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## USING CLIL METHOD IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The present research examined the effect of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) on second language (L2) learners at the intermediate level. The design of the study was quasi-experimental with a pre and post-test research method. Seventy learners were selected from the research population of 90 first year students at the University of Ahvaz. They took Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) and seventy learners who met the band score were selected and divided in two equal experimental and control groups through non-random sampling method. A teacher-made pre-test was given to the participants to assess their vocabulary knowledge at the beginning of the study. Both groups studied *Select readings: Intermediate* (Lee, 2011). The experimental group follow CLIL method (i.e., vocabulary function, contextual clues, content, and vocabulary structures) while the control group studied the units through traditional method of learning vocabulary (i. e., vocabulary definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and word explanations). After 14 sessions of treatment in both classes, the post-test which was a modified pre-test was given to the participants. Data were analyzed through Independent Sample t-test. Results revealed that those students who were taught vocabulary through CLIL method outperformed the control group significantly. Implications of the study suggest that the L2 teachers should teach both forms and functions of the vocabulary in the context.

**Key Words:** CLIL, vocabulary, intermediate level, content, language

### 1. Introduction

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) was initiated in Europe in 1994 (Mehisto (2012). Ortiz (2014) stated that this method is against the outcomes of grammar or form-focused language teaching. It also gained the strength by theories about natural language learning, an alternative method for language teaching which was created in the 1960s (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989).

According to Mearns (2012), the forces of global change, converging technologies and adaptability to the subsequent knowledge to achieve new educational methods for the teaching and learning of foreign languages. This is true for the learning of English globally, and for the learning of regional, minority and heritage languages in different parts of the world. First, the change brought about by the new technologies and lifestyle change concerns the learners' mindset. Second, exposure to new technology at a very young age in the form of game tools and devices like mobiles, tablets, personal computers and the Internet can make an atmosphere in which the young people find new teaching sources. Thus new generation may be harder for older generations to adapt, having been brought up with different thinking conventions. The acceleration of new technology is having an impact on the lives and aspirations of many people,

therefore, better access to language learning, and learning methods for accelerating performance, are now crucial in many communities.

Following Ortiz's (2014) research, this empirical study aims to investigate the effect of CLIL programs on students' reading improvement and finds out if there is a difference between the improvement of learners who are involved in CLIL programs through their learning process and those who are not involved in CLIL programs. This study tries to present a new method to teach a foreign language more effectively. Therefore, the result can be applied by teachers, administrators, researchers, curriculum developers and test makers.

### **1.1. Using CLIL in Teaching Vocabulary**

CLIL can be used in different areas of teaching including vocabulary comprehension since vocabulary is the common core of dealing with other language teaching skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. Thus CLIL means teaching through visuals and activities, presenting stories and teaching through fun and games. The tasks include information gap activity (Prabhu, 1987), reasoning-gap activity (Prabhu, 1987) and opinion-gap activity (Ellis, 2003). Accordingly, assessment should incorporate assessment of language competences and assessment of content knowledge and thus account for the goals and objectives of two different matters such as background knowledge of the learners for dealing with both language and content. Therefore, assessment task should be devised to help learners to show both the content and language they have learned.

### **1.2. Significance of the Study**

Vocabulary learning functions as a cornerstone without which no language could exist. Learning a language would be meaningless and perhaps impossible through having structures without vocabulary. Thus the learners' knowledge of lexicon is important in any learning processes. The main reason is that the lexicon is an element of any language skills that carry meanings. In other words, the language learners need to understand and express the language meanings of the content. For several reasons, they help students remember the words better and they help the teacher to make the lesson more interesting and beneficial.

The need for vocabulary learning on the part of the students is something upon which both students and teachers agree. The problem is not with the importance of vocabulary but the ways or techniques through which students can better learn, retain and retrieve vocabularies. Students know what to learn, but they imply do not know how to learn it. Consequently; it is essential for language learners to have a variety of vocabulary learning strategies at their disposal to choose the ones which are more effective for them. This study would guide English as foreign language (EFL) learners, trying to develop their vocabulary recall in general and use the pictorial based method on vocabulary learning in particular, to arrive at the importance of using the memory strategies on improving vocabulary recall. Therefore, it would prove the pedagogical value of using CLIL method and lead EFL instructors to help and guide their students in selection of the right vocabulary in language skills to enhance language abilities.

In short, this study would guide Iranian junior high school students and 12 to 14 years old who are trying to improve their vocabulary size. Therefore, it would prove the pedagogical values of using CLIL method which enables the teachers to provide their students with sufficient input. The research question is: Does CLIL affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary achievement?

## **2. Literature Review**

In CLIL, the content or subject matter is at the heart of what is taught and it is the content that determines what thinking skills, what language and what aspects of culture the teacher aims to teach. Valdivia (2012) believes that in teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on the content, but also on the language. Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one

or the other at a given time. CLIL is an educational approach which satisfies both educational and contextual demands. Although it concerns about all four skills, its most emphasis is on receptive skills (i.e., listening and reading) since they provide learners with necessary input which enables them to present productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing). As a matter of fact with CLIL, learning the content and learning the language are equally important curriculum subjects for the students, and are developed and integrated slowly but steadily. In the long run, students learn the content and the new language in formal settings that make them ready to use the language in informal and natural situations (Montalto, Walter, Theodorou, & Chrysanthou, 2015).

Production, considered by Muñoz (2007) as the last essential component and output of learning, and was defended by Swan and Lapkin (1995) through their Output hypothesis. According to them, a teaching methodology which only provides input and does not demand production from the learners is weak. Apart from giving the learners ample opportunities by making the input more understandable, learners need opportunities to practice the target language with different purposes and aims at their level of language competence. Muñoz (2007) stated that output gives the learners two main benefits. On the one hand, in context of formal learning, it gives the learners the possibility of choosing the most appropriate and the most accurate form and on the other hand, it makes the learners aware of their errors and motivates correction.

According to Pavesi, Bertocchi, Hofmannová, and Kazianka (2001), CLIL is based on sound theoretical bases. The main language learning assumptions of CLIL concern quantity and quality of exposure to the foreign language as well as increased motivation to learn. Regarding need of exposure, the language teachers should consider exposure as a natural language learning strategy in the achievement of a good amount of vocabulary. Regarding quality of exposure, CLIL not only offers better learning conditions in terms of more exposure to the foreign language, but also offers a good quality of linguistic exposure. Regarding motivation, CLIL relies on intrinsic motivation, that is, the learners are involved in interesting and meaningful vocabulary activities (i.e. vocabularies in use) while using the language. Moreover, its features, CLIL entails several core features including multiple focus, safe and enriching learning environment, authenticity, active learning, scaffolding and cooperation (Mehisto, 2012).

A wide range of resources in CLIL (i.e., posters, flashcards, dictionaries, visual or graphic organizers, etc.) can be provided through Internet, can greatly contribute to making the subject content comprehensible (Muñoz, 2014). One of the key concepts for selecting materials is multi-modal input which is various ways of presenting subject specific matters visually (i.e., through maps, diagrams, etc.) and they not only allow for diversified teaching and promote visual literacy, but also enable a deeper understanding of the specific subject content and serve to illustrate and clarify complex matters presented in a foreign language (Muñoz, 2014).

### **2.1. Learning Vocabulary**

Research on vocabulary in recent years has done a great deal to clarify the proficiency level the learners in using the vocabularies needed to achieve in order to comprehend the reading passages. Thus they need to process different kinds of oral and written texts, as well as the kinds of strategies learners use in understanding, using, and remembering words. Accordingly, teaching vocabulary may involve saying the word clearly and write it on the board, and then ask the learners to do several classroom activities (i.e., group and individual activities including repetition, translation, drawing, question and answer, definitions, dramatization, etc.). Vocabulary can be presented, explained, and included in all kinds of activities, but it must be learned by the individual. Therefore, language teachers must motivate the teachers to study sources of the words and develop their vocabulary knowledge. They also must help their students by giving those ideas on how to learn vocabulary and some guidance on what to learn. So the position of appropriate context, in relation to the problem needs to be specified in a way

that Iranian EFL learners bring that strategy to their vocabulary tasks. Unfortunately, such awareness of the role of these strategies in prompting vocabulary knowledge has been ignored since the understanding of the new vocabularies has only been limited of looking up their definitions in the dictionaries.

Iranian EFL learners may learn different target words to build up their lexicon and become familiar with different phrases characteristics used in the texts. They also do some more practice in vocabulary in order to improve their comprehension and finally apply what they have learned in prompting their vocabulary recall. However, when it comes, to real comprehension of the context and then putting the vocabulary to recall and retention, majority of them fail. The use of proper strategy by learners with the aid of teachers in developing vocabulary recall is considerable importance. So the strategies should be explained by the teachers to make the students understand of their use and to extend those strategies to other similar occasions (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Thus teaching vocabulary involves in providing the EFL learners with the context clues and structural elements such as grammatical points to form the coherent passage. This can make and create a mental image of the vocabulary. The students need to find out the ways to set about words to their vocabulary and also know the meanings of words. The words students encounter are of different types. Some words are used every day (i.e., active vocabulary) and some are used in specific situations (i.e., passive vocabulary). The easiest way to increase one's vocabulary is to recognize new things and about new experiences. The context clues often lead to the meaning of unfamiliar words. It would be helpful to refer to dictionary when the context clues do not provide clues to the meaning of the words. She also emphasizes the importance of recognizing the word elements which include: prefixes, suffixes, roots synonyms and antonyms.

A number of attempts (e.g., Coyle, 2007; Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2007; Gefall, 2009; Krashen, 1985; Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Stoller, 2004; Van de Craen & Mondt, 2003; Wolff, 2007; Xanthou, 2010) have been made to develop the ideas on vocabulary learning strategies, mostly as part of a piece of research into learners strategy use. Thus different processes are necessary for working out a new word's meanings and usages, and for consolidating it in memory for future uses. Some English teachers in Taiwan encourage students to increase their vocabulary through extensive reading, or even suggest rote memory of words in the dictionary as a means. All these approaches may fit certain number of students, but when dealing a large number of words or the timeliness of learning them, the effective principles suggested by learning psychology can be useful (Thornbury, 2004)

Merikivi and Paivi (2014) did their research about teaching vocabulary through CLIL in Finland, found out that CLIL environments would require the students to produce the second language more frequently and further lexical activation. It was revealed that learners in CLIL invested more effort into acquiring vocabulary in general. They concluded that the CLIL environment seemed to be more conducive to word acquisition, especially the development of active vocabulary, than the traditional language learning classroom (Fernandez & Halbach, 2011).

Zurek (2012) in the Czech Republic used CLIL to teach mathematics to students of 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade and found out that learners who are taught through CLIL are more successful in learning mathematics than others. Xanthou (2010) used this method to teach vocabulary and found out that CLIL provides opportunities for deep vocabulary learning strengthening the relationship between the semantic and syntactic form of a word and its morph-phonological form. More specifically, CLIL activated students' prior knowledge, and provide students with opportunities to learn vocabulary in context. Therefore, she concluded that learning content through the medium of the L2 may offer constant opportunities for activating background knowledge, learning L2 vocabulary in context, promoting active processing of new words, recalling target words, being provided with repeated exposures to target words offering incremental learning, and effective L2 vocabulary acquisition (Aldaz, 2013; Korpela, 2013).



Divljan (2012) also used CLIL to teach music songs, chants and rhymes are popular in EFL classroom as a source of authentic language and as appropriate way of drilling vocabulary and structures. Vocabularies related to musical instruments are a part of many learners' courses. The results showed that drawing interesting symbols above the lines and lyrics of song the makes students very interested and motivated in learning music (Ribé, 2000). Accordingly, the studies (e.g., Ringbom, 2012; Sierra, 2011) gave evidence that exposure to a meaningful and comprehensible language enhances vocabulary knowledge. He concluded that if the language is authentic, rich in content, enjoyable, and, above all, comprehensible, then learning is more successful. Therefore, CLIL can enhance vocabulary learning through encountering the target words in contexts and related information in the text as contextual clues within the content develops the learners' vocabulary domain.

Rott (1999) examined the effect of exposure frequency on intermediate learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition. Results showed that the exposures produced significantly more vocabulary knowledge. CLIL allows dealing with a particular topic for a sustained period of time providing recurring exposure to new vocabulary through clarifications, justifications, etc. with possible positive outcomes. Munoz (2014) studied the development of oral skills in undergraduate students and one of their findings were that a higher confidence in one's own oral skills encouraged the students to use a more varied vocabulary, to speak more and to take more risk in terms of word use and formulations (Romova & Neville-Barton, 2007).

## **2.2. Statement of the Problem**

Iranian English teachers have experienced that vocabulary learning ability is one of the major concerns of Iranian EFL learners. Most students have difficulty in learning vocabulary. Teacher, in broad sense, is responsible to manipulate appropriate methods of teaching English vocabulary to Iranian learners; however, there are a few works have been done in relation to learning and teaching vocabulary through CLIL in Iranian context. Yet, there are still questions that have remained untapped such as how to teach vocabulary effectively and how to make students learn vocabulary in short period of time. Considering the system of education in Iran, it is suggested that the problem of vocabulary learning should receive due attention even before the students enter the university, i.e. when they are at guidance and high school levels. Despite the fact that significant studies have been done concerning vocabulary a gap was perceived in the existing literature which has motivated the researcher to fill in this gap. This study is exclusively concerned with the investigation of the effect of CLIL method Iranian EFL learner's vocabulary ability. Therefore, it seems necessary to help learners with the use of the proper strategy in developing their learning in a way that they recall the meaning of a word via one strategy. Both academic and non-academic, this would be possible through the use of pictures for teaching vocabulary.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Participants**

The research population included 90 first year university students who passed Reading Comprehension I at the Islamic University of Abadan. Their age was ranging between 18 and 50 years old. They enrolled in mixed gender classes and studied Reading II in three classes. They took Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) which helped the researchers to recognize the level of learners' proficiency. It included 60 items and the time allocated to this test was 60 minutes. The students who took between 30 and 47 out of 60 are classified into intermediate determine their level of proficiency. Seventy learners whose scores were between 30 and 47 were selected as the intermediate learners. Then they were non-randomly divided into two equal experimental and control groups through convenience sampling method.

### **3.2. Instrumentation**

To accomplish the objective of the present study, the following instruments were employed:

A placement test: Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was used as a placement test to determine the participants' level. Its reliability was reported in some sources since it has been considered as a standard test.

The pretest and post-test: The pre-test included items extracted from the participants' text book "*Select readings: Intermediate*" developed by Lee (2011). The pre-test was designed based on 12 units covered in the treatment sessions. The pre-test included 50 multiple-choice items and it focused on vocabulary recognition and production items. The test was taken to evaluate student's ability in vocabulary recognition at the beginning of the research period. The reliability of the test was tested on a small sample of students other than the participants to calculate the reliability index based on KR-21 method as ( $r=.794$ ). The validity of the pre-test was met through examining of two experts in teaching EFL who confirmed its content validity. The post-test was a modified pre-test with the same content but different form to avoid the learners' reminding. Its content validity and reliability were met again. The reliability of the post-test was met as ( $r=.801$ ).

### 3.3. Materials

Text book "*Select readings: Intermediate*" developed by Lee (2011) was used as the materials of the study. The classes were held 12 sessions and the participants review a unit of the book in each session. The first session was devoted to the pre-test, 12 sessions were devoted to treatment, and the last session was devoted to the post- test. Reading texts were based on social and scientific issues.

### 3.4. Procedure

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was used at the beginning of the study to assess the learners' proficiency level in order to have homogeneous intermediate learners. Thus 70 learners out of 90 first year learners who achieved the OQPT band score were selected as the participants of the study in the Azad University of Abadan. Then they were non-randomly divided in two experimental and control groups. Their age was ranging between 18 and 50 years old. They enrolled in mixed gender classes and studied Reading II in three intact classes. They took a re-test of vocabulary achievement designed based on their reading II text book "*Select readings: Intermediate*" developed by Lee (2011) including 12 units which were covered in 12 weeks. Two weeks were also allocated to the pre and post-test. The treatment sessions included the use of CLIL method in the experimental group and the traditional vocabulary teaching in the control one. Both groups had the same materials and time but they have two different class procedures. The experimental group dealt with CLIL method. The learners read the texts and the teacher explain the content of the study. Then the vocabularies of the texts were clarified in student-student and teacher-student interaction. The techniques in teaching vocabulary included teaching vocabulary function, contextual clues, content of the text, and vocabulary structures. The control group studied the units through traditional method of learning vocabulary. The main activities included vocabulary definitions, synonyms, antonyms, word explanations or even first language (L1) translation. After 12 sessions of treatment in both classes, the post-test which was a modified pre-test was given to the participants. In sum, two sessions were held to give the pre and post-test and 12 sessions for treatment. Each week, there were two sessions and each session lasted 90 minutes. At the end of the treatment, the participants took a post-test and data were collected. The data were analyzed through Independent Sample t-test to observe any significant difference between the pre and post-tests.

## 4. Results

The obtained results of groups in high levels were compared through Independent Samples *t*-test. The descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test in both groups are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	35	15.0571	11.78220	1.99155
Control	35	16.0857	9.95097	1.68202

Table 1 indicates that the difference between two groups was not significant. To find out whether the difference among the performances of the two groups was statistically significant, an Independent Samples *t*-test was applied. Table 2 displays the results.

*Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test (Pre-test)*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.084	.773	-.395	68	.694	-1.028	2.606	-6.230	4.173
Equal variances not assumed			-.395	66.1	.694	-1.028	2.606	-6.233	4.175

Table 2 shows that the observed *t* (.395) is less than the critical *t* (1.671) with *df*=68. Thus the difference between the groups is not significant in the post-test ( $p < 0.05$ ). Data analysis of the post-test is presented in Table 3.

*Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	35	29.8000	16.10955	2.72301
Control	35	21.0000	13.55381	2.29101

Table 3 shows the results of descriptive statistics on the post-test which indicates that the difference between two groups. An Independent Samples *t*-test was run to see any significant difference between the two groups in the post-test. Table 4 presents the results.

*Table 4. Independent Samples t-Test (Post-test)*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed									
Equal variances not assumed									

	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	5.61	.021	2.473	68	.016	8.800	3.558	1.69	15.90
Equal variances not assumed			2.473	66.0	.016	8.800	3.558	1.69	15.90

Table 4 shows that the observed *t* (2.473) is greater than the critical *t* (1.671) with *df*=68. Thus the difference between the groups is significant in the post-test.

## 5. Discussion

To discuss the results of the study, the research question raised above will be referred to as follows: Does CLIL affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary achievement?

The main reason that the learners who were involved a CLIL program achieved better results in terms of reading vocabulary achievement may be the fact that CLIL students are much more exposed to content-based activities than the control group. In this case, texts which are covered through CLIL method may be mostly based on context clues resources. This result agrees with Wolf (2007) who notes that the underlying rationale is that input and particularly, comprehensible input has a lot of importance in CLIL sessions, especially oral and written input. Thus regarding Dalton-Puffer (2008), providing the learners with comprehensible input can be fruitful to vocabulary achievement since the learners can learn the language more naturally in the classroom. This is supported by Coyle (2006) who cites that another reason is that CLIL lessons promote cognition and thinking processes, which means that CLIL pupils can link better concept formation, understanding and language. The results of the study also agrees with Peeck (1993) who supports the use of CLIL method in providing the learners with images to increase the learners' motivation and cognitive processing of the text content in order to arrive at the reading comprehension. Following Peek (1993), CLIL, which teaches reading through enriched texts including pictures, make reading texts more concrete and tangible for students, facilitates acquiring reading skill and accelerates learning a new subject. Therefore, teaching reading through images and pictures can: (1) facilitate, accelerate and strengthen the perception, comprehension and long retention of lexicon in the texts, (2) facilitate reciting, paraphrasing and answering the questions, (3) activate learners' background knowledge, and (4) enhance students' motivation and interest.

The results of this research are in agreement with Ortiz (2014). She taught reading through CLIL in Catalonia (Spain) and concluded that CLIL has a positive effect on the learners' reading skills, since the results obtained by the CLIL learners in reading comprehension tests were better than the ones obtained by the students who were not involved in CLIL program. So the data confirmed and supported her hypothesis that CLIL students would perform better in the reading tests.

The findings of this research are in line with Merikivi and Paivi (2014) who concluded that the CLIL approach brings positive effects to the students, both in terms of motivation and in terms of language development. They also agree that students in the CLIL setting were more motivated than the control group, but also mentioned that other factors such as socio-cultural background and gender, had special effects on the results of the study. However, there are several scholars (e.g., Swain, 1996) who state that comprehension-based classrooms do not pose ideal environments for language learning, despite providing much comprehensible input and conditions which allow for a low affective filter, since the teachers focused solely on meaning. Furthermore, the findings of this study are against Mearns (2011) who reported during a six

week long CLIL survey, the opposite direction was performed. One of the observations regarding confidence and achievement was that, although language development was high in the more able students during the study, the students reported lack of confidence in language use. Possibly this lack of confidence was due to the relatively short time frame and the fact that this was an entirely new situation for the students. The students with lower language proficiency did not improve their academic results over the test period.

## 6. Conclusion

The results of the study showed that the experimental group who used CLIL method in the classroom outperformed the control group at the significant level. Data analysis revealed a significant difference between the two groups in the post-test comparing with the pre-test. The experimental group achieved high level of vocabulary in the post-test. This indicates the role of CLIL method in the learners' performance in a significant manner. Research on second language acquisition can be interpreted to show that a well-balanced language course should contain four major strands: meaning focused input, meaning-focused output, fluency development and language-focused instruction. The inclusion of a language-focused instruction strand is not reaction to communicative approaches but is the result of research findings that courses that contain such a strand are likely to achieve better results than courses that do not contain such a strand (Ellis, 1990).

In learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role. It is impossible to learn a language without learning the vocabulary of that language. Therefore, vocabulary affects the four skills of language (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Allen, 1983). In order to communicate successfully in a foreign language, students should have a good command of vocabulary and also know how to use them accurately (Chastain, 1988). According to the researchers (e.g., Nunan, 1999), vocabulary learning strategies facilitate the acquisition of new lexis in the second foreign language as they aid in discovering the meaning of a new word and in consolidating a word once it has been encountered. Vocabulary learning may be effectively gained through presentation, explanation in formal settings or acquired by individuals in informal settings such as street talks, social interactions and mass media including TV broad casting, newspapers, journals, magazines and publications. Thus students are significantly dependent upon their vocabulary size in their academic studies of their second language vocabularies (Celce-Murcia, 2001). The implications of the study could be useful for EFL teachers and learners who deal with vocabulary learning. Since vocabulary is supposed to be the backbone of learning English language, the expansion of vocabulary domain can significantly affect other skills and sub-skills of language in the context and following CLIL activities can promote vocabulary language learning. Focusing on the content of materials and perform exercises on the real situation can be fruitful too. The main goal of CLIL may be to provide the learners with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) and help them to arrive at student-student or teacher-student interaction in the classrooms.

