign" has already inherent in itself the "repressive and reductive strategies" of systems of power (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 163). Due to this fact, using the same logic to act against it can cause "implosive outcomes", like what happened before, during and after witness 9/11 (Lane, 2010, p. 46). In this sense, a highly powered system with different means of control is, in Baudrillard's philosophy has been built upon a certain association of life and death, having defined death as "the absolute termination of life" (Pawlett, 2010a, p. 46). Baudrillard, thus, holds that living along this power structure cannot shut it down; instead, it is only through death, "an immediate death" that the subject can terminate the system (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 40).

Slotkin (2007) claims that Shakespeare's *Ricard III* owes its reputation to a world in which "foul is fair, and fair is largely absent" (p. 25). In this sense, Shakespeare's play is, in light of Baudrillard, a play about the simulacrum of authoritarianism and how a megalomania rises to concretize the object of his desire,

the kinship of England. With regard to this fact, *Richard III* also makes use of certain metatheatrical techniques, mostly employed by Richard himself in propagating his cause. Thus, Shakespeare seems to have introduced a master simulator of seductive powers where power games and truth mongering are concerned with the state of the world. Therefore, a Baudrillardian analysis of Richard III's personal motivations, political causes, megalomania, seductive arts, and ultimate death can help with the interpretation of Shakespeare's philosophy of life and power systems in this play.

Literature Review

In so far as Baudrillard's concept of "simulacrum" already has its manifestation in the world of drama, some plays of Shakespeare have benefited from such critical readings. As one specific case in point, Kencki (2014) appropriates Baudrillard's concept of simulacrum to serve as a critical theory for theatre and drama. He argues that theatre, as an event or something that happens, combining "spectacularity, causal performativity and simulation" succumbs to the Baudrillardian model of a simulated reality. Kencki then analyses Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to argue that its meta-theatrical feature, "located at the interpretational mezzanine of sorts," shows its complete meaning with the help of the process of staging. Such reading of *The Tempest* specially emphasizes the presence of simulacra in its world as the characters try to free themselves from appearances (p. 36). Muzaffar (2020) also analyzes some of Shakespeare's plays in light of Baudrillard's "simulation" to investigate the problem of appearance versus reality. In this light, such plays as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew* present the audience with characters who "denature reality" by disguising themselves for certain advantages throughout their adventures (p. 57). It can be argued that Shakespeare's main characters, as shown in some of his comedies, try their hands at simulacra within the diegetic level of the plays before other characters simultaneously as they perform meta-theatrically before the audience. This is true with Richard III as a character, even though critics have not been prone to investigate it in *Richard III*. Nonetheless, there are studies that have provided added incentive for the present research. For example, Moulton's Article (1996) examines "some of the fault lines that existed in the practice and gender ideology of masculinity in early modern patriarchy" (p. 251). Looking at power within a framework of gender relations, this Article attempts to show that Richard III's characterization serves "a critique and an ambivalent celebration of excessive and unruly masculinity" to highlight the inarticulateness of the concept of masculinity in early Renaissance (p. 255). However, the term "seduction" in Moulton's essay has been employed in a context of sex and sexuality, or, in general, as sexual power rather than in the Baudrillardian sense of the term to mean the seduction to power, a power that aims at dominating reality by means of simulation, that intend to dominate reality by hyperreality. This being said, one should be on guard against generalizations, because even the very act of sex can be a means of empowerment, an articulation of power. Moulton interestingly argues that Richard tries to degrade "the discourses of erotic pleasure" by giving priority to his desire for power. While seducing Lady Anne, he masterfully uses a "language of affection, sexual desire,

and physical obsession," which he hates as it is a sign of unmanly weakness, for his own political objectives. When he offers Anne his sword, as a symbol of manliness, he performs some "gender reversal," as he gives her the chance of exercising "phallic power" which he initially thinks she is powerless to accept. Anne gives up as she withdraws her political fight with Richard via "a discourse of erotic seduction" which, despite giving some illusory power over Richard and his weakness as a suitor, essentially makes her "feminine and passive" before Richard as "masculine and active" (p. 267). The power struggle between Anne and Richard portrays itself in the form of a sexual duel in which Richard is victorious because of his ability to distort reality by being able to be deceptive.

Day (1991) has shown another aspect of deceptiveness and distortion of reality by focusing on the illusiveness of the identity and the practicality of showmanship on the part of the protagonist. "Richard III," Writes Day, "is self-consciously theatrical," calling for the audience to detect and question its coral "metaphor of acting and illusion" (p. 149). In Day's reading, Richard's wooing scenes and encounters with other characters are marked with equivocation, the definitive quality of his personality. It is only when he has to face himself that he cannot be deceptive, no matter how much he tries. It is seen in his final soliloquy, "a self-examination," in which Richard is both the prosecutor and defender, no longer being able to deceive himself (p. 155).

It is only an encounter with oneself, as Richard III's action gives evidence to it, that deceit does not come handy. Otherwise, it is a means to attain power especially when the various fabricated identities that you produce have buyers out there. This and other similar studies, despite their emphasis on Shakespeare's character's wiliness, fall short of referring to the role that the Baudrillardian simulacrum plays. Hence, this study shows how *Richard III* hosts simulacrum to play an essential role in the construction of power.

Method

"Simulacrum," from the Latin *simulare* or to "make like" (Winer & Simpson, 1989), usually connotes falsity and untruth whenever the reality of a concept or object is under question. However, Baudrillard makes sense of this term not as falsity but as that which "hides the truth's non-existence" (1990, p. 35). Pawlett believes that this aspect of simulacrum is "true" in so far as it is something that hides something else (2010b, p. 196). Baudrillard holds, specifically in *Seduction* (1990), that truth has no basis beyond simulacra games – as ideas and words play hide-and-seek – and thus "truths" are entangled in "seduction". Pawlett thus makes sense of "simulacrum" as "the sudden diverting of signs into a play of appearance and disappearance" (2010b, p. 196). In this regard, linguistic sings, that is, the words we speak and articulate, can be seduced into a chain of simulacra, always escaping the origin to highlight their non-existence.

Baudrillard delineates the four stages of simulacrum in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981). The first stage is when the image of concern reflects "a profound reality." In this stage, which is a Platonic stage, we know that the reality is still there but the image is on a second sphere of being. Then the image "masks and denatures"

the reality; in other words, the image somehow tries to establish its being independent from the reality behind it, as if the reality did not exist at all. Next, the image covers "the absence" of reality, which veils even the vacuum where reality once existed. Finally, in the state of "simulation," the image has no association with any kind of reality: "it is its own pure simulacrum," or a being onto itself (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6). These stages are in fact the behavior of the image which is born as a dependent being and ends up as an independent one with no roots to hold unto.

For Baudrillard, the "media age" now is governed by a "pure simulacrum," as human beings have submerged in a world of media that constantly exposes them to images that have come to replace reality. So Baudrillard remarks that "It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real" (1994, pp. 12–13). When "simulacra" as such become the "real," there is nothing more real than the simulacra as they hide the "fundamental absence of the real" (Pawlett, 2010b, p. 198). However, as Baudrillard argues in *Impossible Exchange* (1999), the contemporary computer-generated or digital images are different from simulacrum, because they lead us into a state of absolute abstraction, that is, into virtual localities. Digital technology is actually "a substitute for the world," a substitute from which reality, the simulacra, and even humans are vanishing while their disappearance is only "our fascination" (Pawlett, 2010b, p. 198). Maybe the digital age of human beings is their conscious attempt at disappearing themselves instead of being unconsciously submerged in it.

However, Baudrillard's argument on simulacra is not specific to the modern and postmodern conditions. So, man's concern with a false image of himself or the world has always been there to the extent that even Plato's image of the corporeal world is a degraded form of the Ideal world. Yet, Baudrillard highlights the fact that the modern man has seduced himself into the play of signs and so has lost the real. For example, Shakespeare's famous lines in *As You Like It*: "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players" (2005, 2.7.139-140) is a case in point here if read in line with the fact that human beings only come onto the scene of life to take roles and then to die and vanish. Yet, it can be argued that the sense of life is more strongly felt by Shakespeare's character Richard III who is his master simulator and seducer.

Discussion

Richard's Network of Simulacrum and Seduction

Throughout his life and royal authority, Richard represents the transfer of the sign from the world of the real to that of the simulacrum. In his real world, he initially suffers from a kind of self-degradation which he cannot overcome through piety and perseverance. The first act of the play sketches a man's personal features which do not fit a prince of noble blood but a man dying in the gutter. Richard's physical nature puts him in a state of paralysis: "Cheated of Feature by dissembling Nature, / Deform'd, un-finish'd," having "no delight to pass away the time" (2005, 1.1.119-25). His real body initially determines for him the range of his actions in the real world. In the courtly atmosphere of the time, a deformed and seemingly impotent man like Richard, Duke of Gloucester has no place in the royal line and

even at the court. He is "not shap'd for sportive trickes," flirting with women, "Nor made to court an amorous Looking-glasse." He is "Rudely stampt" by nature and lacks "love's majesty" before courtly women (1.1.14-16). He considers himself so ugly and "deformed" that even dogs bark at him when he stops near them. So, his lack of self-esteem plays on Elizabethan ideas about the outward appearance and inner harmony, because, as Slotkin argues, a person's "physical appearance" reflects his / her personality (2007, p. 5). This is to say that if a person is innately evil, he / she is born deformed as its verification. Ergo, it can be argued that a physically deformed and ugly person like Richard III is handicapped by God because of his villainy.

Richard himself, however, actually argues that someone who is physically unusual will be treated unfairly by society which causes them to develop an inferiority complex. So, can it be suggested that Richard will have his revenge against his people by paving his way to the throne through tyranny? He suffers from the challenge of the world of images representative of the courtly manners of the time, images such as gallantry and gentlemanly discipline that have defaced the true essence of humanity for the sake of appearance. In Act I, Scene iii, Duke of Gloucester says:

> Because I cannot flatter, and look fair,
> Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
>
> …
> I must be held a rancorous Enemy. (2005, 1.3.52-55)

Richard, who cannot prove himself a perfect courtly lover, is eventually prone to prove a perfect villain to cover his physical distortion with a veil of power. As he puts it a little earlier in the play: "since I cannot prove a lover … I am determined to prove a villain" (2005, 1.28-31).

Richard disrupts moral and aesthetic norms by victoriously announcing his "malevolence" and "taking narcissistic pride in his ugliness" (Stolkein, 2007, p. 5). Dustagheer similarly argues that Shakespeare's character "plays a variety of roles to hide his true evil intentions and manipulate events and people to his advantage" (2009, p. 56). Eventually, Richard says, I "seem a saint, when most I play the evil" (2005, 1.3.337). In fact, his obsession with evil is both out of knowledge and desire; in other words, Richard knows that he is evil-minded and evil-faced at the same time. Slotkin theorizes that the character of Richard III paradoxically symbolizes Renaissance controversies about "the epistemological value of appearances for determining moral truths." In this regard, Richard's deformity, taken by others as a representation of his sinfulness, is an epitome of "the union of outer appearances and inner truths." Meanwhile, Richard's fake benevolence demonstrates "the deceitful disjunction between external shows and internal nature" (2007, pp. 6-7). Purcell (2018) maintains that "metatheatricality" as such is an essential nature in some of Shakespeare's plays (p. 19), and Dustagheer highlights the theatrical aspect of Richard's behavior to hold that Shakespeare's drama "is metatheatrical, constantly drawing attention to itself as a piece of theatre, frequently controlled by Richard" (2009, p. 56). Richard's asides play the main role here because by addressing the audience he tries to get their sympathy in his evil intentions. Richmond sees the

"compulsive interest" of the modern audience in "the megalomaniac delights of Richard's sadism" as a sign of a dominant mental pathology, "an epidemic obsession with violent assertion of the male self" (1999, pp. 7–8). Such beliefs reflect critics' tendency, since the early Renaissance, to make connections between the charm of representing evil and the "deceptiveness of the representation" or the audiences' moral / psychological flaw (p. 6). Whatever the appeal for Shakespeare's audience may be, Richard's deformity is "an aesthetic attribute" symbolizing his dark side simultaneously as it "artfully crafts" his "false appearance of goodness" (Slotkin, 2007, p. 10). It is to say that Richard paradoxically makes his best to deface his ugliness to prove to the world, in a seductive way, that he is better than his appearance. He is proud of such stuff, maybe as a defense mechanism against his ugliness: "I clothe my naked villainy / With old odd ends stol'n out of holy writ, / And seem a saint when most I play the devil" (2005, 1.3.336-38). As a result, he achieves "the complete dissimulation" of all things that betray him and his desires; in other words, Richard's false sainthood completely covers his demonism (Rossiter, 1999, p. 140).