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# THE ROLE OF MIND MAPPING SOFTWARE TECHNIQUES IN DEVELOPING LEARNERS' VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT AT THE PRE- UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of mind mapping strategy on English as foreign language (EFL) pre-intermediate students to developing their vocabulary achievement. The study was conducted in a pre-university center in Masjedsoleyman, Iran. Seventy (EFL) learners were selected through non-random convenience sampling method in two intact classes. The participants studied English as a foreign language (EFL). They were assigned into two groups of experimental and control. The experimental group received instruction on how to use mind mapping techniques extracted from mind mapping software in learning vocabulary (i.e., [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)) while the control group received vocabulary instruction through definitions, explanation, and doing the text book exercises. The sessions lasted for 14 sessions- each took 90 minutes- in a whole semester. The participants covered 12 reading passages included the new vocabularies at the pre-university level. At the end of the treatment sessions, a vocabulary post-test was designed based on the modified pre-test and was given to the participants. Data were collected and analyzed through Paired and Independent Samples t-test. Results revealed there are significant differences between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group rather than the control one. The difference was also significant between the post-test of the two groups since the experimental group outperformed the control one. The implications of the study may be fruitful for the EFL teachers to find new and effective techniques and computer software for teaching vocabulary. The software of mapping can enhance the learners' cognitive awareness on the relationships between the vocabularies in a passage through various charts clearly.

**Key Words:** Mind mapping strategy, pre-university students, vocabulary

## 1. Introduction

The use of technology in pedagogical settings, especially in reading comprehension and teaching vocabulary may be effective and motivating for both EFL teachers alike. Teachers can be free from boring explanatory classes and traditional uses of whiteboard and lectures and students can use and try new technology in learning new vocabulary. Recent works (e.g., Akbarnejad, Gorjian, Nasiri, 2014, Bahadori & Gorjian, 2016; Lin & Chen, 2006; Liu, Chen & Chang, 2010) on the use of technology in the pedagogical settings and vocabulary acquisition have shown that EFL practitioners could use of technology in terms of using multimedia glossed and hyper texts, electronic and the Internet dictionaries, as well as various vocabulary-building boxes of fruit in a passage can be completed by the software (e.g., [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)). Mind mapping software is a graphic organizer which provides the learners with some options to complete the boxes in the chart. For instance, the learners can



name different types of fruit mentioned in the passage and fill in the boxes on the chart to show the relationships between the names and concepts clearly. This can trigger the learners comprehensible input since they can have a complete picture of the main vocabularies within the text and improve their vocabulary recall and retention (Buzan, 2000; Hawk, 1986; Meyer, 1995).

Tomlinson (1999) explains that teachers can use three aspects of teaching including Contents, Processes, and Products. By using graphic organizers, teachers modify the product. It is a universal fact that students in a class are not likely to learn to read at the same rate. Some will learn faster than others, and some will be able to demonstrate their understanding in more complex ways sooner than others. For all children to learn at an optimal pace, teachers may match learners with a reinforcing task that allows each child to be successful in vocabulary learning at a cognitively appropriate level. According to Rawson and Kintsch (2005), mind mapping as a kind of graphic organizers can help the EFL learners to comprehend their vocabulary and reading abilities. Therefore, the use of mind mapping software for learning new vocabulary may trigger learners' cognitive processes.

Learning through visuals aids like mind maps helps students in comprehending the texts more effectively since they can be used than with other reading strategies like skimming, scanning, summarizing, note making, etc. According to Slavin (2011), research in educational settings has proved the fact that visual learning is an effective method for teaching lexical collocations and reading comprehension skill. Mind mapping can teach the EFL learners how to organize the contents of the passages and shape the learners' schemata to comprehend the key words in the texts for eliciting the intended meanings of the words in the passages.

According to Keene and Zimmerman (1997), students must be encouraged to make connections with the text they read to increase the effectiveness of reading. Mind mapping can play a vital role establishing the connections. It also makes the text clear and it shows the main structures of the passage such as the collocated words in terms of meaning and grammar (Barron, 1969).

Studies in the literature have highlighted the link between drawing students' attention to discourse structures in texts and facilitating vocabulary learning (Bernhardt, 1998; Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 1996; Grabe, 2010). The structures of the texts can affect the vocabulary choices of the passage which is done by the writer. The kind of the text type and vocabulary selection is interrelated issues which affect the various types of visual representations of the vocabularies in the texts (Carrell, 1984, 1985; Martinez, 2002; Wang & Cao, 2009). The visual representation of the mind maps could be flow charts, tree diagrams, concept maps, and hierarchical summaries (Suzuki, Sato & Awazu, 2008; Tang, 1992). However, the possible effects of the use of discourse structure-based graphic organizers on L2 learners' vocabulary learning are in need of exploration. With the exception of Tang (1992), there are a few empirical studies which have been conducted in this area.

Some students may have difficulties in actively engaging with the text as they read. Identifying the key concepts in the text and recognizing the inter-relatedness of major and minor ideas is problematic at times because they do not know what parts of the text to look at to form relevant connections. They might waste time focusing on unimportant details and might fail to come up with a global picture of the text in hand. They are not aware of the fact that there are different but repeating discourse patterns in the texts they are exposed to so they cannot develop an understanding of how to approach text structures. It is clear that they need some guidance in this respect. Discourse structure-based mind mapping software might scaffold the students in their approaches to reading tasks (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). This study investigated the following research question. Does the use mind mapping software affect students' vocabulary development at the pre-university level?

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1. Mind Mapping

A mind map is a visual and graphic representation that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and ideas within a learning task (Strangman, Vue, Hall & Meyer, 2003). Graphic organizers have different types for different instructional purposes. "Two commonly used graphic organizers are semantic maps and concept diagrams" (Vaughn & Edmonds, 2004, p.135). Semantic mapping strategy falls under the broad category of graphic organizers. Baleghizadeh and Yousefpoori-Naeim (2011) notes that semantic mapping is a graphic or visual picture of the writers' thoughts, ideas, and attitudes which are represented in the vocabularies in the texts. They have different forms, e.g., the vocabularies of a text in hierarchical or cyclical structures. The shapes may be different and organized based on the relationships between the vocabularies in the text (i.e., subordinate or superordinate vocabularies). Technology can help the teachers to design the variety of visual or graphic mind maps including semantic map, structured overview, web, concept map, semantic organizer, story map, and graphic organizer (Bahadori & Gorjian, 2016; Lee & Schallert, 1997). They may have different styles in the software which is available on the Internet. There are five major structural categories: tree map, chain, sketch, star web, and chart matrix. They are also classified, for instance: KWL chart (i.e., teacher-led chart which introduces a new topic), history frame (i.e., look at historical events), word map (i.e., analyze a new or complex vocabulary), zooming in and zooming out - concepts (i.e., branches that show the objects' relations), zooming in and zooming out - people (i.e., branches that show the peoples'), Inquiry chart (i.e., or I-chart is a way to organize information obtained during research), Venn diagram (i.e., comparing charts), column notes (i.e., two sections, each with its own heading) (Akbarnejad, Gorjian, Nasiri, 2014; Jiang, 2007; Moore & Readence, 1984;

Mind mapping software provides teachers with tools to help students on the road to higher achievement in their vocabulary learning (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001). Although reading in a first language shares numerous important basic elements with reading in a second language, the processes also display significant differences (Aebersold & Field, 2003). It might make sense to claim that "the real nature of reading is unobservable" (Aebersold & Field, 2003, p. 23). However, research on the process of reading in an L2 provides us with an insight into the factors that might influence L2 reading (Grabe, 1991). Grabe and Stoller (2002) explore the differences between L1 and L2 reading under three different headings: linguistic and processing differences, individual and experiential differences, and socio-cultural and institutional differences.

On the other hand, the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, which is considered as the opposing view to the Language Threshold Hypothesis, argues that L1 linguistic knowledge and skills play an instrumental role in the development of corresponding abilities in L2. Simply put, in reading comprehension, L1 reading skills can be transferred to the L2 reading process (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995). The data gathered from the study conducted by Bernhardt and Kamil (1995) seem to indicate that first language reading ability is a very important variable in second language reading achievement. An elaboration on discourse structure awareness seems necessary if the function that discourse structure-oriented graphic organizers like mind mapping software might carry out in reading comprehension for example for learning new vocabulary is to be highlighted. Thus, the next section will focus on the concept of discourse structure awareness.

When the aim is to choose a format of organizer that best matches the features of the text structure in hand, teachers have different alternatives at their disposal. Figures 1 through 10 below show examples of mind mapping software developed by Strangman et al. (2003). For example, a *Descriptive or Thematic Map* (Figure 1) is effective in presenting generic information and lends itself to highlighting hierarchical relationships. While reflecting a hierarchical set of information, a teacher might want to draw students' attention to superordinate and subordinate elements in the text. In this situation, the most appropriate format to construct would be a *Network Tree* (Figure 2). When the information that is linked to a main idea or theme cannot be

integrated into a hierarchical structure, a *Spider Map* (Figure 3) could be useful to organize information (Strangman et al., 2003).

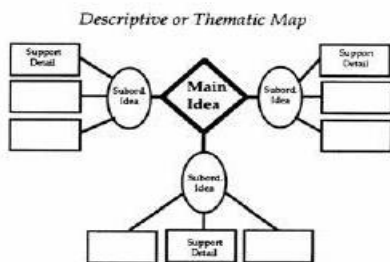


Figure 1. Descriptive map

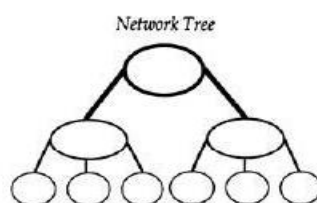


Figure 2. Network Tree

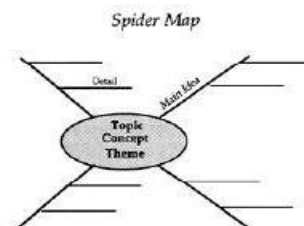


Figure 3. Spider Map

In order to display *cause and effect* relationships or to make students focus on possible problems and solutions that emerge out of a text, teachers are equipped with three options: a *Problem and Solution Map*, a *Problem-Solution Outline*, or a *Sequential Episodic Map* (Strangman et al., 2003). A *Comparative and Contrastive Map* or a *Compare-Contrast Matrix* allows students to compare and contrast two concepts, approaches, opinions or things by taking their distinguishing features and attributes as major criteria (Strangman et al., 2003). If text structure is organized on the basis of various steps and stages, exploiting a *Series of Events Chain* might be a good idea. On the other hand, a *Cycle Map* is likely to produce positive results while reflecting information that is circular or cyclical, with no clear beginning or ending (Strangman et al., 2003).

## 2.2. Constructing Mind Mapping Software

Constructing mind mapping software as graphic organizers is a matter of creativity and all text structures can be represented effectively through these visual language tools. Grabe (2009) claims that basic graphic organizer formats are available to teachers for commonly used text structures including *definitions*, *comparison-contrast*, *cause-effect*, *process/sequence*, *problem-solution*, *description/classification*, *argument*, *for-against* and *timeline*. However, it is crucial for teachers to meet certain demands while undertaking the task of developing discourse or text structure-based mind mapping software as graphic organizers. Grabe and Jiang (2010) propose a list of guidelines that teachers should take into consideration during the development and evaluation process of discourse structure-based mind mapping software. They suggest that mind mapping software should present both the main ideas and the macro level structure of the text effectively. Since the ideas in a given text are ideally logically developed in a sequential manner, the same pattern should be simulated in the organization of mind mapping software as graphic organizers. Local structures are as important as macro level ideas and they should be able to find a place for themselves. However, it is the teacher's responsibility to pay utmost attention to picking out the most salient information to reflect through mind mapping software as graphic organizers. Ideal mind mapping software aims at enabling students to recognize the interrelationships and patterns of organization in a text. Apart from these, it is necessary to present the content of the text in a way that is closest to the original. If the mind mapping software as graphic organizers in question are partially completed, then teachers should make sure that they have effective clues for the blanks. Last but not least, mind mapping software should be simple and easy to follow (Grabe & Jiang, 2010).

Teachers can make use of mind mapping software in different periods of their reading instruction as pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading tasks. The teacher can use a mind mapping software as an adjunct aid to brainstorming in advance of students' exposure to the reading material. With the help of mind mapping software, the teacher can help students retrieve their background knowledge about a particular topic and facilitate discussion of ideas.

Students could be asked to focus on both the semantic relationships among the words they produce and the inter-relationships of their statements (Carrell, Pharis & Liberto, 1989).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The study was conducted in a pre-university center in Masjedsoleyman. The participants of the study were 70 learners studying English in two intact classes. They were ranging in age from 15 to 18 years and were selected through non-random convenience sampling method. They were assigned into experimental (i.e., learning vocabulary through mind mapping software) and the control group (i.e., dealing with usual vocabulary learning procedures such as definition, explanation, and using context clues). Each group included 35 participants.

#### 3.2. Instrumentation

In this study two tests were used including the teacher made pre-test which determined the learners' level of vocabulary achievement at the beginning of research. It included 50 multiple-choice items which were designed based on 12 units of *Select Readings: Pre-intermediate* (Lee & Gundersen, 2000). The pilot study was run on a small sample of pre-university of students to calculate the reliability of the test through KR-21 formula as ( $r=.821$ ). The time allotted to this test was 60 minutes. The post-test was the modified format of the pre-test with the same content but different format to avoid the learners' reminding. The reliability of the post-test was calculated through a pilot study and it was met as ( $r=.723$ ). The content validity of both tests was assured by two experts in field of teaching EFL.

#### 3.3. Materials

The materials used in this study were 12 reading texts (i.e., descriptive, narrative, cause and effect, process, explanation, etc.) of *Select Readings: Pre-intermediate* was to generate good English language skills with the main focus on reading skills. The authors selected the new vocabularies in 12 units and taught them in each session. Since various mind mapping software can reflect the discourse structures of these texts, various formats of mind maps could be visualized through the software (i.e., [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)).

#### 3.4. Procedure

The participants included 50 learners at the pre-university level. They were selected in two intact classes through non-random convenience sampling method. Then they were assigned into two experimental and control groups. They took a teacher-made pre-test on 12 sessions of the *Select Readings: Pre-intermediate* were ready to start 12 sessions of treatment in 12 sessions, each lasted 90 minutes. Both groups read text structures of the 12 reading passages that were used in the study included *description, definition, sequence, procedure, cause-effect, classification, comparison-contrast, and for & against*. In each text, two or three of these structures were nested within one another. The researchers developed mind mapping software that directly reflected the discourse structures of the selected texts by means of the available software on the Internet (e.g., [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)). In order to understand whether this software was designed to put the new vocabularies in the maps and charts provided by the researchers. The mind mapping software was used based on the guidelines in the web site and developed by the researchers. The maps were discussed by the researchers and their practicality was assured. Then 12 mind maps were designed based on the reading passages. However, the aim of teaching the units was dealing with the new vocabularies.

Before the experiment, the participants took a teacher-made pre-test teacher to assess the learners' vocabulary knowledge at the beginning of the course. The in an introductory session,

the teachers make the students familiar with the class procedures of the study by using several mind map samples visualizing the text structures. The students were asked to fill them in. Both the selection of the texts and the development of the related mind mapping software were done by the researcher. The participants in both groups started the units of the book, *Select Readings: Pre-intermediate*, through reading the passages and then doing the exercises. Regarding vocabulary learning, the experimental group deals with the mind mapping software which are the designs and charts on the laptops or tablets and the participants had to complete the charts based on the use of new vocabularies in the texts. They have different mind maps which are appropriate for each unit. Then the charts were checked by the peers or the teacher in the classroom.

The control group read the passages and does the regular exercises at the end of each unit. The new vocabularies were taught through definitions, explanations and context clues in the texts. The vocabularies were mainly used to design the tests and exercises in the classroom. The new terms were discussed in both groups and the learners' comprehension was checked to receive feedback for remedial activities. The units were normally made up of 12 passages and each unit was reviewed regarding its reading questions, identifying the main idea, finding the supporting details, understanding vocabulary and making inferences. Out of these items, there were discussions on the content of passages in each session and some problematic vocabularies were even explained in Persian.

The post-test was designed based on the modified pre-test and included 50 multiple-choice items which were extracted from the 12 units covered in the treatment s participants took the post-test in the final session (i.e., 14 the session) in 50 minutes. Data were collected and the papers were ready to be scored.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

In this study, data were collected through the administration of the pre and post-tests. In the analysis of this quantitative data, SPSS, version 17 was used. In order to examine the effects of the mind mapping software on students' vocabulary, the parametric statistical method was run to analyze the data. The KS test was used to examine the normality of the data. Independent and Paired Samples *t*-test were calculated to discover the difference between the experimental and control groups.

## 4. Results

The experimental and control groups' pre-test and post-tests are shown through descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics(Pre-test & Post-test, Experimental and Control groups)*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Experimental	35	22.7143	12.81215	2.16565
	Control	35	23.9429	11.03189	1.86473
Post-test	Experimental	35	33.6286	11.18057	1.88986
	Control	35	25.7714	10.89275	1.84121

Table 1 shows the mean differences between the pre-test and post-tests of the control and experimental groups. Since the means cannot show the significance of differences, Independent Samples *t*-test was calculated to find any significant difference between the groups. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-test (Pre-test & Post-test, Experimental and Control groups)

Group		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	
Pre-test Exp. Vs. Cont.	Equal variances assumed	.995	.322	-.430	68	.669	-1.22	2.85	-6.93	4.47
	Equal variances not assumed			-.430	66.5	.669	-1.22	2.85	-6.93	4.47
Post-test Exp. Vs. Cont.	Equal variances assumed	.363	.549	2.978	68	.004	7.85	2.63	2.59	13.12
	Equal variances not assumed			2.978	67.9	.004	7.85	2.63	2.59	13.12

Table 2 shows that both groups are homogeneous at the beginning of the treatment in the pre-tests since the difference between the pre-tests of both groups is not significant. Thus there is not any significant difference between the pre-tests of the control and experimental groups ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, the difference between the post-tests of both groups at the end of the treatment is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The descriptive statistics of each group's pre and post-test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (Pre and Post-test of each group, Experimental and Control)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test Experimental	22.7143	35	12.81215	2.16565
	Post-test Experimental	33.6286	35	11.18057	1.88986
Pair 2	Pre-test Control	23.9429	35	11.03189	1.86473
	Post-test Control	25.7714	35	10.89275	1.84121

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics in the experimental and control groups' pre and post-tests. The means of the groups were compared in the Independent Samples *t*-test to examine any significant difference between each group's pre and post-test in Table 4.

*Table 4. Independent Samples t-test (Pre-test, Experimental and Control groups)*

		Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre and post-test Experimental	-10.91	17.90	3.02	-17.06	-4.76	-3.606	34	.001
Pair 2	Pre and post-test Control	-1.82	10.86	1.83	-5.56	1.90	-.996	34	.327

Table 4 reveals that, there is a significant difference between the pre and post-test of the experimental group while the difference between the pre and post-test in the control group is not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, the experimental group outperformed the control groups.

## 5. Discussion

The statistical findings of the study are discussed in this section concerning the following research question: Does the use of discourse structure-based mind mapping software affect EFL students' vocabulary development?

The results of this study may fill a gap in the literature and provide empirical evidence for the effectiveness of mind mapping software on students' vocabulary learning of selected texts. The results of the study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group since there was a significant difference between the two groups' post-tests. At the local level, this study has set out with the aim at discovering whether the use of mental maps may affect the students' learning new vocabularies. The mental maps can clearly make the link between drawing students' attention to discourse structures in texts through visualization and facilitate reading comprehension. Martinez's (2002) ideas are in line with the results of this research that the use of text structures as mental maps can facilitate and improve EFL students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension of the written texts in English. In the current study, the completion of the mind mapping software caused the learners to be more actively involved with the texts and to take charge of their own learning.

Classroom teachers should make sure that the tasks they have devised are engaging enough and necessitate active participation of their learners. Discourse structure-based mind mapping software might be utilized in a preparation session for a summary task by classroom teachers and learners because mind mapping software has the attribute of organizing textual information and giving it additional coherence. The findings of the study may help the teachers to restructure their reading activities. The results of the study are likely to be significant for the teachers in institutions, as well as text-book developers. They might or might not decide to incorporate mind mapping software into the designs of the text-books they develop on the basis of the findings of this study (Jiang & Grabe, 2007).

The findings indicated that after the intervention in the experimental group, vocabulary knowledge was developed learners who were exposed to mind mapping activities. It shows that, mind mapping tasks as pedagogical tools are significant instructional means that may effectively improve learners' vocabulary domain in a reading comprehension course. The

results highlighted the importance of multimedia and technology in language acquisition which may raise the level of motivation among EFL learners to strengthen their cognitive abilities. Moreover, this helps to strengthen the imaging systems which are an indispensable part of learners' lives.

Computer is considered to facilitate vocabulary development through multimedia which refers to computer-based instruction and using various types of contents and genres in the format of texts, audios, videos, graphics, animations, etc. Multimedia is thus 'computer-based' and 'interactive'-oriented approaches that the teachers should pay more attention to the existence of these teaching tools. They can help the learners in vocabulary development in technology-based or Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)-based approaches to teaching vocabulary. In this case, EFL teachers may be free from long and boring processes of teaching vocabularies through traditional approaches like pen and paper activities or white board exercises and they are also allowed to focus more on vital needs of the language learners such as communicative activities. However, being a skilled L1 reader is not enough to be an active and successful participant of society if he does not know vocabulary. If one is to pursue a career and achieve advancement, L2 reading skills constitute a significant challenge. Therefore, a very large percentage of people around the world are encouraged to learn to read a second language as students in formal academic settings. These ideas are in line with Grabe (2009) who suggest that mind mapping software can present both the main ideas and the macro level structures of the text effectively. It can also be used as a testing device to discriminate better between weak and strong EFL learners in assessing any skills or sub-skills.

## **6. Conclusion**

The present study confirms that the mind mapping software can enhance vocabulary development among pre-university student. The participants showed no significant difference in the pre-test while after the treatment sessions of using mind mapping software the findings revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group significantly. There are several studies (e.g., Carrell, 1984, 1985; Martinez, 2002; Wang & Cao, 2009) that support the findings of this study. This may enhance the learners' cognitive processes which is an advantage of the mind mapping software. The other advantage of the mind mapping software is that the words in the learners' mental structures could be the comprehension of the content in the texts through vocabularies in charts. These vocabularies activate the associations among the semantic or grammatical relationships that could link the learners' background knowledge and the unknown knowledge.

The teachers may use mind mapping software to facilitate the students' comprehension of the reading passages in the classroom environment and this technique worked efficiently. This could be taken one step further and mind mapping software can be utilized as an assessment tool in actual testing situations. Since filling in mind mapping software requires seeing the inter-relationships between ideas, understanding main ideas, focusing on key vocabulary and making some inferences, they might be used to test a number of reading constructs. The graphic organizer treatment should be extended over a period of time much longer than three weeks. Teachers should ensure that students are consistently and continuously exposed to mind mapping software tasks. In this way, students can be given an opportunity to observe the full impact of visual facilitation on their language performance and they might develop more positive attitudes towards graphic organizer activities.

Further studies are needed to address the effects of mind mapping software on the other language skills and sub-skills. There is also a need to assess the various strategies that the learners use to deal with mind mapping activities in different text types or genres. The future researchers may work on the links between discourse structure awareness and vocabulary learning. The relationships between using visual representations of textual information and reading performance need to be explored in future research.



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# THE USE OF REFERRING AND PREDICTING ACTIVITIES ON LEARNING LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of referring and predicting activities in learning language functions among senior high school students. For the purpose of this study, 70 senior high school students who were studying English in Anzan high school in Izeh were selected non-randomly. They took Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) to determine their level of proficiency as the pre-intermediate (i.e., 18 to 39 band score). Then they were non-randomly divided into two experimental groups of referring and predicting. i.e., each included 25 participants through non-random convenience sampling method. They met for two hours, once a week in 10 sessions. Then both groups were given a pre-test of language functions before treatment to determine how well the participants knew language those functions. During the ten sessions, they covered ten-dialogue texts of their text book. The referring group received instructions on referring activities (i.e., point to persons and objects directly or indirectly in a conversation) while the predicting group received predictive instructions (i.e., guessing on possible future events and opportunities based on available data). After the treatment sessions, the participants took the language function post-test. Data were analyzed through Independent and Paired Samples *t*-test and findings showed that the referring group outperformed the predicting group significantly. Implications of the study suggest that using predicting activities could be more effective than predicting functional activities in teaching language functions to senior high school students.

**Key Words:** Referring and predicting activities, language functions, senior high school students

## 1. Introduction

The present study focused on two main strategies including prediction and referential in teaching language functions to pre-intermediate learners. A prediction is what the individual thinks may happen based upon the linguistic structures of the text, the author, and the background knowledge. A prediction is a kind of guess as to think on the future. Use clues from events along with what the individuals know from their own experiences to feel what is happening next. It is the act of reasoning about the future based on past experience (Akmajian, 2010). For example, the people can confidently predict that day will follow night. With prediction they can guess what is happening before and during the stories. They do not really need any evidence to foretell what they think of what will happen.

According to Akmajian (2010), a prediction or forecast is a statement about the things will be happened in the future, but it is not always based on personal experiences or knowledge. Although predicting accurate information about the future in many cases is impossible,

prediction can be useful to apply in making mappings about the next developments; Stevenson (1998) writes that prediction in business "... is at least two things: Important and hard." The term "prediction" is mostly used to refer to an informed opinion or idea. A prediction of this kind might be valid if the predictor is an educated person in the field and is employing reliable data. Large predictions or guessing in this kind of activity bring focus attention on possible events, and opportunities. Such guessing brings available past and current data, as a basis to develop expectations in the future.

Using referring and predicting activities as an integral part of language ability has become highly important in language teaching and learning process. It is believed that if EFL learners do not know how to employ referring and predicting activities in a foreign/ second language, they will use their own language strategies and, consequently, misunderstandings occur and learning faces some obstacles (Bayat, 2013). Students also think that learning a new language is only memorizing some vocabularies and structural elements; they are not able to manipulate language in the real context; they do not know how to use clues to establish successful communication and read a text successfully. They do not know how to use predicting and referring to understand what is going to happen next; they use language inappropriately in the context and suffer from pragmatic failures although they are grammatically advanced learners. These are some problems that the researcher tries to solve. In addition, since there are few studies which reveal effects of using referring and predicting activities in learning language functions among senior high school students, the present study is conducted to cover this issue (Bayat, 2013). Regarding the difficulties that EFL learners encounter, more research in the field of language functions should be carried out so that the researcher will get a better insight into instruction of referring and predicting activities. Referring and predicting activities instruction develop senior high school students' language functions. This study focuses on the following research question: Does referring or predicting activities develop senior high school students' language functions?

This study will follow one main objective; it will explore if referring and predicting activities instruction develops senior high school students' language functions. Many researches have been conducted on the different types of speech acts (e.g., pragmatic and meta-pragmatic awareness) inspected from various angles in Iran, but little attention has been paid to referring and predicting. Therefore, this study will investigate the probable effects of instruction of the less-attended speech act - referring and predicting- in learning language functions (Alcón & Martínez-Flor, 2008).

Since a good knowledge of speech acts has a great effect on the learners' linguistic knowledge, the learners need to pay attention to select appropriate learning strategies. This study would guide Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners who are trying to develop their speech act knowledge in general and the use of referring and predicting strategies in language functions in particular. Therefore, it would prove language functions of using referring and predicting strategies and lead English teachers to help and guide their students in the choice of the appropriate strategy to improve language functions.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1. Referring and Predicting Activities**

In referring and predicting, there are three factors which are very important to distinguish what a speaker means from what a sentence means. We have to distinguish what a speaker means from what a sentence means. Speakers can mean what they say, not mean what they say, or mean more than they say. However, when speakers mean, say, or implicate something by an utterance, it determines what is meant, said, or implicated (Akmajian, 2010). In referring and predicting, speakers can mean to communicate more than they say. A special and interesting type of communication has been noted by Hudson (1996) under the label of *conversational*

*implicature*, so called because what is implied is implicated by virtue of the fact that the speaker and hearer are cooperatively contributing to a conversation. Prediction also crucially guides learning through the updating of future estimations about the state of the world (Schultz & Dickinson, 2000).

Referring is a relation that gets out between certain kinds of representational tokens (e.g., names, mental states, pictures) and objects. For instance, when it is said that "George W. Bush is a president," a special kind of representational token is used, i.e. the name 'George W. Bush', referring to a particular individual-named, George W. Bush. While names and other referential tokens are the only type of representational tokens capable of referring, linguistic tokens like these types have been into the nature of reference. Accordingly, this type of token will focus completely on linguistic reference. However, we can get the meaning of such things. For instance, shall I manage to talk about George W. Bush and meanwhile saying meaningful and true things about him? In one word: how shall *refer* to George W. Bush by the name of 'George W. Bush' metaphorically, we should be able to use language to talk about the world because words somehow mean differently. Proper names, like 'George W. Bush' and 'Tony Blair', are considered as paradigmatic referring expressions. Although it seems implausible to believe that *all* words refer, several different types of words are referring sorts. These include: proper names, natural terms, indexical, and definite descriptions (Soozandehfar & Sahragard, 2011).

The main reason behind learning a second language in general and speech act strategies in specific to achieve the ultimate goal, which is to know and understand information similar to that of native speakers of a language. As a consequence, that would lead to the need to know the referring and predicting strategies of native speakers. Furthermore, Nation (2006) claims that second language learners need to know around 98% of the written or spoken words in discourse in order to understand it very well. In order to reach this percentage in written texts, learners need to know pragmatics as well. On the other hand, learners need to know pragmatic competence in order to understand speech act strategies and vice-versa. The concept of an activity or strategy is rather difficult to explain and there are several different views concerning what a strategy or activity really is (Schultz & Dickinson, 2000).

## 2.2. Speech Acts

The theory of speech acts aims to the fact that even though words encode information, people do more things through words to give information. Thus they often convey more than their words encode (Austin, 1962). Although the focus of speech act theory has been on utterances like face-to-face interaction, the speech acts should be taken as intended utterances which are intentionally motivated (Searl, 1969).

The people who act a pertinent feature are that when they act intentionally, generally they have a set of nested intentions. For instance, having arrived home without their keys, one might push a door button with the intention not just of pushing the button but of ringing a bell. Thus ultimately, getting into a house needs having the keys. The single bodily movement involved in pushing the button and ringing the bell. Similarly, speech acts are not just single acts of producing certain sounds; they carry intentions (Bach & Harnish, 1979).

There is an indirect connection of an utterance (e.g., Outside is very cold) and its intended meaning which may be a request (e.g., Please close the door) or it is just a suggestion (e.g., Shall we go into the house?) that means to change the place for having a conversation (Austin, 1962). Whether this utterance is intended to express a request or a proposal depends on the contextual information that the speaker and hearer relies on. This can be possible if the connection between the word and deed is more direct than in the above examples, for the forms of the sentences uttered may fail to determine just what kind of illocutionary act is performed. For instance, shaking hands can depend on the circumstances and the context in which this performance is done would be different. It may mean do several different things: (e.g., introduce someone,

greeting, do a deal, farewell, etc.). Similarly, a given sentence can be used for different ways, so that, for example, "I will see your father." may be used as a prediction, a promise, or a warning. The problem is that how one can determine its intention that the sort of act it is (Austin, 1962). Guessing, expectation, inference, understanding, foresight, and forecasting are all terms that are used to refer to different types of predictive processes that happen in the social situations. Predictive processing may refer to any psychological processes that an individual uses to estimate about the future (Friston & Kiebel, 2009). Thus are three main predictive concepts that are related to different aspects of the predictive social situations. They are inferencing, predicting, and simulating. Inferencing may refer to determining a short-term process that is situated in the current behavior. Therefore, it is probabilistic estimations about the state of the world (Friston & Kiebel, 2009).

In opposite, the term "prediction" refers to generally more related to long-term expectations which are made about the potential and actual events for future events which occur. Simulation can be the happenings that could be imagined by the individuals in their minds as a constructed internal representation of imagination (Gilbert & Wilson, 2007) regarding the individuals' episodic memory (Williams, Ellis, Tyers, Healy, Rose & Macleod, 1996). This may include the processes such as scene constructions which are recalled and integrated the individuals' previous experiences to form the coherent events or mental images. These images could be real or unreal in nature but all may be shaped based on the realities outside the individuals mind.

Kronfeld and Roberts (1998) note that definite referring expressions that have been understood as exclusively the ability to uniquely identify objects such as the examples of noun phrases with the linguistic nature occurring in the texts. In the present research, referring activity refers to the expressions serve other discourse functions since they show an action with a referent, the referent's status as a role function (e.g., a waiter is the referent of hospitality and use the speech differently from a boss in the company). They also refer to the viewpoints from which the referents are presented. All of this information contributes to the role of discourse referents which is therefore a part of the speech acts of referring activity. In other words, interlocutors do not talk about the mere objects in a neutral fashion, but they refer to the functions of the speech plays in a conversation. Thus, the notion of a reference cannot be restricted to objects. It can refer to cases to show the function of an expression.

Referring and predicting activities in learning language functions among the learners could follow the framework of the predictive and referring brain from Barsalou (2009) who describes the activities based on the individual brain's re-enactment of perception, motor, and introspective states of mind (e.g., motivation, intentions, cognition, metacognition, etc.). For the sake of integration, the use of the terms "referring and predictive" in this article does not only refer to higher-level long-time expectations about the future, but are also including the more fundamental low-level short-time predictive or referring processes of mind. Communicative actions are expressed from the motor skills in the individuals' mind and then the commands observed by the brain in action which finally causes changes in the observer's behaviors, and start communicative actions from the persons in contact. This model of social interaction may be supposed to allow us to make referring or predicting and learn about the behaviors of another people in conversations in response to our own communicative actions (Bach, 1994).

Searle (1976) explains that various types of speech acts are frequently used in every day communication and believes that different types of happenings in the contexts enable the interlocutors to use various types of speech acts in order to follow the basic relationships between the speakers and hearers in their social lives. Thus the speakers of a language need to be competently pragmatic and functional in all the aspects of functional activities. Learners of

that language also need to obtain knowledge of all types of speech act activities or strategies which enable them to use appropriate speech acts in different communicative situations.

Regarding the English language learners, English books include various types of Searle's (1976) speech acts which is a demanding task for the EFL teachers to be aware of these forms and functions on the one hand and try to teach the language learners how to perform various forms conveying different functions on the other. It means that if the existing speech acts are not completely distributed throughout English textbooks in schools, the teachers need to deal with them in extra materials or provide the learners with enough chances to perform them in the real contexts (Batjargal, 2010).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Participants**

In the present research, the population was 70 male students who studied English as a foreign language in Anzan senior high school in Izeh. Fifty students were selected based on their scores of the band score from 18 to 39. Thus their level of proficiency was determined through OQPT as the pre-intermediate. Then they were divided into two experimental groups through non-random convenience sampling method, one experimental and one control. Each group included twenty-five participants. One experimental group received instruction about referring and the other received predicting activities on learning language functions.

#### **3.2. Instrumentations**

In order to conduct the aim of this study, the following instruments were applied:

1. OQPT was used to determine the participants' homogeneity and the level of proficiency to divide the research sample into two experimental groups. This test included 60 items and five band scores. Time allotted to this test was 60 minutes. The reliability and validity of this test were reported in some works.

2. Pre-test: The second instrument was a teacher-made test and it was designed based on the participants' sixth grade of high school. It included 20 multiple-choice items. The items included a stem and three functional responses with one correct choice and two distractors. The participants were supposed to select the correct choice which was closer to the stem response. It was similar to a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) which was one of the most frequently used means for collecting data in Inter-language pragmatics (ILP). Its content validity was confirmed by two experts and it was given to a small sample of students other than the participants to estimate the reliability of the test in a pilot study. Its reliability was calculated as ( $r=.697$ ) through Kuder-Richardson formula (KR-21) formula.

3. Post-test: To determine the effect of referring and predicting strategies on learning language functions among senior high school students, the pre-test was modified in terms of format to avoid the learners' reminding of the items. The items and the content of the post-test were similar to the pre-test. Since there were these changes, the reliability of the test was estimated through KR-21 as ( $r=.804$ ).

#### **3.3. Procedure**

Accomplishing the aim of the current study, first 70 male students were selected from Anzan high school in Izeh. Then they took OQPT as a homogeneity test which was administered to the participants under instruction to determine their homogeneity level. The learners who got the scores between 18 and 39 out of 60 were selected as the pre-intermediate learners as well as the participants of the study. They were non-randomly were divided into two equal groups. The two experimental groups took a teacher-made referring and predicting pre-test randomly at the

beginning of the study. The pre-test calculated their level of proficiency in using the appropriate referring and predicting functions. Then they participated in 14 treatment sessions.

In each session of the course, the participants were taught language functions in two different activities to teach the actual functioning of language. The first hour was specified to language function instruction in the text book and the rest to teaching referring and predicting activities in two classes. The research took place in classroom situations completely. Motivating and encouraging the participants to pay more attention and playing an active role in the research program, they were told that the aim of the extra instruction was to improve their knowledge about language functions in the course book and to enable them to use referring and predicting activities on learning language functions.

The entire research project was held in 14 sessions. Ten completing texts or dialogues were chosen and a variety of blank spaces that make the students learn how the words fill the spaces and predict or refer to the missed functional expression. They could guess the missed words. During the sessions of instruction, 90 minutes each, the functional words and their related dialogues or texts were worked on. Both group received instructions about referring and predicting strategies, for example; how they can guess the missed words in terms of language functions.

In order to teach referring and predicting activities in the classes, the following steps were presented:

Step 1: In the first session, referring and predicting strategies were presented and explained explicitly. Also, they were described to students why, when, and how these strategies were applied.

Step 2: Each session, before teaching language function part, the teacher presented the students with the challenging of how we can predict the answers or refer to some words that can be applied as answers extracted from key words printed on a piece of paper. The focus of the study was based on the usage of referring and predicting activities on learning language functions among senior high school students and the predetermined categories of speech act strategies were specified.

Step 3: The learners were gathered in groups of three or four round the class, and after explaining key words for language function, they were directed to classify the predicted or referred words or concepts about language functions generally, based on the topic, their background knowledge and their previous experiences.

Step 4: The learners were given incomplete dialogues in language function asking from which the words had been placed.

Step 5: After each session, the learners rested about ten minutes and right after the break time there was a ten-matching question test asking predicted or referred words learnt in that session.

The groups received instructions about referring and predicting activities on learning language functions as treatment. The learners were seated in groups of three or four round the class as in the experimental group and were easily given the language function samples and required to do exercises and asked the instructor in any case of facing problems. Finally, at the end of the course, the post-test was given to the two groups to evaluate the usage of referring and predicting activities after the treatment.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

The collected data were collected, analyzed and interpreted according to the objectives of the study. Finally, Independent and Paired Samples *t*-test were employed to find out the effects of



referring and predicting activities instruction on learning the language functions of English language among senior high school students.

#### 4. Results

Descriptive statistics of the two groups' scores were compared their knowledge on language functions. The results are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Referring	25	10.7200	3.54166	.70833
	Predicting	25	10.8400	3.54354	.70871

Table 1 shows that the means at the two groups are very close to each other. In order to find out whether the difference between the two groups was significant, Independent samples t-test were applied in Table 2.

*Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test (Pre-test, Referring vs. Predicting)*

		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
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	.129	.721	-.120	48	.905	-.1200	1.00	-2.13	1.89
	Equal variances not assumed			-.120	48.0	.905	-.1200	1.00	-2.13	1.895

Table 2 shows that the observed t (.120) is less than the critical t (1.684) with df=48. Thus the difference between the two groups' pre-test is not significant at (p<0.05). This showed that the groups were homogeneous before the research period at the pre-test level.

*Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (Post-test, Referring vs. Predicting)*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	Referring	25	16.4000	3.40343	.68069
	Predicting	25	12.5600	2.43379	.48676

Table 3 shows that the mean in the referring group differs significantly from the other group, and also the mean for referring group shows difference to some degree from predicting group. To describe the statistical significance of the two groups' means, An Independent Samples *t*-test was applied to compare the significant level of difference between the two groups. Results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Independent Samples *t*-Test (Post-test, Referring vs. Predicting)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	1.642	.206	4.589	48	.000	3.840	.836	2.157	5.522

Table 4 shows that the observed *t* (4.589) is greater than the critical *t* (1.684) with *df*=48. Thus the difference between the groups is significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, the referring group outperformed the predicting group significantly. Paired Samples *t*-test was also run out indicate the difference between the participants' pre-test and post-test. The descriptive statistics is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Descriptive Statistics (Pre vs. Post-tests)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Referring-Pre-test	10.7200	25	3.54166	.70833
	Referring-Post-test	16.4000	25	3.40343	.68069
Pair 2	Predicting-pre-test	10.8400	25	3.54354	.70871
	Predicting-post-test	12.5600	25	2.43379	.48676

Table 5 shows that the means between the pre and post- tests in both groups are different. In other words, the post-test mean scores are higher than the pre-test mean scores. However, to find the significance level of differences, Paired Samples *t*-test was run. Results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Descriptive Statistics (Pre vs. Post-tests)

		Paired Differences			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				Lower	Upper
Pair 1	Referring-Pre-test vs. Post-test	-5.68	3.79	.758	-7.246	-4.113	-	24	.000
					7.486				

	test								
Pair 2	Predicting-Pre-test vs. Post-test	-1.72	4.26	.853	-3.481	.041	-	24	.055
							2.015		

Table 6 indicates that the observed  $t$  (7.486) is greater than the critical  $t$  (1.711) with  $df=24$ . Thus the difference between the groups is significant at ( $p<0.05$ ) in the referring group. Since the observed  $t$  (2.015) is less than the critical  $t$  (1.711) with  $df=24$ , the difference between the groups is not significant at ( $p<0.05$ ) in the predicting group.

### 5. Discussion

To discuss the results of the study, the research question raised earlier in the current study will be discussed as follows: Does referring or predicting activities improve senior high school students' language functions?

The results of data analysis showed that there was not a significant difference between students' performance in the pre-tests of the two groups. It has also been observed that the students who received referring strategies on learning language functions got better scores and their performance was better than the predicting group. The reasons toward this result could be argued in terms of the effectiveness in usage of the speech act activities on learning language functions among senior high school students. This research question sought to investigate the effect of referring strategy to EFL learners. Based on the findings, it can be argued that instruction has a significantly affected participants' use of referring activity on learning language functions among senior high school students. This study seems to be supported by Schmidt's (1990) idea which regarded noticing as an important condition for acquisition. According to Schmidt, awareness is required for learning to take place and noticing is needed to input to intake. Regarding the present research, explicit teaching of propositional acts during different stages of the treatment leads learners notice the functions of language. The reason could be the use of referring strategies which helped the referring group's participants. The referring group outperformed the predicting group since they did some exercises such as: dual coding activities, distinctive encoding, decreasing in interference, processing of supporting, enhancing motivation, focusing on attention, depth of processing, clarification in text content. However, the predictive group worked on guessing the meaning of the context, clues, formal structures and vocabulary meaning. The fact that referring group outperformed the other group indicates that this group not only learned referring and predicting activities, but also learned the use of these activities on learning language functions.

Takahashi (1996) supports the findings of this study and notes that teachers of English may gain insights into the role of speech act method toward the learners' learning processes and ways to complete this method in teaching communicative method. Speech act method may serve to help (1) establishing the setting, (2) defining and developing the characters and subjects, (3) extending and developing the plans, (4) providing several viewpoints, (5) contributing the text's coherence and cohesion, and (6) reinforcing the text. The results showed that the referring group's scores were higher than the second group's score which shows the positive effect of referring instruction on learning language function (Chen, 1996).

### 6. Conclusion

This research started with the assumption that applying speech act including referring and predicting strategies could improve the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL senior high school learners' language functions. The teacher explored to see if the application of these activities has any usage on the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL senior high school learners' language functions. However, the referring group received explanations of the use of form and function, turn taking strategies and the contexts in which the form and functions are used. These results are in line with Koosha and Vahid Dastjerdi (2012) who note that Learners' autonomy is the final goal of

English language learning. Learners' autonomy can be applied in the absence of language teachers and classes. So, language learners can continue their learning.

The findings of the current research are in line with Kasper and Rose (2002) who suggest that the learners require adopting more responsibility in their learning and relying less on instructors and adopt cooperative learning. If the learners are solely and completely dependent on their instructors, as soon as they are left alone, they might have loss in learning. Strategy training in language function is a useful path to eliminate or decrease this problem. Language learning by strategy training is the way through which learner's autonomy can correctly be taken. As a result, the learners are also suggested to get familiar with innovative speech act strategies, especially referring and predicting strategies and their principles in order to get profit from their advantages

A future research can be conducted to assess immediate and delayed post-tests at various time intervals to present the effectiveness of speech act strategies on learning language functions in shorter and longer periods. The current research lasted for five weeks. Successful studies need much more time to the instruction of language function through speech act strategies.

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# VALIDATING THE PERSIAN VERSION OF METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS INVENTORY AND SCRUTINIZING THE ROLE OF ITS COMPONENTS IN IELTS ACADEMIC READING ACHIEVEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether there is any significant relationship between IELTS candidates' metacognitive awareness and their achievement in IELTS academic reading comprehension. One hundred and seven IELTS candidates from different institutes in Mashhad completed the Persian version of metacognitive awareness inventory after being administered an IELTS reading comprehension test. The Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) was developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994) and consists of 52 statements. It measures two components of metacognition: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. Metacognitive knowledge comprises three subscales: Declarative knowledge, Procedural knowledge, and Conditional knowledge. Metacognitive regulation consists of five subscales: Planning, Information management, Monitoring, Debugging, and Evaluation. In this study, the Persian version of the questionnaire was utilized and its validity and reliability were substantiated via a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The result of this study indicated that there was a significant albeit average relationship between IELTS reading score and metacognitive awareness ( $r = 0.543, p < 0.05$ ) and all its subscales. The highest correlation was observed between IELTS and declarative knowledge ( $r = 0.625, p < 0.05$ ) followed by planning ( $r = 0.535, p < 0.05$ ). The results of regression analysis demonstrated that about 40 percent of variability in IELTS reading performance can be accounted by metacognitive awareness components. In conclusion, this finding suggests that those students who have a higher level of metacognitive awareness should logically perform better on IELTS reading section.

**Keywords:** *Metacognitive Awareness, IELTS Candidates, Reading Comprehension.*

## 1. Introduction

High-stake tests of language proficiency are a common practice in Iranian educational setting and their obtained scores are used to represent the candidate's proficiency in English and provide relevant evidence in decision making process for mainly three purposes: selecting people for an occupation, issuing a certificate, and permitting one to enter a higher education organization. IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is a prevalent example of these high-stake standardized tests playing a critical role in determining the future life of their candidates. In effect, the IELTS test is an example of a public test that is used to make crucial decisions about large numbers of people - whether they are eligible for English-speaking

university entrance or not based on their English language abilities. An increase in the numbers of international students wanting to study at English-speaking universities and a concomitant growth in the number of universities requiring IELTS scores has led to a significant expansion of the IELTS test in recent years. The importance of the reading skill on IELTS has made it imperative for second language researchers to find out how students can be assisted in this regard.