Richard's wickedness is both diegetic and hypo-diegetic. On the diegetic level, he plans to be a villain to reach his ends, while on the hypo-diegetic level, although he plays out a "saint" for others, he is the incarnation of "the evil" himself. He also plays extra-diegetically in planning the course of the play; that is, in his asides, to fulfill this metatheatrical role, he makes it more appealing to the audience. In a Baudrillardian sense, Richard escapes the real to enter the un-real through his excursions into sainthood and falsity; he comes to make a saint out of the devil, to make what he is not. From the eye of Dustagheer, Richard's simulation is full, for he maintains that "Richard proves to be a master of simulating emotions – he feigns love for Lady Anne, genuine concern for his brother Clarence, as well as playful affection with his two doomed nephews" (2009, p. 56). So, Anne is easily deceived by his "dissembling looks" (2005, 1.2.222), for Richard associates himself with the image of "Shadow in the sun" (1.1.26), a passing "Shadow" (1.2.263), which befits a dark and treacherous character who hides his evil intentions. Thus, it is understandable why Dustagheer should conclude that "Richard is the ultimate shadow-actor, who morphs into a variety of characters" (2009, p. 57). He woos Anne and praises her beauty while in his coronation he essentially takes her only as a tool. He even pretends humiliation before her: "Take up the sword again, or take up me" (2005, 1.2.183). He then works with Buckingham to facilitate his coronation. When Buckingham ensures him that Richard can dupe the citizens, he does so by appearing with two bishops in prayer; when Lord Mayor arrives, he pretends that he is not after the throne, that he unwillingly accepts it.

Richard basically acts like the devil through his self-conscious theatrically. He constantly tries to dupe others to believe that he is what he shows while he is actually a devil in disguise. His case manifests the challenge of detecting the good side of people when one's appearance might stand for one's "inner truths" at certain times while he / she may "deceptively conceal them" at other times (Slotkin, 2007, p. 25). This means that Richard enchants his victims via his misdeeds and thus "implicates" them in his crimes (p. 12). Therefore, his attraction has its roots in his

monstrosity and ugliness in so far as the play presents them as "aesthetic objects capable of arousing erotic desire" (p. 7). In this sense, Shakespeare's character is the incarnation of what Baudrillard defines as "seduction". Here it should be noted that although many critics have mistaken seduction for a temptation or a desirous activity, for Baudrillard it is something in line with simulation.

Doel theorizes that, from Baudrillard's viewpoint, being seduced is being "drawn towards something that constantly eludes us," being lost on the surface; it is a state offering "neither stability nor balance nor security" (2010, p. 186). In this sense, seduction not only leads images away from the right path but also makes them "curve in on themselves, spiraling towards the non-sense whence they came" (p. 187). Seduction is like a labyrinth of which the beginning and the ending have disappeared; it is a game of appearance and disappearance *ad infinitum*: "a circular and reversible process of challenge" (Baudrillard, 2007, p. 55). Yet, for Baudrillard seduction resembles "a double spiral": it is like "a spiral swerving towards a sphere of the sign, the simulacrum and simulation" simultaneously as it looks like "a spiral of the reversibility of all signs in the shadow of seduction and death" (1988, p. 79*)*. As in this binary structure the two spirals are constantly "displaced and misplaced" against each other (Smith, 2010, p. 187), they are destined to lead to one another forever, without touching one another. As Baudrillard observes in different occasions, this "mad obsession with the real" (2007, p. 38), this desire "to exhaust all the possibilities" (1996, p. 48), is fatal: "Obscenity begins when there is no more spectacle, … no more theatre, no more illusion, when everything becomes immediately transparent" (Smith, 2010, p. 188). For Baudrillard, every appearance in the world can be subverted or inverted but not reversed; seduction in this regard is that "reversible form" (1990, p. 21). Accordingly, unless the mesmerizing vertigo of appearance and disappearance is active, seduction is unstoppable. As Baudrillard holds, seduction has the shape of "an uninterrupted ritual exchange" in which the seducer and the seduced continuously endanger each other in a never-ending game which has no winner (p. 22). In this sense, Shakespeare's *Richard III* begins with a fundamental challenge to his companions as well as his audience. Crippled and stuck in a distorted image of courtliness, Richard the hero acts saintly, although with covert villainy, through a challenge for power. He not only generates a seductive maze in which he becomes a lost actor but also goes on with his seductive methods through the simulated reality he has built, exhausting himself and his method by killing others to satisfy his thirst for blood. His death is the manifestation of Baudrillardian "reversibility" or fortune's wheel overturned (Coulter, 2010, p. 181), and the abysmal vertigo of seduction. Richard's vertigo of seduction even entangles Lady Anne who succumbs to his seduction, although she knows about his evil intentions. So, in a Baudrillardian sense of seduction, no limitation exists against "the challenge to love more than one is loved, or to be always more seduced—if not death" (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 22). Wooing Anne, Richard manipulates her not only by showing her a false image of himself as a justified murderer but also by teaching her how to kill this murderer if she has the reason to do so. In Act I Scene ii, when Anne is mourning the death of Henry IV, her father-in-law, over his corpse, while reminding the death of Edward as well, she expresses her grudge against "the selfsame hand that made these wounds" in their bodies (2005, 1.2.11), and curses

Richard whose "ugly and unnatural" state (1.2.23) has turned "the happy earth" into hell (1.2.52). Richard, who is now the master of simulation and seduction, replies but mercifully to begin a soothing process that ultimately extinguishes Anne's fire. "Lady, you know no Rules of Charity, / Which renders good for bad, Blessings for curses," Richard initially replies (1.2.69-70). Anne calls him a "devil" who tells the truth (1.2.74), and is addressed as an angel who is "so angry" (1.2.75). Richard mockingly justifies killing Henry VI by announcing that the dead good king is better to be with God than this hellish earth: "Let him [Henry VI] thank me, that holpe to send him thither: / For he was fitter for that place than earth" (1.2.112-13). Anne wants Richard in hell while he wants her in his own "bedchamber" (1.2.109-110), against which she wishes him to be dead. Richard tries to change the course of the exchange of these curses and courtly words by asking Anne to "leave this keene encounter of our wittes, / And fall something into a slower method" (1.2.122-23). According to Slotkin, Richard takes the exchange as "a deliberately constructed display of wit", suggested by "method" in his line, and thus consciously decides to change it. His emphasis is on the form than the content of their dialogue, which makes his concern "theatrically motivated" (2007, p. 15). It is to say that Richard is playing with his prey, here Anne, before exposing her to his evil deeds, just like a beast in nature before killing its hunt. However, seducing Anne is not for leading her to the "bed-chamber"; it is not more than a bonus for Richard after having her under his full authority; in fact he seduces Anne away from his regicide to a nightly adventure to win the lady: "Your beauty was the cause of that effect: … To undertake the death of all the world" (2005, 1.2.128-130). However, Anne wishes to take revenge against him while he considers it "unnatural" to take revenge against someone who loves her (1.2.131-32). Richard even considers himself as "a better husband" (1.2.136), keeping up with his flirting despite Anne's insults. Accordingly, Lobo's observation indicates that Richard's desire to seduce Anne is more than sexually motivated. Lobo states that seduction can also involves sex but it is never the target of seduction so far as "the game of seduction" is endless unless one or more players pass away (2013, p. 161). So, Richard's death is the only possibility of terminating his seduction.

Richard seems to be playing a director on the stage, instructing Anne how to take a role, here a murderer, to psychologically submerge her in an unreal world where his wickedness is a blessing. He puts the idea of revenge in her mind, on the spot, by offering his "sharp-pointed sword" to her, teaching her how to use it, not letting her premeditate her favorite kind of revenge, as if teaching a child how to use a toy sword, belittling her revengeful mind (2005, 1.2.174-80). Anne is not going to take the sword but it is Richard who helps her with it by encouraging her to do so. It seems that Richard as a senior actor in the Renaissance drama is helping a junior actor with his / her performance, as Orgel (1996) and McMillin (2004) argue. Besides, Orgel and McMillin believe that Richard's action here has sexual connotations as he seduces Anne into submission before him. Richard thus produces "the spectacle of a villain who has mesmerized his victim" so masterfully that he can equip her with the weapon to defeat him, and even persuade her meanwhile to do so, believing that she will take no action. With his art of seduction and mastery of simulation, Richard presents himself as "an artist" whose creations are meant not

only to satisfy the audience but also to "manipulate the other characters" (Stolkein, 2007, p. 15). Furthering his seduction of Anne, Richard wants her not to "pause" as he is the murderer of King Henry and young Edward, her beauty being the mere cause (2005, 1.2.181-84). Anne drops the sword, despite telling Richard that his tongue and heart are both "false" (1.2.197). For Anne, Richard is a "lump of foul deformity" (1.2.58), and he has a "hell-govern'd arm" that kills everyone he touches (1.2.68). However, she succumbs to his will; Anne is won, finally, and when she exits, Richard concludes, in a lengthy aside, that he has been able to win Anne despite her "hate, / … curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes" (1.2.235-236). This concluding aside leads us back to the beginning of Act I, Scene i, where Richard expresses his evil intentions due to his deformed nature. In so far as Richard is metatheatrical and constantly reminds himself and the audience of his evil intentions, he has created a double spiral of seduction from which there is no escape.

The scene of "Richard's seduction," different from a typical scene of "courtly love poetry," is not sincere (Slotkin, 2007, p. 16). This is because Richard highlights his sins so often that his seductive language cannot be attributed to a benevolent lover trying to win a lady out of pure love and affection. He even tries to seduce others not via the beauty of his form but "a narcissistic erotics of deformity" as he takes pleasure in thinking about his deformed body (p. 18). Even when Elizabeth reminds Richard that he killed her children (2005, 4.4.341), Richard's reply is disturbing enough: "But in your daughter's womb I bury them, … to your recomforture" (4.4.342-45). Richard's sophistry or, seducing Elizabeth into believing in the disappearance of his murders, actually works when she succumbs to his wish: "Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?" (4.4.346), to which Richard replies: "be a happy mother by the deed" (4.4.347). Although an important feature of seduction for Baudrillard is its overt "spatial inflection" than its "sexual reference" (Doel, 2010, p. 186), the concept of seducing still carries a gender-biased connotation. According to Lobo's proposition, which can be regarded as the undertone of seduction in Baudrillard's philosophy, Richard seduces others and others let themselves be seduced by Richard. Lobo states that there is no necessity for seduction to happen when a man is approaching a woman, but seduction emerges when masculinity in an individual seduces femininity in another individual, as the latter keeps on game playing, allowing them to "be seduced" (2013, pp. 159-160).