For more EFLs, reading is a matter of challenge, particularly when the materials are unfamiliar, technical, or complex. Moreover, for some readers, comprehension is always challenging. They may understand each word separately, but linking them together into meaningful ideas often doesn't happen as it should. Comprehension refers to the ability to go beyond the words, to understand the ideas and the relationships between ideas conveyed in a text. There are different definitions for reading comprehension. According to Chastain (1988), "reading is a process involving the activation of relevant knowledge and language skills to accomplish an exchange of information from one person to another. It requires readers focus attention on the reading materials and integrate previously acquired knowledge and skills to comprehend what someone else has written" (p. 216).

Reading comprehension involves the ability to not only read the lines but also the ABSTRACT step of "reading between the lines." However, the next crucial step involves higher order skills that takes reading between the lines one step farther. "Good readers" have the ability to read beyond the lines. Higher-order skills enable students to do this and find the real value in the information they are reading. To do so, students must go beyond absorbing knowledge and learn to heighten skills to judge information, evaluate alternative evidence and self-assess strategy use and learning (Ku, 2009). In other words, if we expect educational systems to prepare people for life, educators need to place a premium on enhancing monitoring and self-regulatory skills in learners (Kuhn, 2005).

The researchers of the present study presumed that metacognitive strategies are among the strategies which can foster learning and hence reading. Educationalist posited that self-control mechanisms are influential in academic endeavors, including reading comprehension, whether one is reading in the native language or a second language (e.g., Careel, 1991; Kuhn, 2005). Indeed, the consensus is that strategic awareness and monitoring of the comprehension process are critically important aspects of skilled reading. Such awareness and monitoring is often referred to in the literature as metacognition, which can be thought of the knowledge of the readers' cognition relative to the reading process and the self-control mechanisms they use to monitor and enhance comprehension. Auerbach and Paxton (1997) considered metacognition as well as an awareness of metacognition –planning and consciously executing appropriate actions to achieve a particular goal – to be critical elements of proficient and strategic reading. Such metacognition, according to Auerbach and Paxton (1997), entails knowledge of strategies for processing texts, the ability to monitor comprehension, and the ability to adjust strategies as needed.

Previous research demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between students' cognitive and metacognitive skills and their ability to read and excel academically (Alderson 1984; Carrell 1991; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Singhal, 2001). Students who have confidence in their learning process and can utilize metacognitive reading strategies such as, planning, monitoring and evaluating are more successful than those students that do not use this strategy in their learning and reading program (Wang, et al, 2009). Metacognition is essential to successful learning because it enables individuals to better manage their cognitive skills and to determine weaknesses that can be corrected by constructing new cognitive skills. Almost anyone who can perform a skill is capable of metacognition – that is, thinking about how they perform that skill.

The major aim of the present study is to examine whether EFL learners' metacognitive awareness can cause differences in the IELTS candidates' achievements. In the followings, research on metacognitive awareness and reading comprehension are briefly reviewed.

## **2. Review of the Related Literature**

### **2.1. Research on Metacognitive Awareness**

In 1979, John Flavell published "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A New Area of Cognitive-Developmental Inquiry." He defined metacognition as "knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena" (p. 906) and tied the term to self-regulated learning through the phrase "cognitive monitoring."

According to Flavell (1976), metacognition refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them. He recognized the importance of developing metacognition for improving learning and he claimed that "good schools should be hotbeds of metacognitive development"(Flavell, as cited in Georghiadis, 2004.p.366).

Metacognition refers to higher order thinking skills that involve active control over the thinking processes involved in learning. Activities such as planning how to approach a given learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating progress toward the completion of a task are metacognitive in nature (Livingstone, 1997).

Cognitive psychologists have emphasized that metacognition is one of the important abilities of the students that should be developed (Garner & Alexander, 1989; Gourgey, 1998; Paris & Winograd, 1990; as cited in Zafarmand, Ghanizadeh, & Akbari, 2014). Most cognitive psychology researchers contended that metacognition is one's knowledge and skills about awareness of, and control over one's cognitive activities and process (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Sternberg, 1998; Swartz & Perkins, 1990). Schraw and Dennison (1994) described metacognition as consisting of two major components: Knowledge about cognition, and regulation of cognition. According their perspective, knowledge about cognition refers to what learners know about their cognition and includes three sub-components: "declarative knowledge (e.g., knowledge about self, strategies), procedural knowledge (e.g., knowledge about how to use strategies), and conditional knowledge (e.g., knowledge about when and why to use strategies)" (p. 460). Regulation of cognition refers to one's cognitive activities to control his or her learning and includes sub-components such as planning (e.g., setting goals, selection of appropriate strategies, allocation of resources), monitoring (e.g., monitoring cognitive processes and learning progress), and evaluation (e.g., evaluating learning goals and learning performance) (Schraw, 1998; Schraw & Dennison, 1994). The two main components of metacognition are closely interrelated and all subcomponents of two main components are also intercorrelated (Schraw, 1998).

Metacognitive knowledge is the knowledge about person, task and strategies. Knowledge of person is one's belief about what one can do what one cannot do, and awareness of one's progress. In other words, it includes individuals' knowledge of their affective states. Knowledge about task refers to awareness of purpose and demand of the task. Knowledge of strategy is the understanding of which strategies should be used for different situations.

Research on metacognition showed that students who were stronger in using metacognitive knowledge and skills in their learning process perform better than weaker students (Sternberg, 1998). Cao and Nietfeld (2007) stated that:

In the classroom setting, metacognitive knowledge allows students to become aware of what they know and what they do not know about a certain topic. This awareness affords students a baseline for planning, for learning and allocating time and effort to study. (p.32)



Metacognitive skills allow learners to choose appropriate strategies, monitoring the employing of strategies, and evaluation effectiveness (Boekaerts, Printrich, & Zeidner, 2003).

## **2.2. Research on Reading Comprehension**

Reading has always been considered as one of the fundamental skills in TESL/TEFL. Contrary to the common belief which for a long time considered reading as a passive and receptive skill during which no apparent production is observed, nowadays, it is considered as an active and dynamic process in which the reader actively interacts with the text to reconstruct the meaning of it. In this view, Chastain (1988) contended that:

Traditionally, in the study of SL comprehension, the emphasis was on the language and not the comprehender or the reader; it was believed that the text has meaning and the reader receives it without himself actively involved in the process. Reading was called a 'receptive' skill but it seems that it isn't a good terminology for active, energy and time-consuming and the two-way communication (Chastain, 1988, p. 216).

It refers to the ability of readers to understand the surface and the hidden meanings of the text using meta-cognitive reading strategies. Reading comprehension is a complex process involving a combination of text and readers. It is widely reasonable that the three key types of reading are as; accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (Ahmadi, Hairul, & Pourhossein, 2012). Perfetti and Hogaboam (1975) explained the importance of "the conceptualization of reading as composed of separable components" (p. 461), since it allows the investigators to test the relationship among the various of reading components and the way that they are related. The purpose of reading comprehension is to construct meaning from the contexts (Sweet & Snow, 2002). Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive ability providing the ability to integrate text information with the background knowledge of the reader and resulting in the explanation of a mental representation (Meneghetti, Carretti, & De Beni, 2006). So, reading comprehension is an interactive activity between students and contexts (Rumelhart, 1994); in the period of this interaction between students and contexts, students utilize different experiences and knowledge which involve language skills, cognitive information, and world knowledge. Researchers found that readers need to utilize a wide range of strategies while reading a text and especially in reading comprehension (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991), because in reading comprehension process readers should utilize various conscious and unconscious strategies to solve their problem in order to construct meaning from written message/messages (Johnston, 1983). From a functional view, these strategies consist of four categories: metacognitive, cognitive, effective and social. Metacognitive strategies allow readers to have control over their reading by planning the task they want to do, checking on progress and evaluating the way they perform a reading task. Metacognitive reading strategies refer to particular, deliberate, goal-directed mental processes or behavior, which control and modify the reader's attempts to understand texts (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008).

## **3. Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between IELTS candidates' achievement in Academic IELTS reading test and their metacognitive awareness as measured through Meta Cognitive Awareness Inventory (MCI). To conduct the study, the researchers first translate MCI into Persian and substantiate the validity and reliability of the scale in Iranian context. The scale is subsequently used to examine whether IELTS candidates' metacognitive awareness influence their achievements in Academic IELTS reading test.

The study can offer both IELTS teachers and candidates' insights to improve some of the abilities they need to surpass in this regard. With verifying the effects of metacognitive awareness on the achievement of IELTS candidates and finding out which component of MCI

can best predict the achievement, we can put forward effective and practical guidelines for developing metacognitive reading strategies.

#### **4. Method**

##### **4.1 Participants**

The participants of this study comprised 107 IELTS candidates from different institutes in Mashhad - Iran. Participants were chosen from advanced and upper-intermediate proficiency levels. The participants were of different social backgrounds. Their ages ranged between 18 and 43. They had different majors in high school or university. Some of them were just students, some of them were students with part-time or full-time jobs and some just worked. 33 percent of the subjects who took part in this study were male and the 67 percent were female. All the subjects who took part in this study were volunteers, and there was no obligation for participation. The participants were informed of the IELTS administration via notes installed on their institute boards. On the notes, the purpose of the study was briefly explained; as an incentive, some presents were offered for the participants and they were assured that they would be kept posted of their performance on IELTS.

##### **5.2 Instruments**

The present study utilized two instruments in the process of data collection as follows:

1. The reading comprehension section of the 2015 academic IELTS test.
2. The Meta Cognitive Awareness Inventory

##### **4.2.1. The 2015 Academic IELTS Test**

The IELTS was established as a result of the ELTS validation project. ELTS itself was set up in 1979/80 as the British Council's English proficiency measure of overseas students' adequacy in English to pursue higher education in the UK. According to Davis (2001):

Between 1982 and 1986 a validation study of ELTS was carried out, culminating in a formal seminar in October 1986, where the main findings were presented. The report on the validation study (Criper & Davies, 1988, as cited in Davis) recommended serious revision which in due course led to the development of IELTS (p. 140).

IELTS has the same role in the UK and Australia as TOFEL does in the United States and Canada and it is as important as TOFEL in making academic decisions.

In this study, the reading comprehension section of the 2015 academic IELTS test was chosen. It consisted of three reading comprehension passages, and forty different items. Subjects were given complete and clear instructions as what to do. Also, for better understanding, the cover page of the test was copied and handed out to subjects so as to be absolutely clear about what they needed to do.

##### **4.2.1.1. The IELTS Reading Test**

In the IELTS, reading is tested quite separately from linguistic competence (which is not explicitly tested). The test is based on some analysis of target language use situations (in particular the work of Weir, 1983), and texts are intended to reflect in general terms what academic readers are expected to do:

Texts are taken from magazines, journals, books, and newspapers. Texts have been written for a non-specialist audience. All the topics are of general interest. They deal with issues which are interesting, recognizably appropriate and accessible to candidates entering postgraduate or undergraduate courses. At least one text contains detailed logical argument (IELTS Handbook, 1996. p. 6, as cited in Alderson, 2000).

The test, according to Alderson (2000), "...seeks to sample candidates' ability to perform a number of tasks, although it is not implied that these can be tested in isolation or independently of each other" (p. 131). Such abilities amount to the construct that at least the original version of IELTS attempted to measure:

- Identifying structure, content, sequence of events and procedures.
- Following instructions.
- Finding main ideas which the writer has attempted to make salient.
- Identifying the underlying theme or concept.
- Identifying ideas in the text, and relationships between them, e.g. probabilities, solution, cause, effect.
- Identifying, distinguishing and comparing facts, evidence, opinions, implications, definitions and hypotheses.
- Evaluating and challenging evidence.
- Formulating a hypothesis from underlying theme, concept and evidence.
- Reaching a conclusion by relating supporting evidence to the main idea.
- Drawing logical inferences (IELTS Specifications, December 1989, as cited in Alderson, 2000).

#### **4.2.2. The Meta Cognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI)**

The Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) (Schraw & Dennison, 1994) was used to measure students' metacognitive awareness. The MAI consists of 52 statements which students' rate as being false or true on a five point Likert scale. The two components of metacognition discussed above are represented within the scale, metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. Within the MAI these are referred to as the knowledge of cognition factor and the regulation of cognition factor. Within the inventory there are 17 questions related to the knowledge of cognition factor for a possible point total of 85. There are 35 questions related to the regulation of cognition factor for a possible point total of 175. The factor scores are calculated by adding the scores on questions related to each of the factors. Higher scores correspond to greater metacognitive knowledge and greater metacognitive regulation. In addition to the knowledge of cognition score and the regulation of cognition score a MAI total score is derived by summing responses to all 52 questions. The instrument was designed for use on adult populations.

Operational definitions of component categories of this inventory are presented below:

Knowledge of Cognition:

- Declarative knowledge: Knowledge about one's skills, intellectual resources, and abilities as a learner.
- Procedural knowledge: Knowledge about how to implement learning procedures (e.g. strategies).
- Conditional knowledge: Knowledge about when and why to use learning procedures.

Regulation of Cognition:

- Planning: Planning, goal setting, and allocating resources prior to learning.
- Information management: Skills and strategy sequences used to process information more efficiently (e.g., organizing, elaborating, summarizing, selective focusing).
- Monitoring: Assessment of one's learning or strategy use.
- Debugging: Strategies used to correct comprehension and performance errors.
- Evaluation: Analysis of performance and strategy effectiveness after a learning episode.

(Schraw & Dennison, 1994, p.474)

Table 1

*The Number of Factors and Their Relevant Minimum and Maximum Scores in The Metacognitive Awareness Inventory*

Factors	Statements in the Inventory	NO of Items	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
<b>Declarative knowledge</b>	5,10,12,16,17,20,32,46	8	8	40
<b>Procedural knowledge</b>	3,14,27,33	4	4	20
<b>Conditional knowledge</b>	15,18,26,29,35	5	5	25
<b>Planning</b>	4,6,8,22,23,42,45	7	7	35
<b>Information management</b>	9,13,30,31,37,39,41,43,47,48	10	10	50
<b>Monitoring</b>	1,2,11,21, 28,34,49	7	7	35
<b>Debugging strategies</b>	25,40,44,51,52	5	5	25
<b>Evaluation</b>	7,19,24,36,38,50	6	6	30

#### 4.3 Data Collection

The study was conducted in several private Language Schools in Mashhad, a city in the north east of Iran in 2016. The Schools were selected based on credibility and feasibility criteria. The participants were asked to complete the *Meta cognitive awareness inventory* questionnaire and do *the reading section of IELTS test*. The questionnaire was coded numerically and they were asked not to write their names. As an incentive, the participants were given the opportunity to receive feedback about their performance on the instruments by presenting their codes.

#### 4.4. Data Analysis

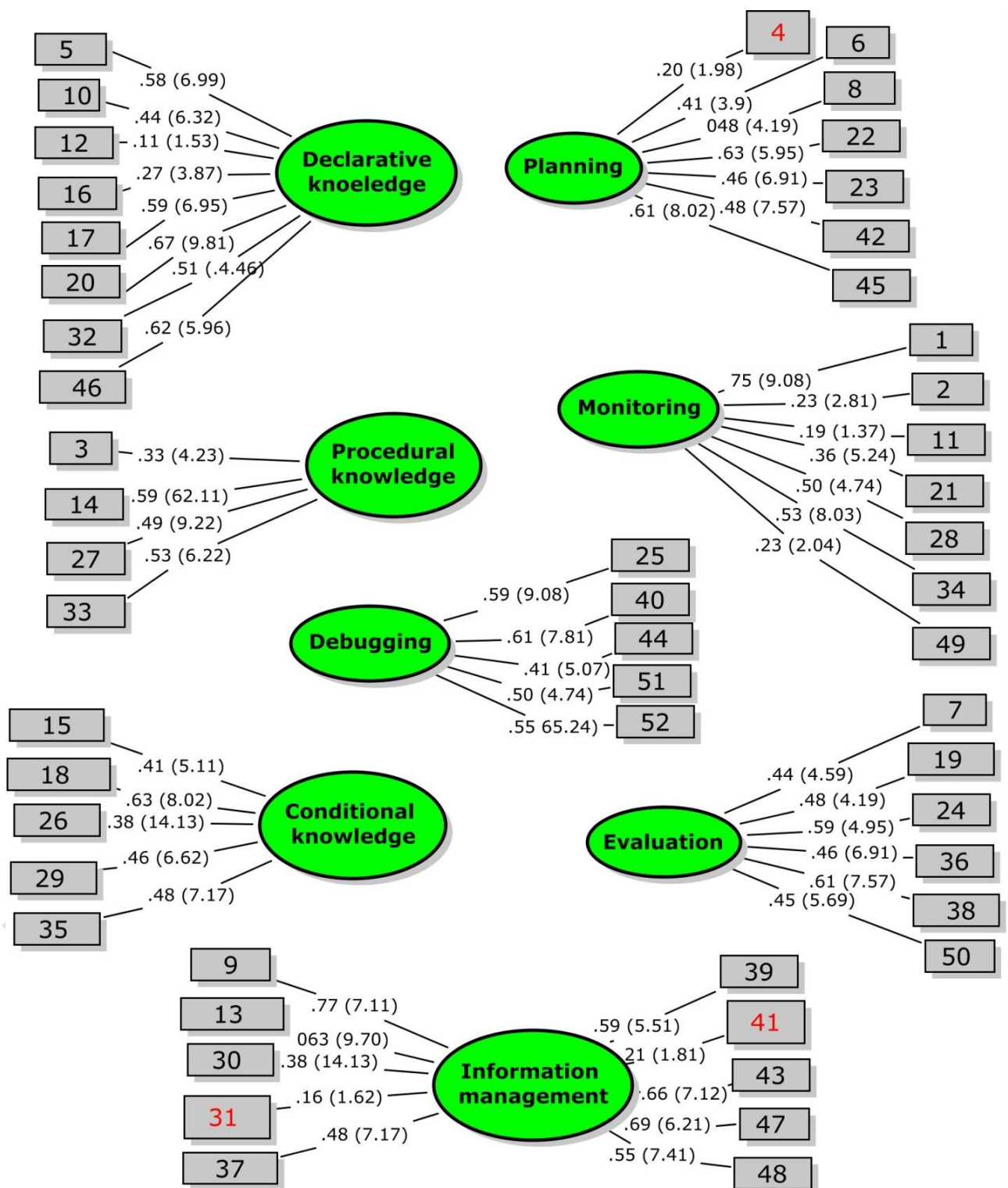
In this study, confirmatory factors analysis (CFA) was employed to determine the validity of Persian version MCA scale. Cronbach's alsha was utilized for examining reliability indices of the scale. To ensure the normality of the distribution, descriptive statistics and KS-test were employed. To determine the relationship between IELTS candidates' metacognitive awareness and their achievement in academic reading comprehension, a Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to the data. To find out which components of metacognitive awareness might have more predictive power in predicting candidates' reading score, a multiple regression analysis was run. To explore what percent of variability in IELTS

candidates can be explained by taking their metacognitive awareness into account, the standard multiple regressions were run.

## 5. Results

To determine content validity of the translated versions of MCA, the researchers assured the quality of items by accommodating the views of three experts. The translated questionnaire was then administered to EFL students. To substantiate the construct validity of the scales, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) utilizing the LISREL 8.50 statistical package was performed. The model for MCA consisted of eight factors, namely, *declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, conditional knowledge, planning, information management, Monitoring, debugging, and evaluation*. These subscales contained a total number of 52 items. A number of fit indices were examined to evaluate the model fit: the chi square/*df* ratio which should be lower than 2 or 3, the normed fit index (NFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the good fit index (GFI) with the cut value greater than .90, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of about .06 or .08 (Schreiber, Amaury, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). As indicated by Figure 1, the fit indices of the MCA are as follows: the chi-square/*df* ratio (2.06), the RMSEA (.061), NFI=.90, and CFI=.90. As it is indicated, all reached the acceptable fit thresholds. Overall, it can be concluded that the proposed model had a good fit with the empirical data.

The fit indices for each item were also examined: 1) the standardized estimates, 2) and *t*-values. The first one is the standardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) which demonstrates the factor loading of each item with respect to the corresponding factor and presents an easily grasped picture of effect size. The closer the magnitude to 1.0, the higher the correlation and the greater the factor loading of the item is. The magnitude of lower than 0.30 is an indication of weak factor loading; in such cases the item must be revised or discarded. The second measure is the *t*-value (*t*); if  $t > 2$  or  $t < -2$ , we call the result statistically significant. According to figure 1, all items had acceptable factor loadings except items 4, 12, 41, 31. These items were discarded from the Persian scale.



$\chi^2 = 996.41$ ,  $df = 483$ ,  $RMSEA = .061$ ,  $CFI = .91$ ,  $GFI = .89$ ,  $NFI = .90$

Figure 1. The schematic representation of the eight factors of metacognitive awareness and the corresponding items.

The reliability estimates of the scale and the comprising factors computed via Cronbach's alpha are as follows: metacognitive awareness (.81), declarative knowledge (.73), procedural

knowledge (.70), conditional knowledge (.72), planning (.78), information management (.79), monitoring (.80), debugging (.77), and evaluation (.79).

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of IELTS candidates' metacognitive awareness. The results are as follows: monitoring ( $M=28.89$ ,  $SD=3.42$ ), condition ( $M=19.88$ ,  $SD=3.09$ ), debugging strategies ( $M=21.14.89$ ,  $SD=2.61$ ), information management ( $M=40.71$ ,  $SD=5.98$ ), procedural knowledge ( $M=16.12$ ,  $SD=2.51$ ), evaluation ( $M=22.62$ ,  $SD=3.07$ ), declarative knowledge ( $M=33.14$ ,  $SD=2.27$ ), planning ( $M=29.60$ ,  $SD=3.43$ )

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of Metacognitive Awareness and its Comprising Factors*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Monitoring</b>	107	17.00	35.00	28.8972	3.42007
<b>Condition</b>	107	12.00	25.00	19.8879	3.09999
<b>Debugging</b>	107	14.00	25.00	21.1402	2.61147
<b>Information</b>	107	26.00	78.00	40.7196	5.98078
<b>Procedural</b>	107	6.00	20.00	16.1215	2.51302
<b>Evaluation</b>	107	15.00	30.00	22.6262	3.07922
<b>Declarative</b>	107	22.00	40.00	33.1402	4.27685
<b>Planning</b>	107	22.00	35.00	29.6075	3.43335
<b>MetCogAware</b>	107	151.00	260.00	212.1402	21.28931
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	107				

Descriptive statistics of IELTS reading scores are represented in Table 3 As the table reveals, the minimum score is 8, the maximum is 34, and the mean is 21.23.

Table 3 *Descriptive Statistics of IELTS Reading Scores*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>IELTS</b>	107	8.00	34.00	21.2336	5.89864
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	107				

To check the normality of data distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed. This test is used to check whether the distribution deviates from a comparable normal distribution. If the  $p$ -value is non-significant ( $p > .05$ ), we can say that the distribution of a sample is not significantly different from a normal distribution, therefore it is normal. If the  $p$ -value is significant ( $p < .05$ ) it implies that the distribution is not normal. Table 4 presents the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. As it can be seen, the obtained sig value for all variables (Metacognitive Awareness and IELTS Reading Scores) is higher than .05. Therefore, it can safely be concluded that the data is normally distributed across all variables.