On this account, there is no end to Richard's seductive methods of simulating reality with falsehood except his death. In other words, the reversibility of the double spiral which is circling over and over to repeat and intensify itself must be stopped. However, Smith (2010) argues that "reversibility" points to a kind of "poetic justice" (p. 181), while Baudrillard maintains that it is not destructible but "the fundamental rule" (2005, p. 41). So, it turns out that there is no "determinism" being active here as Baudrillard considers "reversibility" an "absolute weapon" against determination (2008, p. 82). In Baudrillard's belief, systems have internally a sort of inherent capability to "undermine themselves" through their function (Smith, 2010, p. 182). For example, our attempts at overprotecting ourselves create such a condition in which we become "eminently vulnerable" (Baudrillard, 1988, p. 38). In Baudrillard's "Manichean dualism", evil is as powerful as good, but

attempting to do good, humans create the possibility of reversion as well. Reversibility is somehow a semi-spiritual entity that ensures that every system will be overturned (Baudrillard, 2005), which happens "at their apogee" (Smith, 2010, p. 182). When Margaret laments the murder of her spouse and son, Henry VI and Prince Edward, Richard reminds her that they were the murderers of his father and brother, the Duke of York and the Earl of Rutland. The Yorkists curse the murder of the young Earl of Rutland but "this only foreshadows Richard's infanticide of the young princes." This fact that the dead and the living have identical names and titles "serves to enhance this complex and confused succession of blame, revenge, and bloodshed" (Dustagheer, 2009, p. 54), which points to the reversibility of Richard's seductive world. As Margaret tells the queen:

> I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
> I had a [Harry], till a Richard kill'd him;
> Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
> Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard kill'd him; (2005, 4.3.40-43).

The Duchess of York, also present in this scene, quickly reminds Margaret that she had her own Richard as well whom Richard III killed (4. 4. 44). Richard's numerous murders, according to this cycle, end in his own murder, and so it can be said that his thirst for power merely satisfies itself with his own blood. This is also in accordance with the curses Margaret puts on other characters and the play of fate that is mostly observable in the play. Thus, as each one of Margaret's curses is realized, "it seems that a tragic inevitability is at work in the narrative of the play" (Dustagheer, 2009, p. 55). This fact highlights the motif of "death" in the play: death of kings, death of princess, death of lords, death of innocent heirs, death of a system of monarchy.

Accordingly, it can be proposed that death acts cyclically in Shakespeare's play; it follows the principles of social determinism which finally ends due to the "reversibility" principle in Baudrillard. In this light, in Baudrillard's philosophy, systems equipped with power and control are based on a particular association of death and life, one which divides and puts them against each other them, presenting death as the ultimate point in life (Smith, 2010, p. 46). In the play, the death of others serves Richard's tyrannical survival whereas Richard's death is the only solution for others' biological survival. According to Lobo, Baudrillard considers seduction "a game or challenge" in which not only the seducer but also the seduced can feel the produced vertigo (2013, p. 162). Thus, it seems that Baudrillard tries to refashion Hegel's dialectic of the master-slave, claiming that the former "confiscates" the latter's death while maintaining "the right to risk his own," and so the structure of power in Shakespeare's drama is no other than "a structure of death" (1993, p. 40), for Richard comes to confiscate others' lives. Baudrillard mentions that "the cycle of seduction" cannot be closed; it means that seducing someone can happen to seduce someone else whose seduction serves to please the first seducer (1990, p. 81). Richard even orders the death of children who are heirs to the throne. However, his own life is directed towards death, both as a natural phenomenon and an inevitable part of his tyranny anticipated in the plays' prophesies. It is noteworthy that Richard's megalomania gradually becomes "a general desire for villainy" (Slotkin,

2007, p. 12). It is, therefore, not surprising that he may be entangled in his villainous labyrinth, the only escape from which is his own death.

Richard III's life, tyranny, and death highlights the fact that Shakespeare did have "a philosophy of life," as Bundy argues (1924, p. 516), and many great critics admit of Shakespeare's use of "certain philosophical ideas" (p. 517). However, this is not to suggest that Shakespeare knew about the technical terms of "simulacra" and "seduction" in their Baudrillardian sense, but that the philosophy of his life covered certain existential concerns about the nature of truth and power systems in his time.

Conclusion

In so far as simulacrum defies the origin when it develops an existence of its own, it signifies what it is not and thus destructs the path toward the original source. In other words, perverting reality and pretending to be the real, simulacrum metamorphoses the real into a seductive system of deferred meanings. Thus, what Baudrillard means by *seduction* is the vertiginous world of simulacra in which the boundary between appearance and reality is blurred, with no fulfillment of the ultimate meaning. As far as this seductive maze is thirsty for turning the real into the simulacrum, there is no end for it but its death so that the endless cycle can be terminated.

The title character of Shakespeare's play, the treacherous, murderous, tyrant, and detested King Richard the Third, deserves death and lacks any nobility of character. Moreover, he endlessly fights with his ugly face and posture, which block his megalomania and love of power within a system that only cares for appearance. Thus, for the fulfillment of his obsession with power, he succumbs to an adverse mechanism of villainy and murder under the cover of benevolence. Such evil play-acting, through the metatheatricality of the play itself, turns the important Richard III to the master simulator who fulfills his evil intentions through treachery and villainy while he is helped by others who take his vice for virtue and encourage him to pursue his plans. Richard's art of seduction, just like a spiral swallowing every object of desire, is too mesmerizing for himself and others to be stopped. As Shakespeare's master simulator, he is a despot whose world of simulacra, in its last phase, has not only wiped its origin altogether but also has annihilated the vacuum, replacing it in an endless void, in its seduction, with no satisfaction except death and annihilation. By merging the foul with the fair, Richard becomes the knot of the loop he has created. There is no end to stop the loop of seduction, in a Baudrillardian sense, except through untying the knot, that is Richard's own death.

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We Do Need to Develop the Perspectives: In Pursuit of Options for Triangulating Academic Discourse Studies

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Abstract

This paper assumes that developing strong models of academic discourse analysis would not by itself guarantee researchers' access to the realities of academic communication and that any development in the theory of academic discourse analysis should also be informed and equipped with developments in wider applied linguistics research methodology. The current paper proposes that the departure point of this dialogue between academic discourse theory and research methodology should be the concept of "triangulation". While in applied linguistics research context, the concept has been defined as a research strategy aiming at developing diverse dimensions to approach the phenomena under investigation, I have argued that triangulation should be redefined and further operationalized in light of the realities of academic discourses and the very demands and desires of academic discourse researchers. To do so, a set of options including genre-based triangulation, culture-based triangulation, discipline-based triangulation, language-based triangulation, mode-based triangulation, time-based triangulation, expertise-based triangulation, analyst-based triangulation, corpus-based triangulation, and audience-based triangulation has been proposed.

Keywords: academic discourse, academic discourse analysis, applied linguistics, research strategy, triangulation

Introduction

Interest in the qualities of academic discourses dates back to the 1960s when ESP scholars were searching for models by which they could describe language in light of the specific communicative demands of the potential users. The earliest attempts to understand the qualities of academic discourses as a response to the above-mentioned necessity can be found in two major traditions of research which developed during the 1960s and the 1970s: "*Register Analysis*" and "*Grammatical-Rhetorical Analysis*". However, the 1980s marks the departure points of one of the most influential and insightful developments in academic discourse analysis – Swalesian tradition of "*Genre Analysis*" which has itself gone through three major phases of development: the 1980s as the period of formation of the concept of genre and its operational analytic procedure "move analysis" (see Swales, 1981, 1985), the 1990s as the period of prioritizing the concept of "communicative purpose" (see Swales, 1990), and a third period developing the concept of genre into a wider metaphor defined in light of concepts like frames of social action, language standards, biological species, families and prototypes, institutions, and speech acts (see Swales, 2004). This theoretical enrichment has been supported by a number of other movements, amongst which we can refer to *"Contrastive-rhetoric"* (which assumes that academic discourse does not have a universal and culturally-homogeneous conception and authors belonging to diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds might shape their academic arguments and consequently their texts in ways appropriate to their own cultural meaning-making traditions); "*Corpus-based Analysis*" (which provides tremendous statistically-grounded insights as to how language use varies in different situations); "*Ethnographic Analysis*" (which locates academic discourse researchers within an insider position, emphasizing the priority of a longitudinal engagement with participants in their natural settings); and "*Metadiscourse Analysis*" (which has focused on the social, interpersonal, and attitudinal aspects of academic communication).

This historical development reveals a number of considerable facts. One of these key facts is that from the very beginning academic discourse analysis traditions have been in pursuit of rigorous models which not only provide detailed information about formal properties of academic texts but also link these properties to discursive processes and consequently to a thicker and richer description of the connections between textual properties and contextual variables. Almost all models of analysis have been more or less loyal to this commitment. The natural affinity of these models to wider discourse analysis approaches has created theoretical bridges between them and academic discourse analysis models have been tremendously inspired by developments in theory of text, discourse, and context.

Development of richer and thicker analytic models: In pursuit of a comprehensive picture of realities of academic communication

The author's argument is based on the assumption that developing strong analytic models including a richer account of text, discourse and context would not necessarily guarantee researchers' fully-fledged access to the realities of academic communication and that any development in the theory of text, discourse, and

context should also be informed with developments in wider applied linguistics research methodology. This assumption has also been acknowledged by Paltridge (2020) who argues that a multi-perspective approach to research in academic discourse analysis should embrace the concept of "*triangulation*" in its research design; in other words, academic discourse analysis needs to equip itself and join forces with research designs and procedures (developing in wider applied linguistics research) which help us see academic communication from as many diverse perspectives as possible. The point is that theoretical developments of academic discourse analysis and consequently development of stronger analytic tools to deal with text, discourse, and context should not and cannot turn their backs to developments in wider applied linguistics research methods and a kind of conceptual communication should be established between these two. This dialogue has constituted the philosophy of applied linguistics: a mutual dialogue with areas of language related problems and feeding them with solutions on the basis of the findings of other disciplines. We do have a real problem here: in order to develop the communicative competence required for effective communication in target academic / scientific events, EAP needs comprehensive models of language description – models which not only describe text well, but also link the textual properties to discursive and contextual properties of target situations. Commitment of ESP and EAP to solving such problems requires a constant, never-ending dialogue between academic discourse analysis and wider research methodology developments in applied linguistics. In line with Paltridge (2020), I have found considerable potentials in the concept of triangulation as means of developing a dialogue between academic discourse analysis and applied linguistics research methodology. Some aspects of this potential are discussed in the forthcoming sections.

The concept of triangulation and its inherent potentials

While in its original context (i.e. construction, surveying and navigation at sea), the triangulation metaphor refers to the idea of using two identified points to find the position of an unidentified third point, by making a triangle, in applied linguistics research context (mainly inspired by the work of scholars like Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2011; Denzin, 1970; Webb et al., 1966), it has been defined as a qualitative research strategy which aims at capturing a wholistic picture of the phenomena under investigation. This is achieved by analyzing data gathered from different sources, using multiple groups of participants, and multiple research procedures. While the general objective of triangulation is to know more about a phenomenon by using different methods of data collection and analysis, a more precise characterization, preferred by some, is that triangulation involves approaching a given phenomenon from diverse perspectives in order to get greater insights into it. Riazi (2016) argues that the rationale for such cross-validation lies in the fact that any shortcomings in a data source, method, or perspective can be compensated by another in order to make more reliable and valid conclusions about the phenomena under investigation. This is not an abstract necessity. As researchers we have all experienced the necessity of triangulation when faced with what I call "*what-if-dilemmas*". The "what-ifs" whose origins are the researchers themselves,

reviewers, critics and even readers encourage us to wonder what would have happened if, in conducting a particular research project, if we had used different data, different instruments, different models, different participants, different theories, different methods, different analysts, different contexts, different time, different scale, etc. And, we usually have an implicit impression that different choices could result in different findings, different interpretations of the findings, and generally different pictures of the realities being researched. It seems that each choice equips us with a different torch by which we will have a chance to look at "the elephant in the dark room". Is there a solution? Is there a research design construct which would provide a chance to see the bigger picture and get rid of this dilemma?

It seems that development of the concept of triangulation has been the outcome of such necessities. A construct by which we would be able to see the researched phenomena from multiple perspectives and consequently enrich our research, to facilitate validity checks, to cross-validate, to reduce the chance of systematic bias, to cross-check evidence, and to develop more comprehensive understandings. In the context of applied linguistics, we can even think about more macro reasons behind such necessities: shift of research paradigms from disciplinary to interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research (see, for instance, Pun, 2020), ever-increasing demands for mixed-methods research (see, for instance, Hashemi, 2020), and essence of developing local research perspectives in non-western contexts (see, for instance, Severo & Makoni, 2020).

The multiple perspectives we are talking about here can be differently translated into the context of research depending on the particularities of research projects; however, a well-established classification offered by Cohen et al. (2011) goes as the followings:

- Methodological perspectives

- Theoretical perspectives

- Investigator perspectives

- Time perspectives

- Space perspectives

I believe that while the classification proposed by Cohen at al. (2011) can effectively work in the triangulation of academic discourse studies (and this has been discussed and demonstrated by Paltridge, 2020, as well), it needs to be redefined and further operationalized. In fact, this argument assumes that triangulation is a relatively general and abstract concept which needs to be redefined in light of the necessities of the particular research traditions which adopt it for their research designs. Academic discourse studies have their own problems, their own questions and of course deal with realities and phenomena which are intimately relevant to academic communication. This requires such studies to approach the realities and phenomena from their own unique perspectives and consequently define the alternative perspectives in ways partially or fundamentally distinct from

other applied linguistics research traditions. If the realities of academic communication have justified the emergence and development of independent research traditions over the past 60 years as I have indicated above in this paper, the same justification would support redefining triangulation and operationalizing it in distinct ways as well. One such localization and operationalization of the concept has been introduced by Swales (1998) through what he calls textography – a research strategy which brings together elements of academic discourse analysis with techniques of ethnography such as document analysis, interviews, and observations. This research strategy focuses on the contextualization and situated nature of academic texts in order to develops an insider understanding of the worlds in which texts are produced, why they are produced the way they are, what shapes their production, and the values that underlie the texts which have been produced. A typical example of such thick description can be found in Swales' (2018) textography of the texts produced and consumed in three different floors of an academic building (at the University of Michigan). During a three-year period, Swales conducted a multi-perspective analysis by looking at the texts produced by different people who worked there, collecting observation data, carrying out document and correspondence analysis, and conducting text-based interviews with employees working on each of the three floors of the building. This operationalized and localized version of the concept of triangulation has also been welcomed by a number of other studies. Some of these studies have been summarized below in order to help us develop a tentative reformulation of the general concept of triangulation:

- Paltridge (2004): the exegeses written by master students of art and design; combining the analysis of exegeses with an examination of other texts such as postgraduate student handbooks, examiners' guides, examiners' reports, and annual reports on the master's degree; carrying out interviews with students, advisors, and examiners;

- Paltridge et al. (2012a, 2012b), Ravelli et al. (2013), Starfield et al. (2012): texts written by doctoral students of visual and performing arts as part of their requirements for their degrees; using a wide range of data (nationwide survey, dissertations, supervisor questionnaires, student interviews, supervisor interviews, university prospectuses, information provided to students in relation to their candidature, published research on doctoral research, in-house art school publications, discussion papers, and attendance at roundtable discussions and exhibition openings);

- Paltridge (2017): investigation of reviewers' reports on submissions to academic journals using corpus-informed discourse analysis, survey, and interview data;

- Li (2007): investigation of chemistry doctoral students' attempts to publish their works using process logs, drafts of students' writing, email exchanges, and interview data;

- Flowerdew (2002): investigation of a PhD student's struggles with getting published using student's drafts and final texts, interviews and email

communication, student's communication with editors, reviewers, and in-house editor, and filed notes;

- Li (2005): investigation of a physics student trying to publish his work using conversations and emails with the student, drafts of the manuscripts, communication with journal editors, reviewers' reports, and interviews with the student's supervisor;

- Mur Duenas (2012): investigation of four scholars' writing for publication practices using text trajectories, editors' letters, referees' reports, authors' responses to the reports, and interviews with the authors;

- Curry (2014): examination of the use of graphics in the scholarly writing of writers in engineering using focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, audio and video recorded participant observations, field notes and drafts of students' texts;

- Hewings (2004): investigation of the matters most frequently evaluated in journal reviews using corpus analysis, and a combination of software and manual analysis of the data;

- Lillis and Curry (2010): investigation of second language writers' writing for publication by collecting data from 50 professional scholars, in 12 academic institutions, across four different countries; using a longitudinal in design conducted over a period of eight years; wide range of data including texts written by the study's participants; talk around text sessions; language and literacy history interviews', emails between the researchers and the participants; correspondence between participants and their colleagues, reviewers, and editors; observational field notes / research diaries; telephone conversations; network diagrams drawn by participants; and documentary data such as policy documents from each of the national sites;

- Carnell et al. (2008): investigation of the experiences of published authors in the same academic discipline and at the same academic institution using semi-structured interviews, and exchanging ideas through email, telephone conversations and meetings.

The value of these attempts cannot be denied. As we can see, academic discourse researchers have understood the significance of triangulation and have integrated triangulation strategies within their research design. However, I still believe that realities of academic communication provide further possibilities for multi-perspective research on academic discourses. I have devoted the remaining sections of this article to developing a set of options for the triangulation of academic discourse studies on the basis of these realities.

A reflection on the realities of academic communication and its implications for a wider model of triangulation

To capture a true sense of realities of academic communication, we need to think again and again about what the traditions of academic discourse analysis as outlined above have been searching for. I believe that this development has been in

pursuit of a comprehensive picture of not only textual properties but also intertextual, discursive, interdiscursive, and wider sociocultural factors which play a role in academic meaning-making. Hence, a multi-perspective research model needs to be informed by such realities; in fact, a preliminary model of triangulation in academic discourse studies is expected to bring together the very ingredients of the analytic models which have been emerging since the 1960s to respond to the development of theoretical assumptions and practical needs. The proposed options should not turn their back to textual, discursive, and contextual variables which affect academic communication. The proposed options for triangulation should truly reflect the inherent ambitions and motivations underlying the development of analytic models in multiple diverse perspectives; hence, concepts like genre, discipline, culture, language, and author should constitute the core of such model. In fact, capturing the true picture of the realities of academic communication would not be made possible only through the development of analytic models; this development should be simultaneously reflected in the very construct of research design. Triangulation as defined and operationalized appropriately in the context of academic communication studies is a response to such a necessity. What comes next is the outcome of my attempt to do so.

A preliminary set of options for triangulating academic discourse studies

I have devoted this section of the article to the development of a preliminary set of options for the triangulation of academic discourse analysis projects. As already emphasized, this is not meant to question the validity of already existing models in wider applied linguistics research; it should be seen as a further operationalized concept of triangulation for academic discourse studies. The proposed framework considers the followings as some possible dimensions through which triangulation of academic discourse analysis projects would be made possible:

(1) Genre-based triangulation: The theory of genre as developed in light of Swalesian thinking (1981, 1990, 2004) makes the concept a right site for triangulation. By emphasizing a number of significant contextual factors (e.g., communicative purpose, audience) which play a role in dividing texts into different genres, the concept helps academic discourse researchers investigate how such contextual factors could differently shape both the formal and functional properties of academic discourses. The theory of genre rightly emphasizes that the concept of academic discourse and its formal / functional properties should not be seen as homogeneous concepts and any minor variation in terms of audience, purpose, etc. could lead to different distribution of discursive qualities.

In Kuhi and Behnam (2011), we have demonstrated some potentials of what we can now call genre-based triangulation. The study investigates the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse features in a range of genres (research articles, handbook chapters, scholarly textbooks, introductory textbooks) selected on the basis of the concept of accreditation of academic knowledge (see Fleck, 1979 and Kuhn, 1970 for a discussion on this). The findings show that the use of metadiscourse is fundamentally affected by the role and status of the academic genres in this continuum: compared to pure research genres which are mainly seen

as the medium of knowledge construction, the academic genres playing a role in the accreditation of academic knowledge have different discursive objectives and different audiences, which gives rise to differences in the use of metadiscourse features.

Of course, an important point which should be taken into consideration here is related to the criteria for the selection of the genres to be included in triangulated genre-based projects. Not every random selection of genres would guarantee the inherent objectives of triangulation. The selection criteria should be informed by what Swales (2004) has referred to as a "constellation" and Bhatia (2004) as a "colony" of academic discourses. In light of such concepts, Devitt (1991) has introduced the concept of "genre sets" to refer to that component of the genre constellation which a particular group or individual engages in; these represent a full collection of texts which a particular group deals with in a particular context. Two further developments of the concept of constellation as mentioned by Hyland (2006) are "genre chains"; this refers to the ways spoken and written texts connect together in a particular social context – and "genre networks" – which refers to the ways genres arrayed together interact with, draw upon, and respond to another in a particular context (also see Paltridge, 2012). Hence, triangulating a given academic discourse analysis project in light of the theory of genre demands a careful decision on which set, network, or chain the given genre belongs to and if it is going to be compared and contrasted with a member of the same set, network, or chain or one belonging to another. The selection would certainly require strong justification in light of what a given text does within a certain constellation or colony and why it is going to be compared and contrasted with a genre existing within the same or outside the boundaries of the colony or constellation.

2. Culture-based triangulation: In light of a large number of cross-cultural investigations of academic discourses we have learnt that authors' affiliations to different cultural backgrounds could shape the formal and discursive properties of academic texts differently. Despite the fact that the behavioristic and positivist conceptions of academic / scientific writing strongly opposed the role of cultural patterns of thinking and intercultural rhetoric, in light of a social constructivist paradigm and weakening position of behavioristic thinking, cultural differences in academic communication are seen as natural and acceptable. This provides us with a perspective through which the findings of a certain project could be triangulated by looking at that same phenomenon in the output of authors with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Yakhontova (2002) is a typical example approaching differences in the conference abstracts from a cross-cultural point of view. Working on Ukrainian / Russian versus English corpora, the investigation has shown that Ukrainian / Russian abstracts are similar to short research papers, tend to be relatively global in description of research, and are less personal than the English abstracts, and with little attention to the originality of the research. This allows Yakhontova to link the differences to a number of factors including the specific contextual conditions of the organization of conferences, different relations between academic institutions and

the reality of market society, dominance of different ideological systems, and dominance of different cultural and intellectual traditions.

The dominant pattern of triangulation here has been comparing and contrasting academic texts authored by native English writers to and with those authored by non-native ones, which has been justified by the fact that most of academic genres strictly follow the conventions imposed by anglophone authors and that authors from other cultures need to get rid of their cultural ways of composing and move towards a more "homogeneous" platform of communication. Based on what he calls a "liberation theology", Swales (1997) has developed a detailed criticism of this inviting academic communication to a more pluralistic mode of communication, which is expected to encourage the researchers to deeply explore such differences by looking at more diverse potentials of cross-cultural comparison and contrast.

3. Discipline-based triangulation: In light of social constructivism, we have learned that disciplines create different intellectual climates for members of different academic communities; these intellectual climates influence the problems investigated, the methods employed, the way the findings are seen, and the way texts are written up. In light of this understanding, our attention would be drawn to the idea that academic discourse as used by members of different academic communities is used to communicate not only with diverse non-academic communities, but with the members insider to the community. The concern for addressing the members insider to the community would result in the development of a number of conventions which would, among other things, restrict how something can be said, and how academic meanings can be textualized. This is where the role of triangulation should be highlighted. Through triangulation, we will be able to understand how texts carrying similar names and belonging to similar generic categories are discursively shaped and textually realized differently in different academic disciplines. Being a member of a different academic community means different "ways of being"; this would influence the ways members perform, the views they have, the values they believe in, and the identities they adopt (see Becher, 1989). All these will find their ways into the discourses of disciplines and, through triangulation, we will be able to see how and why disciplinary discourses, texts, and practices vary. Cross-disciplinary triangulation can help us understand that and that there are no homogeneous conventions of language use in academic communication which apply to the discourses of all disciplines.