Table 4

*The Results of K-S Test for Metacognitive Awareness, and IELTS Reading Scores*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
<b>Metacognitive awareness</b>	.981	107	.122
<b>IELTS reading</b>	.965	107	.096

To examine the relationship between metacognitive awareness (and its comprising factors) and IELTS reading scores, multiple Pearson Product-Moment correlations were run. Table 5. Indicates the results.

Table 5

*The Correlation Coefficients between Metacognitive Awareness (and its Comprising Factors) and IELTS Reading Scores*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. monitoring	1.00									
2. condition	.621**	1.00								
3. debugging	.549**	.477**	1.00							
4. information	.490**	.315**	.404**	1.00						
5. procedural	.623**	.530**	.308**	.363**	1.00					
6. evaluation	.571**	.492**	.416**	.316**	.518**	1.00				
7. declarative	.569**	.549**	.421**	.327**	.802**	.605**	1.00			
8. planning	.623**	.499**	.423**	.343**	.780**	.557**	.818**	1.00		
9. MetaCog	.827**	.717**	.643**	.655**	.797**	.720**	.820**	.819**	1.00	
10. IELTS	.379**	.278**	.270**	.274**	.527**	.482**	.625**	.535**	.543**	1.00

\*\*Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05

According to Table 5, there are significant correlations between IELTS reading score and metacognitive awareness ( $r = 0.543$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and all its subscales. The highest correlation is observed between IELTS and declarative knowledge ( $r = 0.625$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by planning ( $r = 0.535$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and procedural knowledge ( $r = 0.527$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Other correlation coefficients are as follows: evaluation ( $r = 0.482$ ,  $p < .05$ ), monitoring ( $r = 0.379$ ,  $p < .05$ ), Knowledge of condition ( $r = 0.278$ ,  $p < .05$ ), Information management ( $r = 0.274$ ,  $p < .05$ ), debugging ( $r = 0.270$ ,  $p > .05$ )



To investigate which components of *Metacognitive Awareness* might have more predictive power in predicting *IELTS candidates' Reading Scores* and how other constructs contribute to this model, a regression analysis was employed.

The following Table is the ANOVA table of regression for metacognitive awareness components (planning, information, debugging, condition, evaluation, monitoring, procedural, declarative) in predicting IELTS achievement. In this analysis, IELTS score is dependent variable and metacognitive awareness components are considered as independent variables. The magnitude of *F*-value ( $F= 9.77$ ) and the amount of the respective *p*-value ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicate the considered models are significant.

Table 6  
*The ANOVA Table of Regression for the Components of MCA*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	<b>Regression</b>	1636.132	8	204.516	9.767	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	<b>Residual</b>	2052.027	98	20.939		
	<b>Total</b>	3688.159	106			

a. Dependent Variable: IRS

b. Predictors: (Constant), planning, information, debugging, condition, EV, monitoring, procedural, declarative

As Table 7 shows, a number of MCA components (declarative, condition, and evaluation) are positive predictors of the dependent variable, i.e., IELTS reading. This can be figured out by examining the magnitude of the *t*-value (which should be higher than the critical level) and the *p*-value (which should be less than the significance level, i.e., 0.05). It was also found that among the variables, declarative knowledge is the most powerful predictor of IELTS reading scores.

Table 7.  
*The Results of Regression Analysis for the Variables under Study*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.312	4.727		1.758	.042
procedural	.009	.342	.004	.025	.980
declarative	.747	.218	.541	3.433	.001
condition	.231	.197	.122	2.175	.049
monitoring	.074	.215	.043	.344	.732
debugging	.382	.221	.169	1.725	.088
information	.100	.087	.102	1.149	.253
evaluation	.379	.195	.198	2.942	.050
planning	.085	.251	.050	.340	.734

a. Dependent Variable: IRS

Table 8 illustrates the model summary statistics. The results revealed that the model containing the eight variables of metacognitive awareness can predict about 40 percent of IELTS reading achievement. The R value is 0.666 which indicates the correlation coefficient between the variables. Its square value is 0.444 and its adjusted square is 0.398. It indicates that about 40 of the variation in IELTS achievement can be explained by taking the above-mentioned variables into account.

Table 8 R Square Table for the Role of Metacognitive Awareness Components in IELTS

1	Mode	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	1	.666 <sup>a</sup>	.444	.398	4.57592

a. Predictors: (Constant), planning, information, debugging, condition, evaluation, monitoring, procedural, declarative

## 6. Discussion

The primary concern of this study was to substantiate the validity and reliability of the Persian version of metacognitive awareness scale among Iranian EFL learners. The results of CFA and reliability estimates confirmed the validity and reliability of the scale with some minor modifications. The present study also sought to examine whether there is a relationship between IELTS candidates' metacognitive awareness ability and their reading comprehension achievement. Furthermore, this study tried to uncover to what extent IELTS candidates' performance on metacognitive awareness test could predict their success in IELTS reading comprehension section.

Considering the main objective of our study which asked whether there is a relationship between students' metacognitive awareness ability and their reading comprehension achievement, the result of the present study revealed that there was a significant albeit average relationship between IELTS reading score and metacognitive awareness ( $r = 0.543, p < 0.05$ ) and all its subscales. This finding suggests that those students who have a higher level of metacognitive awareness should logically perform better on IELTS reading section. The result of the regression analysis showed that the model containing the total scores of metacognitive awareness components can predict about 40% of the learners' success in IELTS reading section.

The findings of this study are in line with previous research. It is contended that having positive beliefs in metacognition and adjusting language learning strategies in learning tend to aid learners to obtain higher grades. A number of studies indicated that metacognition is a strong predictor of learning (Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger, & Kruger, 2003; Flavell, 1976, 1979; Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Research has shown that learners with higher levels of metacognition perform better than those with lower levels of metacognition (Garner & Alexander, 1989; Kruger & Dunning, 1999). The reason is that metacognitively aware learners plan, sequence, and monitor their learning in a way that improves their performance (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). They are aware of their thinking and use their awareness to control their thinking. This finding is also in harmony with Mevarech and Kramarski's (2003) contention that metacognition should be embedded in the learning process, and attests to Rasekh and Ranjbar's (2003) conclusion that metacognitive awareness contribute to improvements in students' vocabulary learning.

It seems the above finding is generalizable to reading achievement. Mohammadali and Negin's (2014) research showed that there is a significant relationship between using metacognitive reading strategies and reading comprehension among ESL college learners. The results are also consistent with those of previous studies which have shown that better readers have an enhanced metacognitive awareness of their own use of strategies and what they know, which in turn leads to greater reading ability and proficiency (Baker & Brown, 1984; Garner,

1987; Baumann, Jones, & Seifert-Kessel, 1993; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). That is, if a reader is aware of what is needed to perform effectively, then it is possible to take steps to meet the demands of a reading situation more effectively. If, however, the reader is not aware of his or her own limitations as a reader or of the complexity of the task at hand, then the reader can hardly be expected to take actions to anticipate or recover from difficulties (Carrell, 1989).

The results also demonstrated that among the components of metacognitive awareness, declarative knowledge and planning were found to have the highest correlations with IELTS reading score. Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge about oneself as a learner and about what factors can influence one's performance (Schraw & Gregory, 1998; Schneider & Artelt, 2010). Cognitive psychologists posited roles for two long-term memory systems, declarative and procedural memory, in second language (L2) learning (Morgan-Short & Ullman, 2012; Ullman, 2005, 2015, in press). These memory systems differ along a number of dimensions, including their relationships with awareness, the computations they perform, and the neural substrates subserving them (Eichenbaum, 2002; Eichenbaum & Cohen, 2001). For example, declarative memory supports the learning of general facts and knowledge (i.e., semantic memory) and autobiographical events from one's life (i.e., episodic memory; Tulving, 1993). Declarative memory is also argued to support both explicit (i.e., with awareness) and implicit (i.e., without awareness) forms of knowledge (Ullman, 2005). The high association between declarative knowledge and performance on IELTS reading is plausible given that one of the most critical determinants of reading achievement— as a non-productive skill— is knowledge about structure, content, and reading strategies. This is even more evident in the case of IELTS which is highly strategic-based.

This result is somehow in line with the findings of Kesici, Erdogan, and Irem Özteke (2011) who reported that declarative metacognitive awareness strategy is a significant predictor of college students' mathematics achievement. Swanson's (1990) research findings revealed that declarative knowledge of cognition facilitates regulation of problem solving among students since problem solving is one of the most important phases in mathematics knowledge (Polya, 1957). The students must know what facts affect their performance and what they must know to be successful. It is possible with the declarative knowledge which is one of the strategies of metacognitive awareness strategies.

As stated earlier, planning had the second highest correlation with IELTS reading performance. It involves "the selection of appropriate strategies and allocation of resources that affect one's learning performance" (Schraw & Moshman, 1995, p.354). The skills referable to planning are setting goals, selecting appropriate strategies and scheduling time and strategies. Adopting appropriate strategies to read and comprehend the text and use the information at the time of need depends on planning. Hence, the ultimate level of reading achievement is prominently determined by planning which is a higher-order cognitive process (Das, Naglieri, & Kirby, 1994; Das, Parrila, & Papadopoulos, 2000; Kirby et al., 1996; Mahapatra, 2015, 2016).

The contribution of planning to language achievement is twofold. At one end, purpose and plans develop only after some mastery over language has been developed; at the other end, these seem to be the inherent characteristic features of human beings. Hence, in determining one's proficiency in reading, the unique contribution of planning is required to be studied thoroughly. Sinclair (2000) suggested that when there is not an explicit awareness of the processes involved in learning, learners will not be able to make informed decisions about their own learning. The reading literature reveals that planning as a higher order cognitive process helps the reader to make decisions in adopting suitable strategies towards the attainment of the goal.

Reading and understanding the print is a highly complex cognitive activity that requires the appropriate interweaving of top-down, conceptually driven processes and of bottom-up, text driven processes (Rumelhart, 1977). The skilled reader, therefore, keeping in view the

purpose of reading, develops his own plans and strategies of mastering the content of the text and becomes adept in the deliberate application of that knowledge in remarkably flexible ways. The more efficient and parsimonious the plan is, the more effective is the outcome. Skilled reading therefore is not just the strategic search of visual information, rather a strategic approach towards conceptualization, storage, and meaningful integration of these information in attaining the goal.

Based on the above-discussed findings, various implications can be put forward for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and learners. Applying the components of metacognitive awareness, EFL teachers and curriculum designers can motivate students to enhance and apply their metacognitive awareness abilities, which will in turn result in their use of these abilities later in life. Teachers are expected to teach and encourage the learners how to use these strategies and take the maximum benefit of them in the process of their learning. When learners believe in their abilities to perform tasks, they would create deeper interest in learning and develop their confidence in order to overcome the difficulties of learning. Therefore, language teachers should help students know not only what strategies to use but also when and how to employ them; that is, they should move learners from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” (Alhaqbani & Riazi, 2012).

In this respect, learners should be explicitly taught about how the strategy is used, why it is important and when and how it applies to the specific task at hand. In essence, the preparation and planning, the selection of appropriate reading strategies, the rationale behind strategy use, monitoring of strategy selection and use, and evaluation of usefulness of metacognitive strategies for reading comprehension should be all elaborated on and exemplified. Furthermore, language teachers should provide students with multiple and repeated opportunities to practice the new strategies on a variety of learning tasks and activities so that eventually the strategy itself becomes part of students’ procedural knowledge. Such an approach seems to help students become strategic and independent language readers.

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## THE INFLUENCE OF WEBLOG ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS WRITING

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### ABSTRACT

New models of communication technology created good pedagogical models and learning field. On the other hand, paying attention to this fact that writing is a social process accentuates the importance of weblog writing. In this study quasi-experimental research design was applied to elicit data from 48 Iranian intermediate EFL learners ranging from age of 16 to 18 and extracted from 60 EFL learners. Learners took part in a GEPT (general English proficiency test) to be sure about their homogeneity in term of English proficiency. It was a standard proficiency test that was adapted and validated to my context with test-retest. The learners with score in beyond +/-1sd GEPT (12 learners) were excluded. Its internal reliability, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.90 indicating that all items were reliable. Then, to avoid bias they were randomly paired to control group and experimental group. The data was collected through GEPT and a five-scale Likert questionnaire response as pre-test and post-test after treatment. The collected data was analyzed by using deductive methods like using t-test on SPSS 18 to find out the consequences of the research assumptions. It was revealed that weblog had positive influence on the learners' attitude toward writing. Meanwhile, according to statistics, confidence interval of the difference in all tests of the study was 95% and p value was less than 0.05 indicating the fact that the result was due to considered variables, and not due to other variables. The finding of the study draws teachers', course designers', and stock-holders' attention to this fact that they should integrate computer and its technology into EFL education.

**Keywords:** attitude; learning; weblog; writing

### Introduction

A weblog (or blog) is a web-based space for writing where all the writing and editing of information is managed through a web browser and is immediately and publicly available in the Internet (Zhang, 2009). Recent developments in the field of technology have led to a rehabilitated interest in using it in language learning and teaching. According to Badrinathan (2013); Noytim (2010); Williams, & Jacobs (2004) blogs expand the opportunities for student interaction and the horizons of learning space" exponentially, provide writers with a far greater audience both within and outside of the classroom. Yih and Nah (2009) cited writing is important for education of EFL learners for some reasons. Firstly, writing well is a necessary skill for academic achievement. Secondly, writing can be an effective tool for the development of language proficiency itself. Thirdly, writing across the curriculum can be valuable for mastering diverse subject matter, as written expressions allow learners to raise their awareness of knowledge gaps, ABSTRACT problem-specific knowledge into schemas that can be applied to other relevant cases, and elaborate mental representations of knowledge that can be more



easily retrieved, while simultaneously allowing teachers to better understand the students' state of knowledge and thinking process and thus adjust necessary instructions.

Recent developments in technology have heightened the need for using weblog in the field of learning and teaching because teachers can open a new way for their students to communicate with other students through creating a blog. Moreover, teaching and learning through weblog is a great way to communicate with parents and keep them involved in what is going on in the classroom with their children even if they cannot physically be there. In addition, it enhances learning via visual learning.

A lot of researchers have confirmed the importance of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and weblog. Weblogs is new and fast form of communication and publishing in the Internet; blog-based learning is a vital part of learning improves traditional teacher - led education potentially (Kim, Turner, Rimal. & Morrison, 2006). As Shahamat and Riazi, (2009) mention blogs allow learners to improve personal content by cooperating and sharing their knowledge with other learners in online community. The other advantage of weblog that outweighs other types of social media is allowing viewpoints on the same subjects to be posted and link to other blogs (Yu, & Watkins, 2011). Meanwhile, it shows potential effect on teacher's instructions, and improves student's self-reflection and self-evaluation of their learning (Kazai, Yusof & Clarke, 2016). The significant literature on the role of technology-based instructions in learning and teaching reveals the key importance of these technologies in education particularly language learning.

In spite of many researches done in this case, far too little attention has been paid to the role of weblog in enhancing of EFL learners' attitude towards writing. Since most of them have concentrated on CALL in EFL teaching and learning. Some of them have focused only on relationship of computer and learning skills; how weblog has changed the learners' performances. Moreover, the problem with those of which have focused on attitude toward technology-based learning in English classroom, is that they have not paid enough attention to the effect of weblog on EFL learners' attitude toward writing in Iran. Additionally, since technology and its sub-sections in Iran, EFL classes haven't been progressed a lot. Besides, our findings may pave the way for teachers and educational stock-holders to integrate computer and its technologies into EFL teaching and learning. The study may also improve teaching methods of English writing.

### **The purpose of study**

This study aims at determining the effectiveness of using weblog in learning English language writing compared with the traditional method. With the help of computer and weblog, language learning environments can be more cheerful, motivating for learners to learn writing.

### **Literature review**

Today, it is undeniable that the revolution of technology in the recent years has modified the way in which pedagogical resources and information are distributed in different institutional levels and fields. So focusing on technology and its usage in instructional and academic curricula has been one of debatable issues. This study aimed to investigate the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' attitudes toward using CALL in the form of weblog in their writing process. These concepts build a foundation of knowledge regarding weblog and its impact on the learning community in EFL classroom. As an important part of research, technology integration requires investigations and explorations in EFL field on the use of CALL and weblog in language classrooms.

### **Writing**

A large number of researchers have emphasized the importance of writing. For example, Yih and Nah (2009) mentioned that writing is important for education of FL learners for some reasons. Firstly, writing well is a necessary skill for academic achievement. Secondly, writing

can be an effective tool for the development of language proficiency itself. Thirdly, writing across the curriculum can be valuable for mastering diverse subject matter as written expression allows learners to raise their awareness of knowledge gaps, ABSTRACT problem-specific knowledge into schemas that can be applied to other relevant cases, and elaborate mental representations of knowledge that can be more easily retrieved.

### **Defining a Weblog**

According to the Oxford dictionary, "A blog is a website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order." A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. A weblog is a web-based space for writing where all the writing and editing of information is managed through a web browser and is immediately and publicly available in the Internet (Zhang, 2009). Similarly, Godwin-Jones, (2011) stated that weblog commonly known as a blog is a contraction of two words: web and log. It is a great way to communicate with parents and keep them involved in learning and teaching, even if they cannot physically be there.

### **Weblogs and Writing Instruction in ELT**

Computers have been used in writing classrooms for a long time. Originally the use of computers in the teaching of writing has been restricted to word processing. It is easy for teachers to make corrections and for students to make revisions. Later, some editing programs provided additional functions such as spelling checkers, and readability scores that helped students with textual errors. However, the use of computers in composition teaching has grown dramatically as new software programs and teacher-designed computer exercises are created. Gorbis and Hallgren (1999) confirmed that "historically, technology of visualization plays an important role in many fields and makes atmosphere of learning enjoyable." Blogs are user-friendly websites which are easy to maintain and frequently updated by their owners. The rise in popularity of technology has resulted in new words being added to the English language, such as: blog, blogging, bloggers, and blogosphere (Embrey, (2002); Izadpanah, & Alavi, (2016). Blog also enables individuals to express their thoughts at their own pace and in their own space so that, in contrast to traditional classroom settings, learners who use blogs do not have to compete with their classmates for the instructor's attention (Burke, & Grosvenor, 2015). To illustrate more, Pinkman (2005) wrote that blogging becomes communicative and interactive when participants assume multiple roles in the writing process, as writers who write and post, as readers/reviewers who respond to other writers' posts, and as writer-readers who, returning to their own posts, react to criticism of their own posts.

### **Attitude**

Attitude is one of challenging concepts which different researches have provided different definitions. For example, Ostrom (1969); Izadpanah, & Asadi, (2015) stated attitude is a reaction or respond to an object or a set of objects. Krashen (1981) defined L2 attitude as learners' tendency toward the culture and speakers of the target language. Marzban (2011) referred to affective states and attitudes as "emotion," "feelings," "attitude," "anxiety," "belief," and "motivation." He added "attitudes" are "psychological states acquired over a period of time as a result of our experiences; these attitudes influence us to act in certain ways". Levine and Donitsa-Schmidt (1998) cited attitude is value, belief, evaluation, acquired motivation. Warschauer, & Meskill, (2000) stated that attitude is second language students' negative or positive feeling about learning of second language which is inter-related with motivation. In other words, students' motivation mainly depends on their attitudes. Vandewaetere and Desmet (2009) stated that cognitive component is beliefs or ideas about related the objects or situations to the attitude. It was defined as what individuals accept or reject in various situations.

### **Attitude toward Language Learning**

Many factors are important learning of language. Among them, positive attitude is more enhancing and facilitating (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Izadpanah, & Alavi, (2016); Krashen,

1981; Vandewaetere & Desmet, 2009). Students who have negative attitude toward second language acquisition will learn less input and have high affective filter where as those possessing positive attitude toward second language acquisition will acquire more input, and also have lower affective variable( Levine and Donitsa-Schmidt ,1998).

**Previous studies on the effect of CALL especially weblog on learners' attitude and motivation**

In a recent study by Ebrahimi, Eskandari and Rahimi (2013), the influence of adopting technology-enhanced language learning framework was found on students' leaning. The participants of this study were selected through accidental sampling. They were 34 Iranian between 17 and 21 years (F=14 and M=20) upper-intermediate EFL students in a communication class in Parto English Institute, Arsanjan, Iran. The study was carried out through a quasi-experimental (Non-equivalent Comparison) with pretest and posttest in control and experimental groups by means of Cambridge ESOL Preliminary Test (PET), a proficiency test, a five-scale Likert questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed by means of ANCOVA on SPSS 18. They found that a technology-enhanced language learning environment proved to be more effective, learner-centered , and improved students' autonomy .

Jalali and Dousti (2014) conducted an experimental study to investigate the impact of attitudes of three different young EFL students toward CALL. The participants were divided into two control and experimental groups. The control group was taught traditionally, and the experimental group was taught through computers for 15 minutes. Then students answered A-call questionnaire. Results revealed that participants generally showed positive attitude toward use of computers.

Kalanzadeh, Soleimani and Bakhtiarvand (2014) investigated the influence of technology on 60 Iranians EFL students' motivation in university classrooms through questionnaire. In order to gather the required data for this study a group of 60 English students majoring in English translation were selected at random. They were studying English at Payam-e-Noor university of Andimeshk, Iran. The age range, sex, and background knowledge of English of the students were not controlled in this study. This empirical study was based on a questionnaire composed of 15 questions about motivation and technology use in EFL classrooms and developed by Bull, Bull, & Kajder (2003). The questionnaire was distributed among the subjects and then an item analysis was done. Then the data were entered into SPSS and chi-square statistical analysis was used. It was found that there was positive correlation between students' attitude, language learning and technology use in the English classes.

Dashtestani (2014) explored the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions on use of online instruction by conducting a mixed-method study questionnaire and semi-structured interview on 242 EFL teachers filling in questionnaire phase of the study. In addition, 46 EFL teachers were interviewed. Results from the study revealed that participants support rather positive attitudes toward use of online instruction. In addition, it was found that there are some barriers to implementation of online instruction in Iranian EFL classrooms like lack of online facilities and resources, lack of interaction in online instruction, cultural resistances to online instruction and teachers' limited knowledge of online instruction.

Also in a recent study Rahimi and Askari (2014) studied the effectiveness of using ICT like internet, email, blogs and PowerPoint in developing students' self-regulation. The study used a pretest-posttest. To this end, 60 Iranian female English students in the age range of 16-21 were randomly selected the participants, were divided into two experimental and control groups.

Shana and Abulibdehb (2015) investigated the EFL students' attitudes toward use of computers in a private university on their language learning process. In this respect, 192 undergraduate students filled in a questionnaire to see impact of some factors like gender, experience of using computers, and perceived abilities in using programs on attitudes of students. Findings of the study verified the key role of the computer in learning process of students. Although effect of gender was not found to be significant on students' attitude, skill in using program had positive effect on students' attitude.

Öz, Demirezen and Pourfeiz (2015) investigated the relationship between computer literacy, attitudes towards foreign language learning and computer-assisted language learning among 123 English university students with two different questionnaires, Attitudes towards Foreign Language Learning (A-FLL) Scale and the Attitudes towards Computer-Assisted Language Learning (A-CALL) scale. The present study was conducted in an EFL teacher education program at a major state university in Turkey. A total of 134 EFL learners ranged in age from 19 to 22 (male:  $N = 34$  and female:  $N = 100$ ) enrolled in the program voluntarily participated in the study and gave consent for data collection. Result of the study showed that the students who had high positive attitudes toward FLL, had high positive attitudes toward CALL. In addition, it was revealed that there was a positive correlation between gender and computer literacy.

A study conducted on 351 university female students in Japan by Burke and Grosvenor (2015), to investigate their reaction to iPads and eBooks explored that students showed positive reactions to both iPods and eBooks. The survey showed that students' reactions to iPads and eBooks are quite positive but that there are some discrepancies between different groups of students in the use of iPads. All participants were 351 students out of the 450. Not all surveys were complete. Many of the questions on the survey asked students to report on a 5-point Likert Scale, with 1 indicating low and 5 indicating high. Finally, there was a section in which students could give their opinions about the iPad. The result showed that there was a positive correlation between students' attitudes and iPad.

In another study, Sardegna, & Dugartsyrenova, (2014) tried to investigate factors affecting CALL in Chinese senior high schools by asking 340 English teachers to fill in a questionnaire and taking part in semi-structured oral interview. A questionnaire was administered to 340 English teachers and a semi-structured oral interview was conducted as a follow-up. The result showed teachers support using computer and its technologies in teaching and learning English. Shams and Ketabi (2015) investigated attitudes of Iranian teachers on using Interactive White Boards (IWB) in EFL classrooms with a questionnaire including 22 questions distributed among 174 EFL teachers who used IWBs in their teaching and learning process. Questionnaires items were based on four main themes including: instructional effects, motivational effects, usability, and frequency. Generally, it was proved that teachers had positive attitude toward IWB use and they confirmed that IWB is a powerful motivating tool in teaching process.

Regarding with all of the researches done in this field, fewer researchers have investigated the influence of weblog on attitudes of learners in learning to write and its implication in Iran. Thus, the researcher thought it was more important to study influence of weblog on writing of learners in our country. Consequently, since technology and its sub-sections in Iran EFL classes haven't been progressed a lot, it was important to investigate students' attitudes toward using of weblog to teach and learn writing. Besides, our findings may pave the way for teachers and educational stock-holders to integrate computer and its technologies into EFL teaching and learning.

## **Method**

### **Design of Study**

In this study, the researcher used quasi-experimental method to investigate the impact of weblog and learners' attitude change in the EFL writing classroom.

### **Participants and Setting**

This study investigated the influence of the simultaneous use of weblog on learners' attitudes to write and writing performance. This study was done in Jahade Daneshghahi Language Institute of Miyaneh. The important reason for choosing Jahad Daneshghahi Language Institute for the study was that it is an authoritative and official state institute under supervision of Tabriz University to teach English Skills. The participants were at the same intermediate level of English. In this study a quasi-experimental research design was applied to elicit data from 48 Iranian intermediate EFL learners ranging from age of 16 to 18 and extracted from 60 EFL learners selected out of 70 learners according to Cochran Formula. The participants ought to be

at the same intermediate English level. For this reason, initially, students took part in a GEPT (General English Proficiency Test) to be sure about their homogeneity in term of English proficiency. This was a standard proficiency test that was adapted and validated to the context and its reliability was tested with Test-Re-test Reliability through pilot test. The students with score beyond +1/-1 standard deviation (12 students) were excluded. Then, they were randomly assigned and paired to control and experimental groups to avoid bias. Control group was taught through conventional way of writing in the class on odd days in Jahade Daneshghahi and experimental group was received treatment through weblog with the same instructor, giving them instructions how to use their weblogs in computer site of Jahade Daneshghahi on even days for 20 sessions during three weeks.

### **Data Collection Tools (Instrument)**

The data was collected through a five-scale Lickert questionnaire response as pre-test, intervention (treatment), and post-test.

#### **Pretest**

The pre-test was used in this study was a questionnaire. It was a five-scale Lickert questionnaire response extracted from Dr. Yuh-show Cheng's questionnaire (Professor of Department of English in National Taiwan Normal University) commissioned and published by Taiwan's Education in 2002 with her permission and authorization and was measuring the students' attitude before treatment. Meanwhile it was translated by some English experts to avoid any misunderstanding by learners.

The questionnaire was validated according to our context. To this end, questionnaire including 30 questions was given to ten experts to determine which ones are essentials and its content validity was estimated by Lawsh CVR (Content Validity Ratio) for each item. Ten questions were excluded.

After that that twenty questions were distributed among 20 learners to estimate its internal reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha was 0.90 indicating that all items were reliable; no items out of 20 questions were excluded.

#### **Post-test**

After treatment learners' learning attitude toward writing were evaluated based on the results of the same test that was five-scale Lickert questionnaire response validated to the context to measure the learners' attitude toward writing after treatment.

#### **Piloting GEPT Questions**

The test to be sure about homogeneity of learners in this study was a GEPT (General English Proficiency Test) which was a standardized test was commissioned by Taiwan's Ministry of Education in 1999 included listening, speaking, reading and writing tests should measure the students writing performance. Section two was devoted to reading and writing which had 30 questions being presented in six parts; however, it had to be noted that its reading section was scored objectively and its writing was scored by two raters to prevent raters' bias. The researcher shortened and validated the section two which was 30 questions to 20 questions including reading and writing questions, and to check the reliability of the test after adaption, first 10 learners who were similar to the target group took the test for the first time and after 15 days again they were given the same test. The correlation of two tests was 0.74 that showed the validated test was reliable enough to be used in our study according to the context. (Table 3.1)

*Table 3.1 Correlations of Test and Retest Of GEPT*

	VAR0001	VAR0002
VAR0001	1	.745*
	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>.013</b>

	N	10	10
VAR00002	Pearson Correlation	.745*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	
	N	10	10

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### Piloting the Questionnaire

Another pilot study was conducted on English learners who had not participated in the research, but were similar to the population of the present study. It was hoped that carrying out the pilot study would mean that the succeeding sample might be less affected by any other possible variables, and would help the researcher to develop a reliable assessment instrument, formulating survey items to measure participants' attitudes toward EFL writing through weblog. The items that were used in the pilot version of the instrument firstly was given to ten English experts in Jahad

Daneshghahi of Miyaneh to determine which ones are essentials and its content validity was estimated by Lawsh CVR (Content Validity Ratio) for each item. Ten questions were excluded.

According to Lawsh Formula →  $CVR = \frac{N_e - N + 2}{N + 2}$

$N + 2$

Every item in CVR must not be lower than 0.42 unless it is known not to be valid.

Table 3.2 Content Validity Ratio of Validated Questionnaire According to Lawsh Formula

Questions	Numbers of 10 Experts who thought the item was Essential	CVR	Valid
1	8	0.6	Valid
2	3	-0.4	Invalid
3	10	1	Valid
4	9	0.8	Valid
5	8	0.6	Valid
6	8	0.6	Valid
7	8	0.6	Valid
8	2	-0.6	Invalid
9	7	0.4	Invalid
10	9	0.8	Valid
11	10	1	Valid
12	8	0.6	Valid
13	7	0.4	Invalid
14	9	0.8	Valid
15	6	0.2	Invalid
16	9	0.8	Valid
17	4	-0.2	Invalid
18	9	0.8	Valid
19	8	0.6	Valid
20	4	-0.2	Invalid
21	8	0.6	Valid
22	8	0.6	Valid
23	3	-0.4	Invalid
24	9	0.8	Valid
25	2	-0.6	Invalid
26	9	0.8	Valid

27	7	0.4	Invalid
28	10	1	Valid
29	9	0.8	Valid
30	8	0.6	Valid

After that in order to provide an appropriate form of survey instrument for group administration within a short period of time, all items in the pilot questionnaire were translated into Persian. This translated version of the questionnaire was revised based upon the feedback provided by three university professors. They were then distributed

to a sample of 10 students to estimate its internal reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha was 0.90 indicating that all items were reliable; no items out of 20 questions were excluded.

*Table 3.3 Reliability of Validated Questionnaire*

*Case Processing Summary*

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

*a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.*

*Table 3.4 Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.909	.916	20

*Table 3.5 Item Statistics*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Q1	2.30	.657	20
Q2	1.85	.587	20
Q3	2.50	.607	20
Q4	2.50	.607	20
Q5	2.45	.686	20
Q6	2.45	.605	20
Q7	2.65	.745	20
Q8	2.45	.605	20
Q9	2.45	.605	20
Q10	2.65	.745	20
Q11	2.55	.605	20
Q12	2.70	.733	20
Q13	2.50	.607	20
Q14	2.60	.681	20
Q15	2.70	.923	20
Q16	2.60	.821	20
Q17	2.45	.605	20
Q18	2.45	.686	20
Q19	2.75	.786	20
Q20	2.05	.686	20

#### **Data Collection Procedure**

##### **Administration of the Questionnaire as a Test to Determine the Learners' Attitude towards Writing**

Information was collected by means of five-scale Lickert questionnaire response. It was a validated CALLAI (Computer Assisted Language Learning Attitude Instrument) questionnaire by Cheng (2012). The items of the questionnaire included affective, behavioral, and language skills factors. It was reduced to 20 items and validated for Persian language contexts like Iran by ten English experts and its internal reliability was estimated by pilot test and Cronbach's Alpha was 0.90 indicating that all items were reliable; no items out of 20 questions were excluded. First section of the questionnaire was related to background information of students such as age, gender, grade, accessibility to computer, and their English language level. Second section of the questionnaire was composed of 20 items relating to affective, behavioral, and language skills components. It was distributed among control and experimental groups as pre-test and post-test.

#### **Treatment**

The treatment of the research included teaching of writing to experimental group learners through weblog in computer site of Jahade Daneshghahi of Miyaneh by an instructor on even days. It took 20 an hour sessions three times a week, practicing writing with them practically, negotiating, and evaluating their writing through weblog. In a way that firstly, the learners were instructed how to create weblog in computer site of Jahad Daneshghahi for two sessions and after that the instructor taught them to write composition with " Developing Composition



Skills “ book by Mary K. Ruetten .They were instructed to write paragraph and after that composition included more than one paragraph ,different kinds of paragraph ( introduction , body , conclusion ) , different kinds of writing ( descriptive , explanatory ,and so on) , and punctuation marks. Meanwhile, after having completed their writings, they send and share them with their peers in weblog” classcentral.vcp.ir”. Learners were then instructed to read two to three of their classmates’ writings in the blog and comment on them. It is better to remind that they should register first of all in weblog and after that they could upload their own writings or comment on others’ writings. But control group learners were instructed writing in conventional way in class three times a week on odd days.

### Results

The question that the study addressed to answer, was, “What is the influence of Weblog on the attitude of Iranian intermediate EFL learners towards EFL writing? “

The results shown in Table 4.1 and 4.2 support and confirm the hypothesis.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is statistically significant difference in learners’ attitude towards writing between EFL intermediate Iranian learners who use weblog in writing and the ones who don’t. (H<sub>1</sub>: (H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq 0$ )

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in learners’ attitude towards writing between EFL intermediate Iranian learners who use weblog in writing and the ones who don’t. (H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = 0$ )

It was important to be sure if test distribution of pre-test and post-test is normal or not. So the researcher used Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test .To this end, indicating that test distribution was normal. Therefore, the researcher used Paired T-Test to analyze the data. (Table 4.1)

*Table 4.10 One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test*

		Attitude	
		Pretest	Posttest
N		48	48
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	65.90	64.96
	Std. Deviation	3.720	4.242
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.199	.168
	Positive	.199	.168
	Negative	-.093	-.139
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.381	1.166
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.044	.132

*Test distribution is Normal.*

To this end, the researcher compared the mean of learners’ scores of experimental group in answering of questionnaire (73.88) with the mean of learners’ scores of control group (56.04). Difference between the means of two groups was (17.83). It was revealed that there was significant difference between means of learners’ scores of two groups in post-test indicating this fact that weblog can change learners’ attitude positively. Because the statistics showed meaningful difference between attitude of learners who use weblog in their writing and the ones who write in conventional way. (t= 12.922, df= 23, P< 0.0005, 2-tailed)(See Table 4.11 and Table 4.12)

*Table4.11: Paired Samples Descriptive Statistics*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error

					Mean
Pair 1	Control Group	56.0417	24	3.38127	.69020
	Experimental Group	73.88	24	6.081	1.241

*Table 4.12: Paired Samples Test*

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Control - Experimental	-17.83333	6.76093	1.38007	-20.68822	14.97844	-12.922	23	.000

To have a strong leg to confirm hypothesis 3 , the researcher compared the difference between the mean of learners' scores of experimental group in answering questionnaire in pre-test (55.96) with their score mean in post-test (73.88) .There was significant difference between two means of the same group (-17.917) . It was revealed that weblog can impact learners' attitude positively. (t=12.955, df= 23, P<0.00025, 1-tailed) (See Table 4.13 & 4.14)

H3: Weblog can influence learners' attitudes for learning positively. (H1:  $\mu d > 0$ )

H0: Weblog cannot influence learners' attitudes for learning positively. (H0:  $\mu d \leq 0$ )

*Table4.13: Paired Samples Descriptive Statistics*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre_test	55.96	24	3.381	.690
	Post_test	73.88	24	6.081	1.241

*Table4.14: Paired Samples Test*

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre_test - Post_test	-17.917	6.775	1.383	-20.778	-15.056	-12.955	23	.000

The researcher explored significant variations in students' attitude before and after the course (paired t-test for each group). The weblog intervention did change learners' attitudes with regard to the factors of enjoyment, productivity and participation in weblog situation. At the same time, the group of learners who hadn't received any treatments also hadn't significant change in their attitude level towards writing. The researcher attempted to find out whether those dependent variables of attitude performance in the experimental group had achieved a higher level of change in comparison with the control group. The result shows that the weblog intervention had a greater impact on learners' attitudes towards writing. In other words, learners in the experimental group were more likely to enjoy writing in English and showed an

increased possibility of using English to express their thoughts and ideas more frequently. The learners in the experimental group were more likely to appreciate their own writing and more willing to participate in the process of revision and self-correction rather than simply reacting to the designated revision tasks.(Table 4.4- 4.5 )

Bearing in mind the above findings, it should be noted that different technological experiences such as weblog and online writing represent a form of social learning activity and social interaction. These technological experiences can play a role as a facilitator when learners are engaged in the context of cooperative learning. Based on the quantitative findings, learners who experienced the weblog writing had a more positive attitude toward the weblog activities and practicing. The researcher found that after twenty sessions of the EFL writing course with the weblog intervention, learners who often used weblog reflected a stronger attitude towards their writing compared with those who never or sometimes used weblog to write in English. This means learners who use weblog frequently are more likely to welcome suggestions and to invite readers or to have their writing proofread by others. Weblog also provides learners a platform to make comments on others' writing activities. Therefore, it is possible to assume that email activity helps the learners to adapt themselves in some writing tasks, particularly when they are asked to proofread and make suggestions on other's writing. The wealth of data provided by the quantitative analysis also demonstrates the fact that learners in the experimental group were more likely to enjoy writing in English and considered the possibility of using English to express their thoughts and ideas more enthusiastically.

#### **Discussion**

The discussion of the research findings in relation to the research question can be summarized as follows. To answer the question, "What is the influence of weblog on attitude of Iranian intermediate EFL learners toward EFL writing? "

After being sure about normality of data distribution with Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and comparing the mean of learners' scores of experimental group in answering of questionnaire with the mean of learners' scores of control group, the researcher explored that there was significant difference between means of learners' scores of two groups in post-test indicating this fact that weblog can change learners' attitude positively. Additionally, the researcher compared the mean of learners' scores of experimental group in answering questionnaire in pre-test with their score mean in post-test. There was significant difference between two means of the same group. Therefore, there is statistically significant difference in learners' attitude toward writing between EFL intermediate Iranian learners who use weblog in writing and the ones who do not and weblog can influence learners' attitudes for learning positively.

The researcher explored significant variations in students' attitude before and after the course (paired t-test for each group). The weblog intervention did change students' attitudes with regard to the factors of enjoyment, productivity and participation in weblog situation. At the same time, the group of students who hadn't received any treatments also hadn't significant change in their attitude level towards writing. The researcher attempted to find out whether those dependent variables of attitude performance in the experimental group had achieved a higher level of change in comparison with the control group. The result shows that the weblog intervention had a greater impact on students' attitudes towards writing. In other words, students in the experimental group were more likely to enjoy writing in English and showed an increased possibility of using English to express their thoughts and ideas more frequently. The students in the experimental group were more likely to appreciate their own writing and more willing to participate in the process of revision and self-correction rather than simply reacting to the designated revision tasks.

It should be noted that different technology-based educations such as weblog and online information exchange represent a form of social learning activity and social interaction. These technological experiences can play a role as a facilitator when learners are engaged in the context of cooperative learning. Based on the quantitative findings, learners who wrote through

weblog had a more positive attitude toward the weblog activities and practicing. The researcher found that after twenty sessions of the EFL writing course with the weblog intervention, learners who often used weblog reflected a stronger attitude towards their writing compared with those who did not use weblog to write in English. This means students who use weblog frequently were more motivated and eager to write and to have their writing proofread by others. As we know, weblog is manifested as a kind of powerful tool to cooperate in writing. In other words, weblog provides learners a platform to make comments on each other's writings. Therefore, it is possible to assume that weblog activities help the learners to write according to their own needs. The wealth of data provided by the quantitative analysis also demonstrated the fact that students in the experimental group were more likely to enjoy writing in English and considered the possibility of using English to express their thoughts and ideas more enthusiastically. A lot of previous studies conducted in this case, confirm the study and this study is in line with many previous studies. For example:

In a study by Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) to show importance of attitude, motivation, and anxiety in learning English of 301 grade 11 students explored that socio-cultural, instrumental, and media-use reasons had the most significant effect on students. In this study weblog did increased the learners' motivation to write and learn English.

In a study, Kamhi-stein (2000) revealed that the Web-based communication promoted collaboration and interaction that were driven by the needs and interests of the students and according to the current study; web-based writing improved the learners' cooperation with eachothers.

Mergendoller, Maxwell and Bellisimo (2000) explored the possible effects of computer-mediated collaboration in the improvement of language skills and found that the students hold positive attitudes to collaborate computer in the teaching and learning context. In this study, the learners were very eager to write and evaluate their writings when they write through weblog.

Ushida (2005) showed that among different materials and methodologies in language teaching, attitude of students toward CALL is considered a major factor influencing its influential implementation and this study explored the positive effect of weblog on students' inclination towards using weblog in writing.

In another study, Shin and Son (2007) examined Korean secondary school EFL teachers' perceptions and perspectives on the use of the internet for teaching purposes and suggested that there are three key factors affecting the use of the internet in the classroom: teachers' personal interest in internet use; teachers' abilities to integrate internet resources into classroom activities; and computer facilities and technological support in schools. The current study is in line in the third case with this study and both confirm that computer - based teaching and learning can influence the learners' viewpoints on language learning.

Che, Li and Liu (2010) investigated attitude of 140 college students of non-English major toward integration of information and communication technologies into English learning and revealed that female students had more positive attitude toward ICT than male students. But in this study the researcher ignored the gender factor in studying of effect of weblog on the learners' attitude towards writing.

Rahimi (2011) studied Iranian high-school students' attitudes towards learning English in CALL environment and revealed that students hold positive attitude toward using of CALL after experiment and this is in line with the current study.

In another experimental study, Tilfarlioglu (2011) investigated students' attitude toward use of technologies videos, sharing writings, joining groups, creating groups, joining groups to learn English, playing games, on learning English. The finding revealed that students hold positive attitude toward technologies. In the study, the learners enjoyed a lot when they wrote through weblog.

Regarding teachers' attitude toward technology in EFL classroom, Arani, (2005) conducted an experiment on 82 EFL teachers in using of interactive whiteboards (IWBS) in different EFL

institutes in Turkey. The result showed teachers' positive attitude toward IWB use in the process of English teaching. The finding of the current study showed learners' tendency towards technology use in their writings.

In addition to aforementioned studies, Bijeikienė, Rašinskienė and Zutkienė (2011) conducted a qualitative study on 24 English teachers taking the role of the respondents to explore their attitudes toward blended learning and ICT implementation in general English classes at the CFL. Teachers revealed moderately positive attitude toward ICT application through multimedia language laboratories. In this study the learners showed positive attitude toward writing through weblog.

Mokhtari (2013) investigated the Iranian EFL students' attitude toward using of computer-assisted language learning and concluded that students hold positive attitude toward implementation of computer technology in their courses like this study.

Rahimi & Katal (2012) examined influence of CALL in different levels of education on attitude of 50 Iranian female junior high school students, and found the higher education level creates the higher positive students' attitude towards CALL, but this study ignored the influence of educational level on the learners' attitude. In general, the learners showed positive attitude towards weblog writing.

In another study by Talebinezhad and Abarghoui (2013) Iranian high school students' general attitude toward using CALL for receptive skills (listening, reading) was studied and it was found that when they used CALL in their learning, they could understand content better and this study showed positive effect of weblog on the learners' attitude towards writing.

In other study conducted by Handal, Mac Nish and Petocz (2013) on 186 female university students in Australian, it was revealed that university students were more inclined and active to use mobile in learning. In this study students were more enthusiastic to use weblog in their writings.

Aydin (2013) investigated Turkish EFL teachers' knowledge of software and their reasons for personally using computer, including the attitudes and viewpoints of self-confidence among teachers in integrating computers and the school climate. The results indicated that Turkish EFL teachers even with little computer and software knowledge have positive perceptions of computer integration and attitudes toward computer use and in this study learners showed positive attitude towards computer and weblog.

Jalali and Dousti (2014) conducted an experimental study to investigate the impact of CALL on attitudes of three different young EFL students and revealed that participants generally showed positive attitude toward use of computers; in the current study the learners were more inclined to use weblog in their writings.

Kalanzadeh, Soleimani and Bakhtiarvand (2014) investigated the influence of technology on 60 Iranians EFL students' motivation and found that there was positive correlation between students' attitude, language learning and technology use in the English classes like this study.

Tri and Nguyen (2014) investigated use of ICT (information and communication technologies) on 149 EFL university students in English learning programs and explored that most of students maintain positive perceptions of ICT use to study English. The study showed that the learners enjoyed a lot when they wrote through weblog.

Also in a recent study Rahimi and Askari (2014) studied the effectiveness of using ICT (Information Communication Technology) like internet, email, blogs and PowerPoint in developing students' self-regulation and explored that using soft - wares had a great effect on students' self-regulation. Again the factor related to self-regulation revealed that the learners could regulate their writing and revise them when they used weblog in their writings.

Shana and Abulibdehb (2015) investigated the EFL students' attitudes toward use of computers and verified the key role of the computer in learning process of students. In the study the researcher investigated the EFL learners' attitude towards weblog as sub-section technology of computer.

Öz, Demirezen and Pourfeiz (2015) investigated the relationship between computer literacy, attitudes towards foreign language learning and computer-assisted language teaching among

123 English university students and explored that the students who had high positive attitudes toward FLL, had high positive attitudes toward CALL and this study showed high correlation between EFL learning specially writing and computer-based learning like weblog.

Shams and Ketabi (2015) investigated attitudes of Iranian teachers on using IWBs in EFL classrooms and proved that teachers had positive attitude towards IWB use and they confirmed that IWB is a powerful motivating tool in teaching process. Unfortunately, the researcher in the study couldn't consider teacher as dependent variables, but technology - based teaching and learning had positive effect on the learners' attitude towards writing.