Swales et al.'s (1998) study of the functions of imperatives in research articles across ten disciplines is a good example of this of type triangulation. The study which identified the six most frequent imperative patterns in research articles and categorized the discursive functions of the identified patterns reported variation in the frequency of occurrence of imperatives. The findings revealed that the three top fields (statistics, experimental geology, and linguistics) tend to produce texts which consist of solid paragraph blocks, contain mathematical, experimental or illustrative elements which demand more specific forms of reader-text management. All this is achieved through the use of imperatives. The analysis of the footnotes and endnotes also revealed that the use of imperatives had a strong humanities flavor.

This type of triangulation has a great potential in showing that language use is affected by the differences in the ways disciplines see the world and perform their academic tasks. In fact, triangulation here is expected to help us understand that disciplines have different ways of constructing knowledge, different research practices, and different ways of seeing the world, and these differences are usually textualized in diverse forms of argument and expression.

4. Language-based triangulation: Intimately connected to culture-based dimension of triangulation and implicitly carrying all the advantages of that type of triangulation discussed above, language-based triangulation is expected to develop a cross-linguistic comparison and contrast of the findings of academic discourse studies. The assumption is that languages do not follow a universal pattern of textualizing certain meaning potentials and functions. It is a well-established fact that the way form-function relationships are established could differ from one language to another; consequently, like other domains of human communication, the same or similar academic / scientific meanings and functions might be expressed through different textual resources in different languages. Through this type of triangulation, we will find fresh means of understanding the formal / functional potentials of different languages for the expression of what is deemed to be academic / scientific meaning within different cultures. In fact, I find the potentials of this type of triangulation within the orientation captured by Belcher and Braine (1995). They argue that EAP should be the informed understanding of the rigor of explicit cognitive awareness of texts, subtexts, and contexts of academic discourse; this is expected to enable members to join collectivist efforts without losing their "home perspectives". And I think this assumption gains an indispensable credit for triangulation as an EAP research construct.

A considerable example of studies with such orientation is Hyland (2005). In a meta-review of a number of cross-linguistic investigations of different features of academic discourses like nominalization, indirectness, implicitness, theme and reflection, the researcher shows that compared with other languages (here Japanese, Chinese, Finnish, and Thai), Anglo-American academic English is more transparent in terms of its formal structure and purpose, employs more recent citations, uses fewer rhetorical questions, generally does not tolerate asides, is more tentative, divides the text more strictly, uses more inter-sentential transitions, and is more reader-friendly.

Information emerging from this type of triangulation can help the researchers develop a descriptive picture of differences in the academic discourses of different languages and language-using groups. This would further result in understanding that conventions of academic / scientific meaning-making are not uniform across languages; the universal academic / scientific meaning making is a myth. This would certainly result in questioning the monolithic view of academic communication in EAP pedagogy and, as Ventola (1992) has argued, would pave the way for the development of convenient ways of dealing with intercultural linguistic problems in academic writing.

5. Mode-based triangulation: Intimately bound to the concept of genre and the communicative purposes underlying academic genres, what I have called "mode" here can be seen as a potential dimension of triangulating academic discourse studies. Although academic genres are conventionally divided into written genres (e.g., research articles, book reviews, textbooks, and grant proposals) and spoken genres (e.g., lectures, seminars, student presentations, and dissertation defenses), this division should not be understood purely based upon the oral / written modes of communication; the division also reflects complex facts about the social structure of academy and the criteria used for the division and distribution of genres. Hence, we expect that triangulating the outcomes of research on certain written genres with those belonging to the spoken category would reveal significant facts about how genres function in the complex social structure of the academy. Swales' key concept of "communicative purpose" (1990) could be seen as a guiding principle here; however, his later development of the concept as a "metaphorical endeavor" (2004) (genres as frames for action, genres as language standards, genres as biological species, genres as prototypes, genres as institutions, and genres as speech acts) could also shed light on how written / spoken dichotomy is triggered by the social functions and status of texts in academic life. Hence, what might sound as a simple system of categorization in the first impression would certainly prove to be a significant mechanism of meaning making in academic communication. Triangulation would certainly be of great significance here.

Although, to the best of my knowledge, this direction of triangulation has not received due attention, a recent study by Vasheghani Farahani (2020) on the distributional patterns of interactive and interactional metadiscourse features in *British Academic Written English Corpus* and *British Academic Spoken English Corpus* is an interesting example. The findings reveal that, in both corpora, the authors tend to use interactive metadiscourse more frequently. Furthermore, in the written corpus, the transitions and endophoric markers are used more frequently; in the spoken corpus, however, endophoric markers and transitions are the most frequently employed resources. Among the interactional metadiscourse resources, hedges and self-mentions are the most frequent in the written form, but in the spoken, self-mentions and boosters are more frequent.

6. Chronological triangulation: It is a well-established fact that academic disciplines evolve in order to adjust themselves to the emerging needs of academic communities. In response to such changes, academic genres also change and evolve (see Devitt, 1997; Kress, 2010; Miller, 1984; Swales, 2004). In light of the developments of the theory of genre in academic discourse studies, we have understood that genres are not and should not be seen as static constructs; their formal and functional properties are connected with complexities and dynamicity of the social practices of discourse communities (Berkenkotter & Huckin,1995; Dudley-Evans, 1994). I have proposed chronological triangulation as a mechanism through which the researchers can penetrate into the very heart of this change. Through such triangulation, we would be able to explore not only the formal and functional changes taking place in academic genres but also the origins and motivations behind such changes.

Mainly motivated by the logic outlined above, Rezaei et al. (2020) looked at the evolution of stance markers in three outstanding journals of applied linguistics over a period of three decades. The study detected a significant decrease in the occurrence of stance markers in the corpus. The authors linked this to the radical shift of academic practices in applied linguistics. In what the authors labelled as a surprising picture of change, they reported that while they had seen an overall decrease in the expression of hedges, boosters, and attitude markers over time, they had witnessed the greatest change in the frequency of self-mentions among all stance categories. They related this change to the development of a promotional discourse, the process of commodification of academic knowledge and fundamental changes in professionalism.

Such attempts to triangulate are ideally expected to explore the changes taking place in the epistemological and methodological assumptions of academic disciplines, and the way academic discourses are becoming more and more hybrid.

7. Expertise-based triangulation: The rigid boundaries which used to strictly divide the members of academic / scientific communities in terms of the types of texts which could be produced by different members are getting looser and looser. This is due to the changes which are taking place in the mechanisms of knowledge construction, the mechanisms of membership, and the social structure of academic communities. In light of these and a large number of other changes, mechanisms of access to texts have also been fundamentally altered.

A good example of such a shift in what I call "access mechanism" is related to research articles which used to be produced mainly by expert members of academic communities; however, due to the changes in the structure of higher education, increasing number of post-graduate students, and the implicit desire of universities to elevate themselves through more and more publication, the genre has been made widely available to novice members of the academic communities (e.g., MA candidates) as well. For instance, in the academic institution I belong to, publishing a number of research articles in high-ranking academic journals is considered a pre-requisite for defending theses / dissertations and even graduation. The wider access of novice members to the production of such a complex genre has hence resulted in problems related to guaranteeing the standard qualities of it and thus become a source of concern for EAP pedagogy.

In light of such developments and changes, I see expertise-based triangulation as a means of comparing and contrasting how the formal and functional qualities of academic genres made available to academics belonging to different expertise level could differ. The most immediate consumers of such triangulated projects would certainly be EAP pedagogues who are trying to bridge the gap between more and less expert members of the academic communities.

Khoshsima et al. (2018) is a good example of research conducted in light of the considerations outlined above. The study starts with the assumption that when novice academic writers enter an academic community, they are expected to face probable challenges when they try to meet the rhetorical expectations established by the experienced members; therefore, they may not be able to write in a way

acceptable to the professional members. The researchers then explore the probable rhetorical distance between these two groups by focusing upon the employment of interactional metadiscourse markers in the writings of some novice and expert members of the academic community of applied linguistics. The findings indicate that the novice members use far less interactional metadiscourse markers than the expert ones in their texts (here research articles). The researchers conclude that novice members of the discourse community are far away from the rhetorical restrictions established by the expert members of the discipline.

8. Analyst-analyst / author-based triangulation: Researchers of academic discourses usually approach texts with analytic kaleidoscopes, which shapes the way they see textual and discursive properties. These kaleidoscopes have diverse potentials: while they help us penetrate into some complex layers of textual and discursive properties, they could also hide some significant realities about the nature of academic communication. They impose certain ways of seeing and conceal some others. Hence, what a certain researcher might see as relevant in academic meaning making could be seen differently by another analyst and even by the producers of texts. Hence, what I have labelled as analyst-analyst / author type of triangulation can provide fresh perspectives through which textual and discursive properties can be approached from other analysts' and the text authors' own points of view.

Insightful examples of such triangulation can be found in Soltani et al.'s (2021) study on move recycling in academic research articles. Mainly approaching this discursive strategy form a cross-cultural perspective, the study ends in a different picture – that at least from a statistical, quantitative perspective the use of move recycling in academic research articles is not associated with the authors' national / cultural backgrounds. The researchers then go through a triangulation phase by email communication with a sample of authors whose texts were included for analysis. The guiding hypothesis of the study (that there should be a relationship between national culture and move recycling) is missing among the themes which emerge from the qualitative phase of the project. The interviewed authors mainly highlight the role of research article length, conventions of academic communication in the disciplines they belong to and their own concern with guiding the readers in the text and making their prose more readable.

9. Audience-based triangulation: Academic / scientific texts carrying the same content for different audiences can also provide an insightful perspective for triangulation. Intimately bound to the concept of genre and communicative purpose, composing the same content to different audiences can result in different ways of shaping both the formal and functional qualities of academic texts.

Babapoor and Kuhi (2018) is a good example of this type of triangulation where the researchers work on how popularization of academic discourses can affect the use of informal elements. Focusing on three corpora – scientific journal articles, scientific magazine articles, and scientific newspaper articles – the researchers detect considerable variations regarding how communicative purposes and target audiences might influence the way informal elements are employed: among the selected corpora, magazine article were reported to carry the most frequent use of such

features, which is linked to the different conceptions of audience and the different conventions of publication dominating the three genres.

The findings of such projects could be significant. In fact, the sociocultural changes shaping in academic communication have resulted in further diversification of the audiences of academic discourses. Most academic texts used to be written by experts and consumed only by experts; however, the necessities for further popularization of academic knowledge have pushed these texts into wider social contexts where the established qualities and conventions of academic meaning-making need to be re-adjusted for a different audience. This formal / functional re-adjustment and its contextual variables can constitute the rationale for further triangulated projects.

10. Corpus-based triangulation: The merits of utilizing large corpora of academic discourses have already been demonstrated within the corpus-based approaches to academic discourse analysis. These will help us get rid of intuitions about the textual / discursive properties of academic communication and base our judgements on solid empirical evidence. Availability of a large number of already constructed oral and written academic discourse corpora combined with the development of sophisticated technology for collecting and analyzing any other possible corpora has developed promising perspectives for academic discourse researchers. In light of all these, what can be witnessed in small, researcher-made corpora can be compared against relatively larger ones to provide the necessary empirical support for generalizing the findings of such studies and guaranteeing a so-called external validity for them. Based on such assumptions, I have included this as another possible dimension of triangulating academic discourse analysis projects.

Conclusions and Implications

The current preliminary proposal has been made on the basis of the assumption that meeting the ideal ambition of academic discourse studies – depicting a rich picture of the realities of academic communication – would not be possible only by reference to the theory of discourse. Our attempts to develop a true picture of academic meaning making also requires joining forces with development in wider applied linguistics research methods. I have argued that the concept of "triangulation" has a potential to meet the above-mentioned objective, and that the concept needs to be redefined and operationalized in light of the realities of academic communication. This redefinition has resulted in developing a set of options for triangulation. The proposed options cannot have a static nature and ongoing dialogue between the general theory of discourse analysis, academic discourse analysis, and applied linguistics research methodology is expected to further enrich the set of options proposed. This enrichment is much needed since academic discourse analysis is a problem-oriented area of research and its findings are of utmost significance in EAP pedagogy. These needs have for decades motivated the expansion of academic discourse analysis and it seems that further complexities of modern academy and academic communication also require development of richer multilayered and multidimensional perspectives and procedures of analysis. I believe that academic discourse research developing in

light of the current argument would have great potentials for feeding EAP pedagogy and meeting the expectations of its multiple participants.

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Book Review: Janet Mola Okoko, Scott Tunison, Keith D. Walker (Editors), *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods: Selected Contextual Perspectives* **(Springer Texts in Education), 1st ed., 2023). Springer. 495 Pages,** ISBN 978-3-031-04394-9 (eBook)

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Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods: Selected Contextual Perspectives is a book that compiles various concepts related to qualitative research. The book has 75 chapters written by 53 authors from different parts of the world, and it is edited by three Canadian editors: Janet Mola Okoko, Scott Tunison, and Keith D. Walker, who are all associated with the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. The editors noted that as the world becomes more interconnected, there is a need for qualitative research to become more diverse and inclusive of different ways of knowing and inquiry. The field of qualitative research has become much larger, with many nuances, varieties, complementary ways of knowing, and new methods to explore. To cover such a wide range of topics, the editors have identified the best authors who can provide reputable practice and scholarly experience on each concept or method discussed in the book.

The topics discussed in the book haven't been thoroughly investigated, but the book gives readers additional sources to explore these topics further. The book also includes references and links to online resources that are linked to the different concepts and methods discussed. This allows readers to access more information and descriptions, encouraging them to adapt various methods in a complementary manner. The book is organized into five main themes: namely: (i) theoretical perspectives (7 chapters) (ii) methodological frameworks/ approaches to research (22 chapters) (iii) data collection methods (16 chapters) a (iv) data analysis (19 chapters) and (v) indigenous methodologies (10 chapters).

The book's chapters are arranged in alphabetical order according to their titles and follow a specific outline. Each chapter begins with a short historical overview of the concept, followed by a clear description of it. Readers are then presented with potential applications and benefits of the concept. Finally, each chapter concludes by discussing the strengths and limitations of the concept, and provides readers with a list of references and exercises. These features enable readers to grasp the intricate details of the 74 qualitative research concepts covered in the book.

1. Action Research
2. Actor-Network Theory
3. Affinity Research Approach
4. Appreciative Inquiry
5. Archival Research
6. Arts-Based Inquiry
7. Asset Mapping
8. Autoethnography
9. Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method
10. Case Study
11. Coding Qualitative Data
12. Comparative Analysis
13. Content Analysis
14. Critical Ethnography
15. Critical Race Theory
16. Critical Theory
17. Cultural Domain Analysis
18. Decolonizing Methodologies: A Pacific Island Lens
19. Decolonizing Autoethnography
20. Deliberative Public Engagement
21. Discursive Positioning
22. Document Analysis
23. Duo-ethnographic Methodology
24. Electronic Delphi Method
25. Embodied Research Methodologies
26. Ethnomethodology
27. Fa'afaletui Framework
28. Facet Theory Research Approach
29. Feminist Autoethnography
30. Focus Groups
31. Force-Field Analysis
32. Grounded Theory
33. Harnessing Insights with NVivo
34. Hermeneutics
35. Hermeneutic Phenomenology
36. Indigenous Métissage
37. Indigenous Participatory Action Research (PAR)
38. Interpretation and Expert Panels
39. Interpretive Analysis
40. Interpretive Description
41. Institutional Ethnography

42. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
43. Kakala Research Framework
44. Kaupapa Maori
45. Life History Narrative
46. Manual Transcription
47. Melanesian Tok Stori Research
48. Métissage
49. Metaphor Analysis
50. Narrative Inquiry
51. Naturalistic Decision-Making Method
52. Nominal Group Research
53. Observational Study
54. Online Focus Groups
55. Participatory Learning and Action
56. Phenomenography
57. Phenomenological Studies
58. Photo Elicitation Interviews
59. Photo Voice
60. Portraiture
61. Qualitative Longitudinal Research
62. Realist Analysis
63. Reception Theory
64. Reflective Journaling
65. Reflexive Bracketing
66. Rhizoanalysis
67. Situational Analysis/SWOT
68. Social Network Analysis
69. Structural Narrative Analysis
70. Symbolic Interactionism
71. Thematic Analysis
72. Transect Walk Research Method
73. Videovoice
74. World Café

The aim of this review is to objectively evaluate a book by using examples from it to illustrate important points. The overall purpose of the review is to assist readers in deciding if they should read the book, and provide constructive feedback to its editors and contributors. This aligns with Dahal's (2023) view that book reviews are critical assessments that summarize a book's content and assess its value in terms of relevance and quality, ultimately helping readers determine if it is worth reading.

As a reader, I have mixed feelings about this review. While the book covers 74 qualitative research concepts and offers helpful collections to capture their nuances, it is silent on other important qualitative research concepts. After summarizing the book's main points, I offered an evaluation in the later section of my observations. The book's strength lies in its coverage of these 74 concepts, which can aid readers in understanding them deeply. To guide my assessment, I considered

questions such as whether the editors and contributors achieved their goals with the book, whether it was informative, persuasive or fictional, and whether the writing was clear, engaging, and easy to follow. However, the book's limitation is that most of the contributors are from Canada, which may be too narrow for other contexts outside of Canada to contextualize research issues globally. Despite this weakness, I would still recommend this book to other readers looking to evaluate the core ideas of qualitative research, as it is a valuable resource in this emerging field.

The book's strength lies in its structure, where each chapter starts with a brief historical overview of the concept and follows it up with a concise description of the concept and its application process. The readers are then presented with examples of how the concept can be applied and its benefits, and finally, each chapter concludes with an assessment of the concept's strengths and limitations, as well as a list of references used by the authors. I believe that this makes the book a useful resource for researchers who want to explore different qualitative research concepts in their current and future projects. While readers are free to disagree with the editors and contributors' perspectives, it cannot be denied that the book opens important avenues for debate and discussion in the field of qualitative research concepts.

In summary, the book makes a significant contribution to literature on qualitative research concepts and is fascinating and thought-provoking overall. However, it does not explore topics in depth but rather serves as a starting point for readers to delve deeper into these concepts using additional sources and conversations provided in the book's relevant literature and resources. Additionally, the book introduces various methods for readers to consider rather than instructing them on how different concepts or methods might align or complement one another. Nonetheless, I believe that this book is worth reading to gain an understanding of different qualitative research concepts and contains a strong set of qualitative research tools and approaches due to the diversity and expertise of its authors. The book's accessibility and contents make it a valuable resource for research practitioners, academics, students, and instructors of foundational research courses

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Dahal, N. (2023). Is doing research for people or on people? A book review of Emancipatory and Participatory Research for Emerging Educational Researchers: Theory and Case Studies of Research in Disabled Communities. *The Qualitative Report, 28*(1), 69-74. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2023.6136

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Persian Abstracts

**بررسی نقش سطح بسندگی زبان فراگیران ایرانی زبان خارجی در دیدگاه آنها نسبت
به استفاده از زبان اول در بافت آموزشگاهی: مطالعه ترکیبی**

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چکیده

با توجه به بحث‌های طولانی در مورد استفاده از زبان اول در آموزش و یادگیری زبان انگلیسی، این مطالعه با
استفاده از روش تحقیق ترکیبی، نقش سطح زبان فراگیران ایرانی در دیدگاه آنها نسبت به استفاده از زبان اول را
مورد بررسی قرار داد. پرسشنامه‌ای که در ابتدا توسط شفلر و همکاران (۲۰۱۶) طراحی شده بود، بعد از ویرایش
در بین ۱۸۰ زبان‌آموز سطح مقدماتی، متوسط، و پیشرفته در چهار آموزشگاه زبان واقع در کرج، ایران به طور
متوازن توزیع شد. مصاحبه‌های نیمه ساختاریافته با ۱۸ شرکت‌کننده از ۳ سطح مختلف برگزار شد. اطلاعات کمی
توسط نرم‌افزار اس‌پی‌اس‌اس تحلیل شد. مصاحبه‌ها مورد تحلیل محتوایی قرار گرفتند. در مجموع نتایج نشان داد
که سطح زبان فراگیران به‌طور قابل ملاحظه‌ای روی نظرات آنها تاثیر می‌گذارد. زبان‌آموزان مقدماتی سرسخت‌ترین
حامیان استفاده از زبان اول در کلاس بودند و هر چه سطح زبان آنها افزایش پیدا می‌کرد ترجیح می‌دادند از زبان
اول کمتر استفاده شود. اطلاعات کمی نشان داد که برخلاف فراگیران سطح متوسط و پیشرفته، اکثر فراگیران
سطح مقدماتی موافق استفاده از زبان اول بودند. همچنین مشخص شد که در حالی که فراگیران مقدماتی بیش از
همه با استفاده از زبان اول برای دستور زبان موافق بودند، فراگیران سطح متوسط و پیشرفته بیش از همه موافق
استفاده از زبان اول برای لغت بودند؛ نتایج این مطالعه می‌تواند به معلمان زبان انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی یا
زبان دوم و همچنین تصمیم‌گیران تصمیم‌گیر کمک کند تا نظرات زبان‌آموزان را بشنوند و تصمیم بگیرند در چه زمان و چه
سطحی استفاده یا محدود کردن زبان اول مناسب است.

واژگان کلیدی: بسندگی، فراگیران زبان خارجی، زبان اول، دیدگاه‌ها

سبک‌ها و راهبردهای یادگیری دانشجویان کارشناسی ارشد آنلاین با موفقیت بالا و پایین

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چکیده

این مطالعه با هدف تعیین سبک‌ها و استراتژی‌های استفاده شده توسط دانشجویان کارشناسی ارشد رشته آموزش انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی انجام شد. این مطالعه همچنین رابطه بین سبک‌های یادگیری، استراتژی‌های یادگیری و پیشرفت یادگیری دانشجویان را بررسی کرد. شرکت‌کنندگان در این مطالعه 87 دانشجوی کارشناسی ارشد آنلاین در دانشگاه علم و صنعت ایران بودند. ابزارهای مورد استفاده در این تحقیق، پرسشنامه نظرسنجی سبک یادگیری، پرسشنامه استراتژی‌های یادگیری و میانگین نمرات دانشجویان تحصیلات تکمیلی بود. نتایج مطالعه نشان داد که بیشترین سبک یادگیری مربوط به سبک‌های سنتزی، مستقل از میدان، تصادفی- شهودی و دیداری بوده است، در حالی که کمترین ترجیحات سبک مربوط به وابسته به میدان، شنیداری، لمسی/حرکتی و باز بوده است. بیشترین تمایل دانشجویان آنلاین مربوط به مدیریت احتمالات بوده است، در حالی که کمترین تمایل آنها مربوط به استفاده از حواس فیزیکی بوده است. با درنظرگرفتن استراتژی‌های یادگیری، استراتژی‌های تعیین هدف بالاترین میانگین را کسب کردند، در حالی که استراتژی‌های وظیفه کمترین میانگین را به دست آوردند. نتایج رگرسیون لجستیک نشان داد که افراد با موفقیت بالا بیشتر در سبک‌های یادگیری دیداری، لمسی، فراگیر، بسته و باز گروه‌بندی می‌شوند. با این حال، از نظر استفاده از استراتژی یادگیری، تفاوتی بین دانشجویان با موفقیت بالا و پایین وجود نداشت. به مدرسان آنلاین توصیه می‌شود که به سبک‌ها و استراتژی‌های دانشجویان آنلاین توجه کنند و سعی کنند کتاب‌ها و روش‌های مناسب را بر اساس سبک‌ها و استراتژی‌های آنان انتخاب کنند.