A study conducted on 351 university female students in Japan by Burke and Grosvenor (2015) to investigate their reaction to iPods and eBooks explored that students showed positive reactions to both iPods and eBooks and there was a positive correlation between students' attitudes and iPad. In this study there was positive correlation between the learners' attitude towards writing and weblog.

The researcher had some limitations in conducting the study that lack of equipment like computers, laptops, and other things in educational settings was the most important one. Therefore, the researcher had some problems in getting permission of Jahade Daneshghahi officials to use their computer site. Additionally, a large number of teachers could not use technological equipment like computer or projector. The researcher again had only some choices that were familiar with weblog environment. Lastly, some learners thought that learning to write through weblog is informal and too flexible that distracts them from doing their writings. Therefore, it was a hard for the researcher to encourage learners to participate in the writing course.

Nowadays, One of the most important challenges is educating EFL learners who are able to catch up with the progressing technology especially CALL. The increasing progress of computer especially weblog environment necessitates evolving educational system to train autonomous and motivated learners who study all the time. This needs a kind of education that makes learners and students interested in learning. Meanwhile according to psychologists, the educational environment should be adjusted to learners' needs. In addition, it should enhance critical thinking; in other words, it must educate learners who are able to revise their own learning processes. Moreover, it can help learners learn without being limited in time and space; A learner can study and learn disregarding distance and without being present in class. This motivates learners to explore and learn better. Moreover, it should train flexible learners' adapting themselves with learning environment and educational curriculums. Potentials of weblog can provide all mentioned cases. Importantly, it is a verbal and visual tool that causes learners to learn what they see especially in writing that is necessary language proficiency for academic achievement, but difficult burden for learners. In addition, it creates some new ways of teaching and learning at schools and language institutes .It can change the learners' and teachers' outlook and viewpoints on computer - mediated education and weblog .That leads to real and effective learning and academic success as an important summit in our context. Therefore, investigating the influence of weblog on attitude of EFL learners' towards writing is one of crucial studies to conduct that can facilitate the way for learners to learn better , teachers to teach effectively , and educational stock-holders to integrate computer in general , and weblog in particular in their educational system and policies.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has given an account of and the reason for influence of weblog on EFL learners' attitude and writing performance. The main conclusion to be drawn from this study was that according to statistics, weblog activities have positive effect on EFL learners.

First major finding of the study was the positive effect of weblog on EFL learners' writing performance that most of the previous studies confirm it and the second major finding was this fact that there is a strong correlation between weblog intervention and EFL learners' attitude toward writing that again many previous studies support this finding of the study. In spite of the fact that this study could investigate the influence of weblog on EFL learners' writing

performance and their attitude toward writing simultaneously, that most of the previous studies disregarded, there were some other variables like gender, age, cultural, personal, social factors which the researcher couldn't focus on. Therefore, Future investigations need to be done in Iran to establish whether there is any correlation between weblog and mentioned factors.

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## THE EFFECT OF RISK TAKING STRATEGY ON EFL LEARNERS' ORAL PROFICIENCY

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### ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the effect of risk-taking strategy on English as foreign language (EFL) students' oral performance among pre-intermediate learners. The participants were 90 Iranian students from a high school in Ahvaz, Iran. In order to homogenize the participants, the researcher chose to use Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) which includes 60 multiple-choice items as the language proficiency test. Based on the participants' score obtained from the risk taking questionnaire, the researcher divided the 50 participants into two equal in number groups: experimental high risk-takers and control low risk takers. Participants were pre-tested by being interviewed individually each in about 2 to 3 minutes. After ten sessions each about 45-minutes of the treatment for both groups, participants were post-tested by a parallel interview of the one conducted in pre-test to find any potential improvement in the experimental and control groups in terms of their oral proficiency after the treatment. The interview used for both pre-test and post-test was scored based on the sample checklist developed by Hughes (2003). Data were analyzed through independent and paired samples t-test to compare their pre and post-tests. Results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control one ( $p < 0.05$ ). Implications of the study for English teachers suggest that the role of learners' risk taking is important since the teachers need to motivate the low risk takers to participate in class oral activities.

**Key words:** Risk-taking, oral performance, EFL learners, male, female

### 1. Introduction

The effects of classroom interaction on language learning have long been a focus of research for second and foreign language teachers and researchers (e.g., Allwright, 1984). They argue that language learning comes about as a consequence of the interplay of the factors created by the learners, the teacher, and the interaction among them (teacher-student, student-student). Allwright (1984) sees classroom interaction as "the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy because everything that happens in the classroom happens through a process of lives person-to-person interaction" (p. 156).

Classroom interaction is indeed a complicated phenomenon. Teachers' perceptions of the nature of language learning, of classroom activities, and of norms for classroom participation often differ from those of their students, who have a wide variety of proficiency levels, linguistic background, culturally predisposed ways of learning, and individual motivations and objectives in studying the language (Mostafavi & Vahdany, 2016). If ignored, these differences

can cause misunderstandings and create a barrier to effective language learning and teaching during face to-face interaction within the classrooms (Rivers, 1987).

Several theorists have attempted to elucidate the human capability to acquire a second language and all the factors that may expedite or deter this learning (Dewaele, 2012). Definitely, the process of learning a second language has to be understood as both a process of learning rules and one in which several individual differences come into play. The environmental circumstances, age, attitude towards the target language and learning itself, neuroticism, motivation as well as extroversion are common examples of individual differences worth studying when assisting students learn a second language.

Apart from the ones mentioned, learners' ability to take risks appears as a significant individual difference, which has been considered a predictor variable of success in second language learning (Gass & Selinker, 2000, 2008). Essentially, risk-taking behavior refers to a "developmental trait that consists of moving toward something without thinking of the consequences" (Alshalabi, 2003, p. 22). Language learners may engage in the act of risk taking through learning a second language since they are establishing linguistic patterns for unfamiliar situations (Gledhill & Morgan, 2000). Similarly, to communicate using the new language, either orally or in writing, the EFL learners may face the risk of making a mistake. These challenges make the students familiar with the level of risk-taking. Risk taking may entail impulsiveness and keep a correlation with extroversion, introversion, and self-confidence among others.

Risk taking has concentrated on speaking rather on the other macro skills (i.e., writing, listening, and reading). Oral production has received specific attention since second language teachers may face problems when the students are not willing to take the risk of speaking activity in the second language class. Furthermore, the level of motivation can be related to risk-taking behaviors among EFL learners. For instance, the levels of anxiety can be the other factor in learners' risk taking when talking in class (Dewaele, 2012). Risk taking behavior is a condition in which the learners are ready to participate in any activity for the second language acquisition. Nakamura (1993) notes that testing oral proficiency could be a risk-taking activity since it are an important issue in language teaching. Speaking skill is one of the main risk-taking activities which play an outstanding role. Concerning speaking skill, Madsen (1983) declared that "the testing of speaking is widely regarded as the most challenging of all language tests to prepare, administer and score" (p. 147).

Previous investigations on risk taking have demonstrated that in EFL learning, risk taking plays a major role, since it enhances proficiency in the target language, giving experience to students to partake actively in English classes. That can be noted in studies such as Beebe's (1983) observation; learners take risk when they take opportunities to communicate in class. Samimy and Tabuse (1991) all concluded that risk taking is fundamental in language learning. That is to say, risk taking is a key factor in language learning, due to the fact that it has revealed that in a language classroom setting, taking risks in using the target language is related to greater language skills. They asserted that risk-taking is a great opportunity that gives students more background and heighten their proficiency in L2. In short, the researchers mentioned above propose that risk-taking in foreign language learning results in greater foreign language capacities.

Several researchers (e.g., Samimy, 1994) assert that the successful language learner is one who is willing to take risks. In a spoken language classroom, risk taking is best manifested in active oral participation; it involves responding to teacher's or other students' questions, raising questions, and making comments. When language learners take risks in oral participation, they actively engage themselves in the negotiation of comprehensible input and the formulation of compressible output (Swain, 1985), both of which are essential in the language learning process. Swain (1985) stated that, while comprehensible input may be sufficient for acquiring semantic

competence in the target language, comprehensive output is needed in order to gain grammatical competence. In other words, language learners must make efforts to produce the output that is comprehensible to their interlocutors if they are to master the grammatical knowledge of the language.

Nevertheless, many previous studies have argued that getting students to speak up is a problem that most teachers face (Tsui, 1996). The studies reported that the students' verbal reticence in the classrooms is especially acute with Asian students. Sato (1981), for example, investigated the learner's turn-getting behavior among Asian and non-Asian students in two university ESL classes. In classes containing more Asians than non-Asians, she found that Asian students did take fewer self-selected turns than non-Asian students.

Considering what can be concluded from what has been observed by the previous researchers, it is evident that risk taking is a key element of learning a foreign language. Young (1991) points out that risk-taking is the ability students develop in class which enables them to play an active role in English language learning and it is related to the improvement in the speaking skill. Hence, risk-taking is crucial for learners to develop oral abilities and to master oral communication in the target language. Despite a large body of research characterizing how risk taking affects learner performance (e.g., Ashouri & Fotovatnia, 2010), further research is required to delve into the impact of risk taking behavior on the oral performance of the learners. Consequently, the current study seeks to shed light on the nature and extent of the effect of risk taking behavior on the oral performance of the English language learners. Thus the following research question is: Does EFL learners' risk taking behavior facilitate their oral performance at the pre intermediate high school level?

Although studies pertinent to risk taking behavior have produced sufficient evidence to inform language teaching and learning practices, reports directly addressing Iranian EFL students' risk taking behavior are insufficient. Promoting risk-taking helped participants to overcome their weaknesses in their English class. Students receive feedback from their classmates and from the teacher who worked together to provide effective advice to improve students' limitations in the language. Risk-taking is vital in English learning process. It helps learners to acquire the ability to express their ideas and thoughts to the whole group orally without fear. It does not matter if they make mistakes. The key is to demonstrate that learners can speak in class without fear of criticisms or smirks. Research (e.g., Zeng, 2010) on risk-taking has been on the rise in the EFL context. The link between learners' variable (e.g. gender) and oral performance has been of interest to the researchers in the field. The problem with studies on personality factors in the area of EFL learning is that there is often no theoretical basis for predicting which personality variable will be positively or negatively related to which aspect of L2 proficiency. This research extracts its significance from the increasing importance of the variable of risk taking in foreign language learning. This research, therefore, seeks to fill some of the gaps which still remain in regard to the studies conducted on learners' willingness to take risks in the language classroom.

This study centers on Iranian high school students' risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in spoken English classrooms. As such, the study has two different yet closely related areas terms of what it analyzes, how the analysis is conducted, and what the analysis finally reveals. The study may provide a body of significant data with which the EFL teachers and researchers of significance in Iran might be better informed of more appropriate and productive teaching strategies for spoken English classes.

## 2. Literature review

In recent decades, individual differences in language learners influencing learning outcomes can be one of the main factors in second and foreign language learning. Learners' affective variables are anxiety, attitude and motivation (Ellis, 1994). Personal variables influence language learning

at the individual level. According to Schumann and Schumann (1977), personal variables or factors interact with cognitive, affective, and socio cultural variables in patterns that are idiosyncratic for each individual. Personal variables represent learner's gender, personality, and attitudes towards learning (Kabrizadeh Najafabadi, 2014).

Affective factors, according to Ellis (1985), are ones concerning feelings or emotional response aroused by the attempts to learn the target language. According to Stevick (1980), language learning is a total human experience. She stresses that language teaching should carry out "the ways in which language learning depends on the deeper reaches on the learners' emotions and symbolic lives. The 'holistic' or 'humanistic' approach thus requires a reconceptualization of language learning and teaching. Language learning according to such a perspective can be conceived as an activity that involves learners as complex human beings and not just as language learners. Rardin, Tranel, and Green (1988) stated that "the person is seen as striving for an integrated unity of intellect and emotions functioning within an interpersonal environment of both freedom and determination" (p. 1). In this context, theories of language learning and teaching that fail to take the affective variables into account are both incomplete and inhuman. Therefore, learner's personal and affective factors can bring learners out of mere passivity toward full and active participation and eventually transform the language learning process from mechanical accumulation information into a series of more positive and meaningful experiences.

Risk-taking behavior emerged in the literature of psychology in the 1960s (Kogan & Wallach, 1967, cited in Beebe, 1983) Risk taking is defined as a condition where a language learner has to make a decision between the choices of different options. The outcome of the option is uncertain since there is a possibility of failure (Beebe, 1983). Risk-taking is an act of dealing with new information intelligently regardless of shyness. Risk-taking is not only an affective factor but also one of the important factors in learning the second language.

It is important to recognize that gain and loss are subjectively determined, not necessarily objective. Kahnemann, Slovic and Tversky (1982) noted that a risk taker should undertake relatively risky activities in any situation, but this personality trait is not limited to language learning. It can be used in any situation. Two learners may face the same situation but the act differently. This could be important if one of them loses and the other one gains the success (Kabrizadeh Najafabadi, 2014).

### **2.1. Language Learners as Risk Takers**

Definitely, the definitions of risk taking have also led to research to account for the particular feature that a risk taker should possess. Concerning the requirements that learners have to fulfill so as to be considered risk takers, one of the most influential reports corresponds to Ely's (1984) dimensions. According to Ely's first dimension, risk takers are not hesitant about utilizing a newly encountered linguistic constituent. The second dimension has to do with risk takers' willingness to employ linguistic elements supposed to be intricate or difficult. This dimension explains why risk takers develop levels of tolerance towards vagueness and ambiguity to the extent in which a difficult or new situation does not really represent an issue of concern for them. The third and fourth dimensions describe respectively how risk takers become tolerant toward probable incorrectness or inexactitude in using the language and how they are inclined to rehearse a new element silently before attempting to use it aloud. This rehearsal issue, nonetheless, is further discussed by other researchers who maintain that prior preparation before producing utterances may deter risk taking (Hongwei, 1996). Indeed, mental preparation is said to be a characteristic of more cautious learners who on certain occasions spend so much time preparing to talk that they decide not to take the risk of speaking in front of others.

The literature in the field of second language acquisition has also brought to light other theories to characterize risk takers. A clear example is Krashen's (1985) Monitor Hypothesis. Even though Krashen does not refer specifically to the notion of risk taking in his studies, the risk-taking construct and its features are implied in many of them. In simple terms, risk takers and risk-averse students can be compared respectively to Krashen's "underusers" and "overusers" (Ortega, 2009, p.198) of the monitor device. As Mitchell and Florence (2004) explain, the overusers are highly concerned with editing their language performance and carefully think their utterances; consequently, they usually exhibit deficient oral fluency. Monitor overusers have the characteristic of "cautiousness" shared by risk-averse students in the language classroom. On the other hand, underusers are believed to be more reckless in their use of the language. Their utterances are not the product of mental correctness. Additionally, underusers exhibit high levels of risk taking since they prefer to say what they want without worrying about the details like risk takers usually do. Beebe (1983) clearly summarizes the relationship between Krashen's (1985) Monitor Hypothesis and the concept of risk taking: "It is possible that Krashen's cautious overuser is a low risk taker. His monitor underuser is a high risk-taker. The optimal user suggested by Krashen (1985), then would match the moderate risk taking student who is capable of taking accurate risks when appropriate."

## 2.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of High and Low Risk Takers

The recognition that taking risks contributes to learning has led authors to query whether an overuse or low use of risk taking is more valuable for both learning a second language and maximizing L2 speaking ability. On one hand, high risk takers enjoy several advantages when they venture into oral discourse. For instance, researchers have acknowledged that fossilized structures tend to be less common in the speech of high risk takers. Since they are willing to try out new linguistic items and constantly look for opportunities to learn the language, they become "more resistant to fossilization" (Ashouri & Fotovatnia, 2010, p.231). On the contrary, Hongwei (1996) asserts that the timidity and inhibition which characterize low risk-taking speakers can lead to the development of erroneous patterns, i.e. fossilized structures in the inter-language of such speaker.

Another benefit of high levels of risk taking conforms to the quantity and quality of the linguistic input that learners receive. Students who exhibit risk-taking behaviors in the second language classroom may show a substantial increase of the linguistic input obtained in comparison to low risk-taking students. This may be proven by risk takers' readiness to deal with discourse; they make constant attempts to use new linguistic structures in the target language although they may not know the correct use of such forms. Therefore, high risk takers are more able to transform oral input into practical intake (Beebe, 1983). In Krashen's terms (as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008), the availability of useful intake certainly benefits high risk takers since they probably have more access to comprehensible input, which is a key element for the successful acquisition of a second language. Moreover, high risk takers' willingness to communicate in almost any type of social setting increases their opportunities to hear and obtain a sufficient number of linguistic structures which sharply contrast with the input that low risk takers receive due to their reluctance to interact. Generally, such acquisition of input on the part of high risk takers improves their language proficiency, especially for speaking purposes.

With regard to the topic of fluency, it has also been suggested that high risk takers are able to effectively tolerate ambiguity in the language classroom. Dewaele (2012) place special emphasis on high risk takers' tolerance to ambiguity because they focus their attention on meaning rather than on form. Thus, high risk takers become active speakers who reduce their anxiety to communicate more efficiently and fluently.

One of the most significant arguments against the overuse of risk taking in the language classroom is related to fear. The affective role of fear when students speak a second language may

undoubtedly represent a disadvantage for high risk takers in the sense that the construct of risk itself necessitates fear, and this becomes a barrier to learning (Gledhill & Morgan, 2000). It is irrefutable, then, that the fear of speaking a new language which the students do not fully master can intensify the feelings of nervousness and apprehension. Some of the most common fears that students may experience when venturing into speaking a second language involve social fears including peer reactions, derision, humiliations, disapproval and personal fears. Furthermore, students may even be afraid because of the context, i.e. the English classroom. There, the fear of obtaining a bad grade, failing an exam, being punished or embarrassed may translate into major drawbacks for high risk-taking students. Similarly, when students are outside the English classroom and practice the language orally, they are afraid of looking ridiculous, feeling frustrated, having a blank look, not being understood, and feeling alienated among others (Gledhill & Morgan, 2000). In this respect, low risk takers gain an advantage in comparison to high risk-taking students since they are expected to experience lower levels of fear that could hinder their speaking abilities.

Ashouri and Fotovatnia (2010) discovered that high risk takers had a negative belief about utilizing translation in the second language class. Even though the authors do not consider this idea as a benefit of high risk taking, they admit the fact that high risk takers are eager to learn and prefer to use the target language irrespective of embarrassment or failure instead of translating input into their mother tongue. Unlike high risk takers, low risk takers hold a very positive opinion about translation. Since they do not like uncertainty and are more vigilant about their speech, it is not surprising that they find in translation an opportunity to check what they are going to say in their native language before actually saying it in the target language.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants

The participants were selected from the original pool of 90 Iranian students from two public high schools in Ahvaz. Participants were native speakers of Persian. The participants were 2<sup>nd</sup> grade high school students and their ages ranged from 14 to 16. They took OQPT to determine the level of proficiency at a homogeneous level. Thus 50 learners who gained scores between 30 and 39 were considered as the pre-intermediate students. Then they took the risk taking questionnaire adapted in this study was the Persian version of Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire, developed by Kiany and Pournia (2006). The highest and lowest scores for this questionnaire are 54 and 0, respectively. Accordingly, the participants who get the scores ranged between 40 and 54 were categorized as high risk takers (HRT), and those who get the scores below 20 were categorized as low risk takers (LRT).

#### 3.2. Instrumentation

In order to homogenize the participants, the researcher chose to use OQPT which includes 60 multiple-choice items as the language proficiency test. At the beginning of the experiment the participants completed OQPT. It included 60 multiple choice items and the learners who gained scores between 30 and 39 were selected as the participants of the study. In order to get the participants' personal and language background information, the researcher administered a background questionnaire at the very beginning of the experiment.

The risk taking questionnaire adapted in this study was the Persian version of Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire, developed by Kiany and Pournia (2006). Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire is a 54-item questionnaire with three subscales: Impulsiveness (19 items), Venturesomeness (16 items), and Empathy (19 items). Given the purpose of this study, only the items related to the Venturesomeness subscale are included in the risk taking questionnaire. Kiany and Pournia (2006) calculated the reliability of their Persian version of the

Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire through employing Cronbach's alpha and Brown's equal-length split-half reliability measures, the results for which were 0.83 and 0.85, respectively. Therefore, the questionnaire could be safely used to determine the level of risk taking of the participants in the present study. The risk taking questionnaire was employed in this study consisted of 16 items with five-point Likert scale which encompass risk-taking behaviors such as, being willing to do adventurous activities such as scuba diving, water skiing, mountain climbing, etc.

After completing the risk taking questionnaire before the treatment course, the pre-test designed for measuring participants' oral proficiency was administered. The pre-test employed in this study was an interview on the topics related to the learners' English textbooks. The participants were interviewed individually for about 2 to 3 minutes. In order to safely measure the participants' oral proficiency, their interviews were tape recorded and scored based on Hughes' (2003) checklist. To validate the data, the interview scores were checked through inter-rater reliability. The researcher asked an expert to score the pre-test interviews. The inter-rater reliability index calculated through Pearson Correlation was ( $r=0.94$ ). The index of obtained reliability was significant at the 0.05 level, therefore, it can be claimed that the scoring of the interview used as the pre-test was reliable.

In the present experiment, the participants' oral proficiency was assessed once more at the end of the treatment course which lasted 15 weeks, each two sessions. They took the oral proficiency with the same interview again. The participants were interviewed individually for about 2 to 3 minutes and their interviews were tape recorded. The procedure for validation and checking the reliability of the oral proficiency post-test was the same as that of the oral proficiency pre-test in that to validate the data and to check the inter-rater reliability of the post-test. The inter-rater reliability index was calculated through Pearson Correlation was ( $r=0.78$ ). The index of obtained reliability was significant at the 0.05 level; therefore, it can be claimed that the scoring of the interview used as the post-test was reliable.

### **3.3. Materials**

The materials used in this study were the textbooks regularly instructed in public schools in Iran, i.e., the English textbooks used in 2<sup>rd</sup> grades in a high school. Eight units were covered in the 15 weeks and each unit took time about two weeks. In fact, the teachers in intact classes were instructed to follow the ordinary teaching procedures in their class with a special focus on dealing with students' oral proficiency.

### **3.4. Procedure**

The researcher asked the participants to complete the OQPT at the beginning of the study in order to ensure the homogeneity of the participants, and to determine the participants' language proficiency. Sixty participants out 90 learners were homogenized regarding their language proficiency through OQPT. The selected participants were pre-intermediate since the gained scores between 30 and 39. Then they filled in the Eysenck's IVE Questionnaire. When they were divided to high and low risk takers, they participated in the classrooms for 15 weeks, 30 sessions. They studied their textbook units and do the routine class activities.

One week prior to the experiment, participants took an oral proficiency pre-test and filled in the risk taking questionnaire. This interview was designed to ensure the comparability of the 50 selected participants in terms of their oral proficiency prior to the experiment. Based on the participants' scores obtained from the risk taking questionnaire, the researcher divided the participants into two equal in number groups: high risk-takers and low risk takers.