واژگان کلیدی: استراتژی‌های یادگیری، سبک‌های یادگیری، دستاورد یادگیری، یادگیری الکترونیکی، دانشجویان کارشناسی ارشد رشته آموزش انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی

بررسی اصلاحات در باورهای آموزشی معلمان: مقایسه معلمان پیش از خدمت و معلمان تازه کار

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چکیده

باورهای آموزشی به عنوان یک مفهوم مهم در روانشناسی یکی از تأثیرگذارترین و تعیین‌کننده‌ترین عوامل در موفقیت فراگیران زبان انگلیسی است. اخیراً باورهای معلمان توجه بسیاری از محققین را در زمینه آموزش زبان انگلیسی به خود جلب کرده است. بنابراین مطالعه حاضر به بررسی باورهای آموزشی معلمان مبتدی غیربومی و میزان تغییر یا اصلاح باورهای آموزشی آنها در سال اول تجربه تدریس در مقایسه با معلمان پیش از خدمت پرداخته است. داده‌های مورد نیاز از طریق پرسشنامه اعتقادی و مصاحبه نیمه‌ساختاریافته جمع‌آوری شد. اگرچه نتایج پرسشنامه نشان داد که بین معلمان پیش از خدمت و مبتدی تفاوت آماری معنی‌داری وجود دارد، یافته‌های داده‌های کیفی نشان داد که اکثریت باورهای آموزشی اصلاح شده است. یافته‌ها حاکی از آن است که عوامل متعددی موجب اصلاح باورهای معلمان می‌شود. اهمیت نادیده گرفته‌شده نقش معلمان در توسعه محتوای درسی؛ فقدان شیوه‌های تدریس در برنامه‌های تربیت معلم؛ عوامل فرهنگی و زمینه‌ای؛ و روش‌های ارزیابی از جمله مهمترین عوامل هستند.

واژگان کلیدی: اصلاحات آموزشی، آموزش معلمان انگلیسی، آموزش معلمان بین‌المللی، باورهای معلمان، آمادگی برای آموزش معلمان

آموزش زبان انگلیسی در نروژ: رشته‌ی دانشگاهی مستقل یا رشته‌ی دانشگاهی وابسته

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پلونچوک وانپت

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چکیده

با توجه به پیشینه‌ی نسبتاً کوتاه آموزش زبان انگلیسی در نروژ، مطالعۀ ماهیت، حیطه، هویت دانشگاهی، تعریف، موقعیت، و علت وجودی این رشته ضرورتی اجتناب‌ناپذیر است. مقالۀ حاضر در پی پاسخگویی به پرسشی ساده و در عین حال بنیادین در زمینۀ آموزش زبان انگلیسی است: آیا رشتۀ آموزش زبان انگلیسی ماهیتاً رشتۀ دانشگاهی مستقلی است و یا رشتۀ دانشگاهی وابسته؟ استدلال ما این است که چنانچه آموزش زبان انگلیسی به دنبال تثبیت موقعیت خود به عنوان رشته‌ای مستقل و زایا است، لازم است به سه موضوع مرتبط بپردازد: اولاً، آموزش زبان انگلیسی باید مرزهای دانشی وقلمرو رشته‌ای خود را از سایر رشته‌های همجوار تغذیه کننده آن، مشخص نماید. ثانیاً، باید اصول هستی‌شناختی، بنیان‌های معرفت‌شناختی وابزارهای روش‌شناختی مورد استفاده در آموزش زبان انگلیسی که آن را از سایر رشته‌های مرتبط متمایز می‌سازد، به روشنی تبیین و تشریح گردند. ثالثاً، آموزش زبان انگلیسی باید قادر باشد با تمسک جستن به سرمایه‌ی فکری و یافته‌های علمی دیگر رشته‌ها، دانش جدید نظری و عملی منحصر به خود را تولید نماید. در این مقاله لزوم توجه بیش از پیش به تبیین و نظریه‌پردازی در زمینه‌ی آموزش زبان انگلیسی مورد تأکید قرار می‌گیرد.

واژگان کلیدی: آموزش زبان انگلیسی، رشته‌ی دانشگاهی مستقل، رشته‌ی دانشگاهی وابسته، مغالطه‌ی ضمیمه گرایی، مغالطه‌ی تقلیل گرایی

پایبندی عملی مدرسان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی به پسامتد و آموزش منتقدانه

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چکیده

تغییرات بنیادین و ایده‌های نوینی از طریق معرفی پسامتد و آموزش منتقدانه در حوزه آموزش زبان انگلیسی ایجاد گشته‌اند. پسامتد به عنوان جایگزینی برای متدها، در صدد دستیابی به اصول سه گانه اش بود: تخصیص، عملیت داشتن، و امکانپذیری. زیرشاخه معروف پسامتد، یعنی آموزش منتقدانه، در صدد قدرت بخشی به مدرسان و فراگیران، و ایجاد عدالت اجتماعی از طریق تعلیم و تربیت بود. برخلاف جنبه‌های نظری این جنبش‌ها، ابعاد عملی توجه لازم را دریافت ننموده اند، به خصوص در بافت‌های شرقی. تحقیق کیفی حاضر به بررسی میزان پایبندی عملی مدرسان زبان انگلیسی به اصول این مفاهیم ذاتا" غربی در ایران پرداخت، نمونه‌ای از بافت شرقی دارای معیارهای اجتماعی، فرهنگی، و آموزشی مختص به خود. از روش‌های کیفی گردآوری اطلاعات جهت جمع‌آوری داده‌ها از مدرسان موردنظر استفاده گردید. تحلیل کیفی اطلاعات، این یافته ها را به دست داد که پسامتد و آموزش منتقدانه به میزان قابل توجهی توسط مدرسان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی در عمل پذیرفته شده اند، و اصول مربوط به آنها مشتاقانه مورد استفاده قرار می‌گیرند. کمرنگ شدن مرزهای فرهنگی از طریق ارتباط قدرتمند با جوامع غربی، دلیل اصلی چنین پذیرش قابل توجهی تصور گشت. بر خلاف انتظار، ضعف قابل توجه مدرسان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی در حیطه دانش نظری پسامتد و آموزش منتقدانه آشکار گشت. به بیان دیگر، اگرچه کمرنگ شدن مرزهای فرهنگی زمینه را برای تحقق عملی این مفاهیم فراهم نموده است، جهت بهره‌گیری بهینه از پسامتد و آموزش منتقدانه، رشد دانش نظری در این راستا نیازمند توجه لازم در دوره‌های تربیت مدرسان زبان انگلیسی در ایران می‌باشد.

واژگان کلیدی: آموزش زبان انگلیسی، پسامتد، آموزش منتقدانه، مدرسان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی، پایبندی عملی

بررسی رابطه بین سرسختی و ممارست آکادمیک در بین زبان‌آموزان دبیرستانی ایران از منظر روانشناسی مثبت‌گرا و نظریه کنترل ارزش

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چکیده

درک نقش احساسات مثبت و تاثیرشان بر موفقیت تحصیلی و سلامت روان دانش‌آموزان از جمله مسائل حائز اهمیت تعلیم و تربیت است. بدین منظور، تحقیق پیش رو با تکیه بر اصول روانشناسی مثبت‌گرا و نظریه‌ی کنترل ارزش، سعی به تاباندن نور به سوی روابط میان سرسختی و ممارست آکادمیک زبان‌آموزان ایرانی داشت. از این جهت، ۲۶۳ دانش‌آموز متوسطه اول در تحقیق حاضر شرکت کردند و به پرسشنامه‌های پژوهش پاسخ دادند. نتایج حاصل از همبستگی، رگرسیون و آنالیز واریانس چندگانه نشان داد که سرسختی و ممارست تحصیلی زبان‌آموزان با یکدیگر ارتباط قوی و معناداری دارند و همچنین، شواهد نشان داد که میزان سرسختی دانش‌آموزان مذکر و مونث با یکدیگر تفاوت‌هایی دارد. نتایج این تحقیق می‌تواند نویدبخش این مسئله باشد که تمرکز روی سرسختی دانش‌آموزان می‌تواند عنصری مهم در هدایت آن‌ها به سمت کارآمدی بیشتر و بروز احساسات مثبت دیگری شده و آن‌ها را به سمت سلامت روان سوق دهد.

واژگان کلیدی: سرسختی زبان دوم، ممارست تحصیلی، روانشناسی مثبت‌گرا، نظریه کنترل ارزش، احساسات زبان دوم

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چکیده

پژوهش حاضر با هدف بررسی تأثیر گفتگوی مشارکتی ترکیب‌شده با آموزش زبان تمرین-محور در آموزش مهارت نوشتاری به زبان‌آموزان ایرانی زبان انگلیسی و بررسی نگرش معلمان آنها نسبت به چنین رویکردی انجام شد. با توجه به ماهیت سؤالات پژوهش، از طرح تحقیق ترکیبی متوالی توضیحی استفاده شد. برای این منظور، ۱۰۰ دانشجوی ایرانی کارشناسی آموزش زبان انگلیسی و مترجمی از نظر مهارت زبانی نسبتاً همگن از طریق برگزاری آزمون تعیین سطح آکسفورد (OPT) انتخاب شدند و ده معلم زبان انگلیسی زبان ایرانی در این مطالعه شرکت کردند. دانشجویان گروه آزمایش در معرض رویکرد ترکیبی آموزش نوشتن قرار گرفتند، در حالی که گروه کنترل آموزش معمول را در مرحله کمی مطالعه به مدت ۱۶ جلسه‌ی آموزشی تجربه کردند. در مرحله کیفی، یک مصاحبه انفرادی نیمه ساختاریافته با معلمان شرکت کننده انجام شد. مرحله کمی نشان داد که این روش ترکیبی تأثیرات نسبتاً معنی‌داری بر عملکرد نوشتاری زبان‌آموزان زبان انگلیسی دارد و مرحله کیفی نشان داد که معلمان دیدگاه‌های مثبتی را نسبت به اجرای رویکرد ترکیبی کاربردی به آموزش زبان تمرین-محور و گفتگوی مشارکتی در آموزش نوشتاری اتخاذ کردند. یافته‌ها برخی مفاهیم آموزشی را برای ذینفعان، از جمله طراحان برنامه درسی، زبان‌آموزان زبان انگلیسی، و معلمان ارائه می‌دهد تا گفتگوهای مشارکتی مبتنی بر تمرین را در آموزش زبان انگلیسی لحاظ کنند.

واژگان کلیدی: گفتگوی مشارکتی، آموزش زبان تمرین محور، مهارت نوشتن

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چکیده

علیرغم تحقیقات فراوان در مورد آموزش معلمان زبان، کمبود پرسشنامه با رویکرد اکولوژیک برای سنجش عاملیت معلمان وجود دارد. به همین منظور، این پژوهش با طراحی و اعتبارسنجی پرسشنامه‌ای برای سنجش عاملیت دانشجو معلمان بر آن است تا این شکاف را پر کند. سیزده جنبه شناسایی و توسعه یافتند، از جمله باورهای آموزشی، باورهای حمایتی، یادگیری مشارکتی و شایستگی، که نشان‌دهنده بعد گذشته است. بعد عملی-ارزیابی با فرصت برای انتخاب، فرصت برای نفوذ، حمایت، برابری، اعتماد، زمینه‌نهادی و جامعه حرفه‌ای نشان داده می‌شود. اهداف بلند مدت و کوتاه مدت بعد تصویری را آشکار می‌کنند. یک پرسشنامه ۲۲ سوالی در مقیاس لیکرت ۷ درجه‌ای تهیه و اجرا شد. در مجموع، ۲۱۰ دانشجو معلم زبان انگلیسی از چهار واحد دانشگاه فرهنگیان به روش نمونه‌گیری در دسترس در مطالعه شرکت کردند. تحلیل معادلات ساختاری (SEM) از طریق AMOS 22 برای بررسی اعتبار مدل نظری استفاده شد. در انجام این کار، یک تحلیل عاملی اکتشافی (EFA) و یک تحلیل عاملی تاییدی (CFA) اجرا شد و چارچوب اکولوژیکی عاملیت دانشجو معلمان تایید شد. نتایج نشان داد که پرسشنامه برازش قابل قبولی با مجموعه تجربی داده‌ها دارد، که نشان می‌دهد این مقیاس پتانسیل مفیدی برای ارزیابی عاملیت دانشجو معلمان و افزایش آگاهی آنها از ساختار عاملیت دارد. این مطالعه دلالت‌هایی برای سیاستگذاران در مورد اینکه چگونه رویکرد اکولوژیکی آموزش حرفه‌ای ممکن است بر رویه‌ها، اقدامات و فرآیندهای تصمیم‌گیری معلمان تأثیر بگذارد، دارد.

واژگان کلیدی: عاملیت معلم، دانشجو معلم، مدل اکولوژیک، دانشگاه فرهنگیان، بدو خدمت

مهارت‌های میان‌فردی در شکل‌گیری توانش ترجمه: ارائهٔ یک مدل

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چکیده

بازار پویا و در حال دگرگونی کار در عصر حاضر به شدت تحت تأثیر توسعهٔ مداوم در بخش فناوری‌های نوین، مسألهٔ جهانی‌سازی، ماهیت رو به تغییر اقتصاد و تقاضاهای نو از نیروی کار است. در چنین بافتاری، توقع می‌رود دانش‌آموختگان دانشگاهی با برخورداری از انعطاف و پویایی لازم، بتوانند در قبال شرایط نوین و در حال تغییرات شتابان در عرصهٔ بازار کار، دگرگونی‌های شکل‌گرفته در مشاغل و نیز مقتضیات جوامع قرن بیستم سازگاری مناسبی از خود به نمایش بگذارند. در چنین شرایطی، دانشگاه‌ها ناگزیرند تا به نگرانی‌های مستخدمین در خصوص انقطاعی که بین آموزش‌های ارائه شده به دانشجویان و عرصه‌های عملی کار مشاهده می‌شود، به نحو شایسته‌ای پاسخ دهند؛ چراکه می‌رود تصور دانشجویان بدون کسب آمادگی‌های مورد نظر محیط‌های کار در عصر حاضر وارد عرصه‌های کاری می‌شوند بدون آنکه دانش و مهارت‌های آنها با نیازمندی‌های کاربردی محیط کار همخوانی داشته باشد. حوزهٔ مطالعات زبان نیز از این موضوع مستثنی نیست. انتظار می‌رود در آتیه‌ای نزدیک مترجمین با موقعیتی متفاوت و وظایفی متنوع مواجه باشند که مستلزم برخورداری آنان از شایستگی‌ها و مهارت‌های گوناگون است. مترجم ناگزیر است ضمن تعامل با سایر متخصصین یا مشارکت‌کنندگان در فرآیند ترجمه به عنوان بازیگری مسلط به استفاده از فناوری نوین به کار گروهی بپردازد. مقالهٔ حاضر به نقش مهارت‌های میان‌فردی در شکل‌گیری توانش ترجمه می‌پردازد. در بخش اول، کلیدواژگانی همچون دانش، مهارت و مهارت‌های میان‌فردی تبیین می‌گردد. در بخش دوم، به ارائهٔ مدلی آموزشی برای ترجمهٔ تخصصی پرداخته می‌شود. این مدل پایش چگونگی توسعهٔ مهارت‌های میان‌فردی را امکان‌پذیر می‌سازد که خود نمایانگر نوعی تغییر نگرش در رابطهٔ متقابل بین مدرس و فراگیر است.

واژگان کلیدی: شایستگی‌ها، ابزارهای یارانه‌ای ترجمه، مهارت‌های میان‌فردی، مدل آموزشی برای ترجمهٔ تخصصی، مهارت‌های قابل انتقال

رویارویی با امر واقع نشانه‌شناسی سایبر در کتاب‌های آلیس

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چکیده

هدف اصلی مقاله حاضر بررسی سه امر لاکانی در دو کتاب «آلیس» لوییس کارول در چارچوب نشانه‌شناسی سایبر است. نشانه‌شناسی سایبر (cybersemiotics) یک حوزه و چارچوب میان‌رشته‌ای برای مطالعه نشانه‌ها و نحوه کدگذاری تغییرات محیطی در سیستم‌های خودنوگر (autopoietic) است که توسط سورن بریر (Søren Brier)، نشانه‌شناس معاصر دانمارکی، پایه‌گذاری شده است. بررسی سه امر لاکانی خیالی، نماده و واقع (The Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real) در چارچوب نشانه‌شناسی سایبر موید این موضوع است که واقعیت زیسته یک ارگانیسم، در حقیقت، یک نسخه برساخته و نمادینه شده از امر واقعی است که کدگذاری آن میسر نبوده است. با این حال عناصر و نشانه‌هایی همچون ناممکن‌ها، بی‌معنایی‌ها، و پارادوکس‌ها در آثار ادبی خلاقانه از جمله دو کتاب «آلیس» وجود دارد که امکان بررسی هر سه امر لاکانی را به صورت تنیده در متن فراهم می‌آورد. برای بررسی فرصت‌های نادر رمزگشایی از امر واقع در میان کدهای زبانی به چارچوب نظری نیاز داریم که بتواند نشانه شناسی، علوم شناختی، و زبان شناسی را با تکیه بر جدیدترین یافته‌های فناوری و تأثیر آن بر پدیده‌های فرهنگی و روانشناختی با یکدیگر ترکیب کند. چنین چارچوب نظری در نشانه‌شناسی سایبر توسط Soren Brier و همکارانش در کتاب Cybersemiotics: Why Informantion Is Not Enough و ژورنال Cybernetics & Human Knowing تشریح شده است. مطالعه سه امر لاکانی در بستر بی‌معنایی در کتاب‌های آلیس در چارچوب نشانه‌شناسی سایبر بیش از پیش بر اهمیت نشانه‌ها و کدهای ورودی از محیط در شکل‌گیری جهان‌بینی جمعی و فردی صحه می‌گذارد.

واژگان کلیدی: نشانه‌شناسی سایبر، امر واقع، لاکان، بی‌معنایی

رمان زوال جمعی: هویت‌های پیش ساخته، خلأ معنوی و زندگی طرد شده در «عصر یخبندان» اثر مارگارت درابل

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چکیده

دوره انتقالی بریتانیا در دهه ۱۹۷۰ که در رمان مارگارت درابل، «عصر یخبندان» (۱۹۷۷)، به تصویر کشیده می‌شود، زمینه را برای بحث نظری مقاله حاضر فراهم می‌کند که بر اساس بینش‌های جورجیو آگامبن است. این تحقیق، نحوه تفسیر درابل از موضوعات سیاسی-اجتماعی غالب در دهه ۱۹۷۰ و نحوه تاثیرگذاری این موضوعات بر او را بررسی خواهد کرد. همچنین با در نظر گرفتن شخصیت‌های طرد شده در رمان، بینش‌های زیست‌سیاسی آگامبن بررسی می‌شود تا روشن سازد این بینش‌ها چگونه می‌توانند به درک تاریک جنبه حاکمیت و توانایی تبدیل دموکراسی‌ها به حاکمیت‌های توتالیتر نائل شوند. این مقاله، با در نظر گرفتن بی‌ثباتی موقعیت‌های عاطفی، سیاسی و هستی‌شناختی «عشق»، «هومو ساسر» و «زندگی برهنه» که توسط حاکمیت به انسان اختصاص داده شده است، نگاه متفاوتی از دیدگاه درابل درباره عشق و مشکلات اجتماعی-سیاسی ارائه می‌کند. مقاله همچنین از طریق ویژگی‌های چشمگیر گفتمان آگامبن، به بررسی زندگی برهنه می‌پردازد و آن را به مفاهیمی چون ابزارگرایی، کار، برده‌داری و زندگی پیوند می‌دهد و اساسا نوعی خودآگاهی در نگاه سیاسی را ارائه می‌دهد و به بررسی برخی پتانسیل‌هایی می‌پردازد که ممکن است به افراد کمک کند تا از بن‌بست‌های غالب دوران دور شوند. تحقیق در نهایت نشان می‌دهد که این پتانسیل‌ها، که به گفته آگامبن ممکن است به شکلی از زندگی منجر شود که زندگی شاد نامیده می‌شود، به طرد و خلأ معنوی افراد منتهی می‌شود.

واژگان کلیدی: عشق آگامبنی، هرآنچه هستی، هومو ساکر، زندگی برهنه، شکل زندگی

مطالعه‌ای درباره هنر اغوا در نمایشنامه ریچارد سوم: تحلیلی بر شبیه‌سازی استادانه شکسپیر از دیدگاه بودریار

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چکیده

وقتی واقعیت نمی‌تواند بر محور خود استوار باشد، ممکن است وانموده‌ها جایگزین آن شوند، توهماتی که در گذر زمان انسان را در آنچه ژان بودریار دنیای «فراواقع» می‌نامد، گرفتار می‌کند، دنیایی که فرار از آن عمدتاً غیرممکن است. زمانی که انسان از حس واقعیت تهی شود، به سوی نابودی خود اغوا می‌شود. حرکت شخصیت ریچارد سوم در نمایشنامه‌ای به همین نام از ویلیام شکسپیر به سمت اوج قدرت از هنر وانمودگی او می‌گذرد تا به آنچه در زندگی واقعی نمی‌تواند داشته باشد دست یابد. مهارت‌های بازیگری ریچارد در تظاهر به بی‌گناهی، همزمان با پنهان کردن شرارت خود، فن سخنوری متقاعدکننده‌اش در رفع سوء ظن دیگران، و قتل‌های متعددی که به سمت قدرت انجام می‌دهد او را در هزارتویی فراواقعی گرفتار می‌کند که به تعبیر بودریار هیچ گریزی از آن ممکن نیست. ریچارد سوم در جنگ قدرتی سرگیجه‌آور اغوا می‌شود که او را به ویرانی خویش می‌کشاند. در این راستا، این مقاله تلاش دارد شخصیت ریچارد سوم را در پرتو نظریات بودریار و چگونگی ارائه مفاهیم وانمودگی و اغواگری مورد بررسی قرار دهد تا توضیح دهد که چگونه ضدقهرمان شکسپیر قربانی حلقه‌ای خودساخته از اغوا و فراواقعیت می‌شود که منجر به سقوط او می‌گردد.

واژگان کلیدی: اغواگری، بودریار، ریچارد سوم، شبیه‌سازی، شکسپیر

ما نیازمند افق‌های نو هستیم: در جستجوی گزینه‌هایی جهت سه‌سویه‌سازی مطالعات گفتمان‌های آکادمیک

داود کوهی

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چکیده

مقاله حاضر بر این استدلال تاکید می‌ورزد که ایجاد الگوهای جامع و کارآمد تحلیل گفتمان‌های آکادمیک صرفا از طریق توسعه نظریه‌های گفتمان محور ممکن نیست و برای حصول به چنین چهارچوبی باید میان حوزه پژوهش گفتمان‌های آکادمیک و حوزه گسترده‌تر پژوهش در زبانشناسی کاربردی تعامل بیشتری صورت گیرد. به نظر محقق، این مکالمه مفهومی بین دو حوزه مذکور با تاکید بر مفهوم سه‌سویه‌سازی میسر خواهد شد. هر چند مفهوم سه‌سویه‌سازی در مطالعات زبانشناسی کاربردی به عنوان رهیافتی پژوهشی برای ایجاد امکان نگاهی چند بعدی به پدیده‌ها مورد توجه قرار گرفته است، اما مولف بر این عقیده است که مفهوم مذکور نیازمند تعریف و عملیاتی‌سازی دوباره در محیط مطالعات تحلیل گفتمان آکادمیک می‌باشد. از این رو تلاش می‌شود محصول این بازتعریف و عملیاتی‌سازی در قالب الگویی اولیه ارائه شود. به اعتقاد مولف، این الگو در صورت توجه به ویژگی‌های ناظر بر واقعیت‌های ارتباطات آکادمیک می‌تواند زوایای جدیدی برای کشف ابعاد پیچیده گفتمان‌های آکادمیک فراهم سازد.

واژگان کلیدی: گفتمان آکادمیک، تحلیل گفتمان آکادمیک، زبانشناسی کاربردی، رهیافت پژوهشی، سه‌سویه‌سازی