The present experiment composed of two phases. First, the participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire. Then they were interviewed 2 or 3 minutes on the text book topics to ensure that



the participants' oral proficiency. Second, 30 sessions each about 60 minutes, the teachers' in both groups followed their regular and ordinary teaching procedures. In other words, the strategy used in the classroom was in the way that participants of the study in the normal traditional way. One week after the final session of the treatment, the participants took the oral proficiency post-test though an interview individually which lasted 2 to 3 minutes. A parallel interview of the one conducted in oral proficiency pre-test was administered to find any potential improvement in the groups in terms of their oral proficiency after the treatment. The scores of the oral proficiency post-test were evaluated by the second rater to arrive at the inter-rater reliability index. Pre and post-test scores were the average of two raters' scores given to a participant based on the Hughes' (2003) speaking checklist. The total points students could get on the pre-test and post-test were 20. Risk taking behavior was the independent variable and oral proficiency was the dependent variable. To check the homogeneity of the participants at the outset of the experiment, an Independent Samples *t*-test was run for checking the difference between the group's pre and post-tests of the participants' oral proficiency.

#### 4. Results

The test of normality was taken to be sure that the Independent Samples *t*-test could be used in analyzing the data. Thus *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* is presented in Table 1.

##### 1. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		-test HRT	o-test LRT	st-test HRT	Post-test LRT
	N	25	25	25	25
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	11.2400	9.3200	17.4000	10.6000
	Std. Deviation	6.02965	5.82895	6.52559	5.77350
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.094	.131	.123	.116
	Positive	.090	.131	.123	.114
	Negative	-.094	-.105	-.085	-.116
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	.468	.653	.616	.579
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.981	.787	.843	.891

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Table 1 shows that the test score distribution is normal. Thus the parametric statistical analysis such as Independent Samples *t*-test can be used. The results of descriptive statistics of the high and low risk takers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean

High risk takers	25	11.2400	6.02965	1.20593
Low risk takers	25	9.3200	5.82895	1.16579

Table 1 shows that the mean scores for the high risk takers and low risk takers are 11.2400 and 9.3200 respectively. Since the descriptive statistics cannot show the significant difference between the two groups, Independent Samples *t*-test was run in Table 3.

*Table 3.Independent Samples t-test (pre-test)*

re-test of high and low risk takers	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.229	.634	1.145	48	.258	1.920	1.677	-1.452	5.292
Equal variances not assumed			1.145	47.9	.258	1.920	1.677	-1.452	5.292

Table 3 shows the *t*-observed value is 1.145 which is less than the *t*-critical (1.670) with *df*= 58. Thus the difference between the two groups is not significant. Thus it can be safely claimed that the two groups were homogeneous regarding their oral proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment. In order to see if there is a difference between the oral performances of high and low risk takers, descriptive statistics of the group's post-test was calculated in Table 4.

*Table 4 .Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
High risk takers	25	17.4000	6.52559	1.30512
Low risk takers	25	10.6000	5.77350	1.15470

Table 4 shows that the post-test mean scores for the high risk takers and low risk takers are 17.4000 and 10.6000 respectively. Since the descriptive statistics cannot show the significant difference between the two groups, Independent Samples *t*-test was run in Table 5.

*Table 5.Independent Samples t-test (Post-test)*

re-test of high and low risk takers	Levene's Test for Equality of		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	

Variances								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
t-test of high and low risk takers	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2- taile d)	Mean Differe nce	Std. Error Differe nce	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.231	.633	3.902	48	.000	6.800	1.742	3.296	10.303
Equal variances not assumed			3.902	47.2	.000	6.800	1.742	3.294	10.305

Table 5 shows the *t*-observed value is 3.902 which is greater than the *t*-critical (1.670) with *df*= 58. Thus the difference between the two groups is significant. Thus it can be safely claimed that the high risk takers group outperformed the other group regarding their oral proficiency after the administration of the treatment.

## 5. Discussion

The first research question addressed in the current study along with the results is discussed thoroughly in the following section follows: Does EFL learners' risk taking behavior facilitate their oral performance at the pre intermediate high school level?

The results showed that risk-taking affected the students' oral performance significantly in the way that high risk takers have oral performance with higher quality than lower risk-takers. Thus, allowing the students to take risks in English classes can help them use more appropriate strategies in their performance and have better oral performance. The findings of this study suggest that teachers need to be concerned about lowering students' affective filter in risk-taking and about how they can encourage their students to take risks actively in classroom. Meanwhile, risk-taking ability has a significant role in L2 acquisition and it is associated with success in second language teaching (Emerson, 2005).

The findings of this study corroborate the findings revealed by several studies (e.g., Beebe, 1983; Ely, 1986; Johannessen, 2003; Kelly, 2004; Gass & Selinker, 2000) that note risk-taking ability can impact EFL learners' oral proficiency. Teachers should provide an encouraging class atmosphere for their learners to partake in class discussions. Oxford (1992) asserted that "risk-taking ability, though sometimes considered inherent character traits, can be developed through a non-threatening classroom climate, class discussion of fears, individual counseling with inhibited students, and training in strategies that facilitate taking risks (e.g., compensation strategies like guessing or using synonyms)" (p. 38). English language teachers should be conscious of who their students are and what the individual differences among their students are. If the teachers establish this atmosphere in their classroom settings, learners are ready to take risks and they can take risks in various situations when they talk and share their ideas, they will take part in the class willingly and do well on L2 acquisition unconsciously. Researchers (e.g., Oxford, 1992) believe that the learners should take risks in order to learn L2 since without risky activities, they cannot follow the trial and error situation.

Therefore, as far as the results showed, it can be inferred that the risk-taking capability revealed significant results. Generally, the results of *t*-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the control and the experimental group of Iranian high school EFL students in terms of their oral performance. That is to say, high risk-takers performed significantly better

than low risk-takers in terms of their improvement from pre-test to post-test, i.e., their gained scores for their oral performance. In order to test the second research question, an Independent t-test was run to compare the gained scores of male and female high risk-taker participants in the experimental group. The male high risk-taker participants in the experimental group gained more scores than females in that group. But the difference is not significant. However, the hypothesis that there is no difference between males and females in using risk-taking behavior to develop their oral performance was proved in this study.

## 6. Conclusion

Risk-taking behavior in relation to oral proficiency is a complex concept in classroom interaction. Although risk taking is not equivalent to learning, it is a personality factor strongly connected to ultimate second language acquisition success. If risk takers look for more chances to use the target language, it can be stated that they will learn more and develop considerably their language proficiency. When learners speak, they test out their hypotheses about the language. They attempt to make themselves understood and are in a continuous process of negotiation and reformulation of output. Language teachers should instruct students in this trial-and-error process by encouraging them to take risks, by providing them with contexts in which learners can take risks, and by helping learners develop a positive attitude towards mistakes. These three teaching behaviors will certainly increase the learners' language learning process. If learning is the outcome of taking risks, then risk taking is worth trying.

The findings of this study show that high risk-takers performed significantly better than low risk-takers in terms of their improvement from pretest to posttest. Moreover, there was not a significant difference between the male and female high risk-taker participants' gained scores of oral performance. In other words, even though the findings of the study demonstrated the significant main effects found for the factor risk-taking behavior, they did not indicate significant main effect for the factor gender (Wen & Clément, 2003). Therefore, learners should learn to think of such tasks as possible opportunities to try out the language in various ways, and they should learn to accept the ambiguity that oral tasks usually bring with them. Thus the English teachers need to generate opportunities for the students to experience the sense of improvement or success in communicating in English. For that purpose, the instructor needs to help to increase students' preparedness by careful guidance on the assignments. Positive attitude in error correction would serve the purpose, too. Encouraging comments rather than a simple correction can assist the students to learn from their errors and obtain a sense of improvement without losing their self-esteem.

Various research methodologies (e.g., interviews, large scale of surveys, and long term observations) could be valuable in triangulating the present study's findings. This study included only pre-intermediate level students as participants. Similar studies may be conducted to investigate the similarities and differences for different course-levels (e.g., intermediate and higher levels) of students and for various age-levels (e.g., junior and senior high school students) of participants. An in-depth study of the teachers' perceptions toward learners' risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in EFL classrooms could complement the current study. Some external factors that could not be controlled in the present study including children uneasiness which affected the learners' performance in the pre and post-test. Thus, these circumstances complicated the participants' recruitment in general.

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# THE IMPACT OF CHOOSING TITLE ACTIVITIES AS A POST-READING TASK ON LEARNING READING COMPREHENSION AMONG PRE- INTERMEDIATE LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of choosing title activities as a post-reading task on learning reading comprehension among Iranian pre-intermediate language learners. To homogenize participants, the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was administered, and a homogeneous sample comprised of 42 male and female learners whose scores were between 28 and 36 was selected from a population of 90 at the pre-intermediate level. Then the homogenized sample was non-randomly assigned to two equal experimental groups of guided and free title activities. A reading comprehension pre-test was administered to the participants at the beginning of the course. In the experimental group of guided title activities, the learners used guided title activities as a post-reading task for the intended reading texts. In the experimental group of free title activities, the learners used free title activities as a post-reading task during 30-minute sessions in eight weeks. Then the learners' performances were evaluated based on their appropriate comprehension of the reading texts. During ten sessions of treatment, the participants of the guided experimental group followed choosing of guided title activities engaged in the post-reading task and the learners received guidance for comprehending the texts and answering the comprehension questions included selecting the title activities. The free experimental group engaged in free choosing title activities since they did not receive teacher's guidance for choosing the title, and then they proposed some topics for the passage. The participants took a reading comprehension post-test to approve the effectiveness of the post-reading task, of choosing the title activities. The results of Paired and Independent Samples *t*-tests indicated that there was a significant difference between the guided and free title activities groups on the post-tests. Consequently, Implications of the study suggest that reading comprehension could be developed through choosing guided title activities rather than free title activities.

**Key Words:** Title activities, post-reading task, reading comprehension

## 1. Introduction

In order for language learners to function in a foreign language, they need to be able to speak, listen, write and read that language. In academic settings, reading is assumed to be the central means for learning new information (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Reading as a skill has received a lot of attention almost in every pedagogical situation because the purposes of reading and the tasks it fulfills can be various and it can affect the learning of other components as well. Richards and Renandya (2002) stated that there are some reasons that

reading receives a unique attention among second or foreign language learners. At first, the learners want to be able to read for gaining important information about their careers or their majors. Second, they are able to enhance the process of language learning via written texts which follow various pedagogical goals. "The reading goal is to read for meaning or to recreate the writers meaning. Reading to improve pronunciation practice, practice grammatical forms, and study vocabulary does not constitute reading at all because, by definition, reading involves comprehension. When readers do not comprehend, they do not reading" (Chastain, 1988, p. 217).

Reading comprehension is thus an interactive process between the reader and the text. In that the reader is required to fit the clues providing in the text to his or her own background knowledge. Reading for comprehension is the primary purpose of reading skill. Thus raising students' awareness of main ideas in a text and exploring the organization of a text are essential for good comprehension. As a consequence, the use of graphic representation to highlight text organization and to indicate the ordering of the content information is an important resource for comprehension instruction (Nunan, 2006). Celce-Murcia's (2001) framework of reading instruction consists of: pre-reading instruction, during-reading instruction, and post-reading instruction.

Post-reading instruction focuses on the development of opinions on the texts to discuss the major ideas to be understood by the learners. Demand a critical stance on text information, or oblige students to connect text information to personal experiences and opinions. All three components of the frame work may be integrated into a single lesson with a short reading passage on a familiar topic or they may run across numerous lessons. Reading is a complex skill and we want to see whether choosing title activities as a post-reading task is effective in reading comprehension or not (Celce-Murcia, 2001). To achieve the purpose of reading comprehension, an appropriate approach or methodology is required. Language teaching methodologies involve some of the more popular second language teaching methods of the last half century (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Alongside content-based instruction (CBI), task-based language teaching (TBLT) has gained a considerable degree of attention around the world. In TBLT, the learners are given an opportunity to explore the language (Skehan, 1998). Successful teachers have always helped their students to create a connection between the new information they obtain with their real lives. Post-reading activities and tasks are used to help ESL students to think about and respond to texts they have read (Morris & Stewart-Dore, 1990). They support students to consider what they have read and learned that they might use for other language and literacy related activities such as presentations or reading texts.

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), it is important to note that not all but the majority of the writers agree that post-reading tasks should be included in the extensive reading programs. Although the post-reading tasks take time away from reading and may prevent the students' enjoyment from reading, but it should be seen as its own reward in extensive reading. However, we feel that if pos-treading tasks are carefully designed, they can serve useful purposes. The purposes of post-reading activities are: (1) reinforcing what students have learned from their reading; (2) giving students a sense of progress; and (3) helping students share information about materials to read or avoid.

Reading skill is the activity of comprehending a piece of written language which is designed to be read. However, reading is more than being a matter of recognizing the symbols of written language (Koralek & Collins, 1997). Just as speech is more than producing sounds, writing is much more than the production of graphic symbols and reading is much more than recognizing the symbols; these symbols have to be arranged according to some conventions to form words,



to combine them to form sentences and at the end to convey a message (Maarek & Moumene, 2009).

Reading is a language skill which is relatively difficult to learn and teach. In terms of four skills, comprehending a coherent, fluent, extended piece of written text is probably the most dominant to do in language (Nunan, 2004). For second and foreign language learners the challenges are enormous, particularly for those who go on to a university and study in a language that is not their own. A number of efforts have been made to develop the students' reading skill, among others is by applying different approaches to the learning and teaching of reading (Richards, 2015). Lots of studies were done on learning and teaching different phases of tasks, particularly pre-task, during-task, and post-task they also show that Iranian learners as foreign language learners to some extent have had difficulties in reading.

Therefore, because of the importance of reading and benefits of tasks and their aspects, this research investigated the role of choosing title activities as the post-reading tasks in learning reading comprehension among Iranian learners. Post-reading tasks generally and choosing title activities particularly provide a chance for students to practice and check their comprehension at the time they are challenging to choose the best titles. By using it students' reading comprehension will improve in a number of ways by focusing their attention to the main points of the applied post-reading tasks. The research questions to be investigated in the present study are as follows:

- RQ<sub>1</sub>. Does a choosing free title activity as a post-reading task affect learning reading comprehension among pre-intermediate language learners?
- RQ<sub>2</sub>. Does a choosing guided title activity as a post-reading task affect learning reading comprehension among pre-intermediate language learners?

## **2. Review of Literature**

### **2.1. Task-based Language Teaching**

A task is a pedagogical action "where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome" (Willis, 1996, p. 23). Skehan (1998) defines the task as "an activity in which meaning is primary; learners are not given other people's meaning to regurgitate; there is some communicative problem to solve; there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities; task completion has some priority; the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome" (p.95).

Krahnke (1987) notes that task-based instruction may be different from other methods of language teaching since the lessons are constructed based on the way in which the more focus is on the language required to perform the tasks rather than the aspects of language such as structures and vocabulary. The students learn the language structures indirectly and through the task completion. Students' interaction during the tasks facilitates transfer of old information and incorporates it with new information through performing the task which connects the tasks to the learners' real-life and provides them with large amounts of input.

According to Ellis (2002), the design of a task-based lesson is based on several components of the lesson including vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, etc. Thus any task is based on its principal component. The designs of tasks have been proposed through the main purpose of the treatment. Generally speaking, they all have three levels in common. These levels are of the chronology of a task-based lesson. Thus, the first phase is 'pre-task' which concerns the activities those teachers and students may undertake before they start the lesson such as warm-up, pre-speaking or pre-reading questions. The second one is the task phase which centers the lesson, including the main activities performed by the students who are required to operate

under time-pressure. The final phase is the post-task that deals with the procedures for wrapping-up the task performance. (Willis, 1996,p.1).

According to Willis (1996), there are many advantages in using task-based learning to motivate the learners towards tasks and classroom activities in a TBLT environment. It offers a situation for students to display their efforts and develops their ideas. It also help the learners to co-operate with each other in small groups which builds bonds between them. They work together in groups and they are able to produce meaningful interactions on given topics. They also able to concentrate on the language features, knowledge and experiences which enable the students to explore novel features of language.

## **2.2. Post-task Activities**

According to Skehan and Foster (1997), post-task activities have also proved interesting. Examples of such activities are informing learners before they do a task that some of them will be required to re-do the task subsequently on front of the entire class. The rationale here is that the threat of a future public performance will induce learners, while doing the task, to concentrate on error avoidance, since they will more clearly see the connection between the task and how well they will later do, when more pedagogic norms will prevail. In addition, the future task will not compromise the naturalness and communicativeness of the actual task, since the teacher will not be present at that stage. An alternative post-task condition would be to record learner performance during a task (which is done anyway during research studies), and then give the tape to learners so that they have to transcribe some of their own performance. Once again, the intention is to focus learners' attention on form, since they will be drawn in working in detail with what they themselves have said. Skehan and Foster (1997) made the prediction that accuracy, selectively, would be advantaged in a post-task condition.

Title activities, as a type of post-reading task, consist of the questions in which the readers have been pulled into the challenge to choose the most fruitful title for the passage. By the time, the learners come to these types of activities; they already have read or skim the passage (Richards & Renandya, 2002). In the present study, title activities refer to two types of guided and free choosing title activities in which the learners' reading comprehension measured by choosing the best title for the read text.

Khoshsima and Pourjam (2014) investigated the effectiveness of cloze tests and open-ended questions on reading comprehension ability of Iranian Intermediate English as foreign language (EFL) Learners. The traditional way of teaching reading comprehension was used for the control and working with various items of testing reading comprehension The findings of their study indicated that the open and closed ended items facilitate the learners' 'reading comprehension while the open-ended questions are significantly more effective than the closed ended items in students' reading comprehension (Derakhshan & Nazari, 2015).

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Participants**

To use post-reading activities in this research, the study was conducted at Abadan Islamic Azad University. A sample of 42 learners at the pre-intermediate level was selected non-randomly from among 90 Iranian EFL learners based on convenience sampling method. They were studying English language translation at Abadan Islamic Azad University. Male and female BA students ranging in age from 20 to 25 acted as our participants. Through their performance on OQPT which was designed into two parts with sixty questions, 42 learners out of 90 were selected. After administering OQPT, 42 male and female learners whose scores were between 28 and 36 (based on a standard ranking test) were chosen as the research sample. Because of the limit number of learners, these participants were non-randomly divided into two equal groups

(21 participants in each group). Sampling was made based on non-random convenience sampling method. One group acted as experimental group of guided title activities in which the learners used guided title activities as a post-reading task for the intended reading text as the treatment step and the group who used free title activities as a post-reading task was considered as the experimental group of free title activities.

### 3.2. Instrumentation

The present study made benefit from the following instruments:

**OQPT:** It was applied to determine the learners' level and to homogenize the sample. This test was divided into two parts; Part One (Items 1 - 40) and Part Two (Items 41 - 60). Each test had 60 items, with one point available for each correct answer. Levels were then determined by the number of points the learners scores i.e., between 28 and 36. This test took 60 minutes.

**Pre-test:** A teacher-made reading comprehension test was designed by the researcher. It was piloted on a group of ten students other than the real participants in the study. The reliability index was met through KR-21 formula as ( $r=.828$ ). Then the participants took it as a pre-test. Two groups participated in an independent pre-test with 20 multiple choice items based on the first texts read by the participants.

**Post-test:** A teacher-made reading comprehension test was designed by the researcher. It was piloted on a group of ten students other than the real participants and the reliability index was met through KR-21 formula as ( $r=.701$ ). Then the participants took it as a post-test. Two groups participated in an independent post-test with 20 multiple-choice items based on the last texts read by the participants.

### 3.3. Materials

The present study made benefit from the following material:

**Select Readings (Lee & Gundersen, 2000):** It was used to choose some text from it. The goal of *Select Readings* was to generate good English language skills with the main focus on reading skills. The authors used both the bottom-up and top-down approach where appropriate. This book was taught in the department of English at Abadan Azad University.

### 3.4. Procedure

Ninety BA students at university from different major were selected non-randomly for participating in an OQPT for selecting students with the same homogeneity. After administering OQPT, 42 students were selected with the same homogeneity for this study. Then these students divided into two groups non-randomly each group with 21 students. One group received guided title activities as a post-reading task and other group received free title activities as a post-reading task.

Before starting instruction groups participated in an independent pre-test with 20 multiple choice items based on the first text read by the participants. It means that students answered to 20 items. At the next stage students worked on 8 reading passages that selected from *Select Readings* (Lee & Gundersen, 2000) for two months and each month four sections. Reading each passage was taken 10 minutes. The minimum and maximum text lengths were specified (150 words). During instruction a treatment task was designed to elicit the master of reading and comprehending of the learners in written texts.

It was going to apply pre-test, treatment and post-test design. The reasons behind selecting this design would be as follows:

- a. The participants were requested to complete the pre-test, which was going to be administered in order to check out the learners' current level of reading.
- b. Providing the participants with treatment in order to pave the way for complete comprehension of the texts.
- c. To know whether the treatment was shed some light on the blurred issue of using title activities in Iranian EFL context, one post-test were used.

A treatment task was designed to elicit the master of reading and comprehending of the learners in written texts. Two types of free and guided choosing title activities were used as post-reading task.

- a) During treatment, the experimental group of guided title activities engaged in reading different texts with the different content. The participants of the experimental group of guided title activities which followed the guided choosing title activities engaged in a post-reading task through it the learners received teacher's guidance for comprehending the texts and answering the comprehension questions included choosing title activities.
- b) The experimental group of guided title activities engaged in guided choosing title activities used as post-reading task. The experimental group of free title activities engaged in free choosing title activities since they did not receive teacher's guidance for choosing the title, and then they proposed some topics for the passage. In every session, the teacher gave the free experimental group one passage without any title, and then he/she wrote some topics on the board. The teacher requested the learners to choose the best topic after reading the passage. At the end, the best topic was chosen based on the majority of the students' election.
- c) The experimental group of free title activities engaged in free choosing title activities used as post-reading task.

After allocation of learners into experimental groups, a pre-test, included choosing title questions, for reading comprehension proficiency was administered to the participants of both groups during a 30- minute time allotment and the learners' performances were evaluated based on their appropriate comprehension of the read text. One type of post-reading task, called choosing title activities, was designed to elicit the pre-intermediate language learners' comprehension of read texts.

During the treatment, participants of the experimental group of guided title activities which followed the guided choosing title activities engaged in a post-reading task through it the learners received teacher's guidance for comprehending the texts and answering the comprehension questions included choosing title activities. The experimental group of free title activities engaged in free choosing title activities since they did not receive teacher's guidance for choosing the title; then they proposed some topics for the passage. They just comprehended the comprehension questions. The participants took a post-test alike the pre-test to approve the effectiveness of the post-reading task, especially choosing the title activities.

The first and the last texts read by the participants were respectively be regarded as a pre-test and post-test. That is, the learners of experimental group of guided title activities were first required to read the texts during the first session and to complete a twenty-item test which was designed in accordance with the text. The last text with its questions was again assigned by the instructor was treated as post-test. Choosing titles from a list of possibilities could show whether the students had understood the overall theme of the text. The titles should have worded in such a way as to make the students think about the overall meaning.

At the end of eight sessions both groups participated in a post-test with 20 multiple-choice items based on the last read text. The results of pre-test and post test were analyzed through Independent Samples t-test for testing the null hypothesis.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through paired and independent samples t-test to show the difference between the groups' means. In order to analyze the data obtained from the rating assessment tests, the data results were analyzed through using SPSS, version 17 to have the two groups' means compared. The researcher aimed to show whether there will be any significant difference between the mean of two experimental group of guided title activities and experimental group of free title activities. Moreover, the researcher's aim was to show whether tasks were helpful for the students to recognize the appropriate title for the passages.

### 4. Results

Descriptive statistics of free experimental and guided experimental groups' pre-tests including means, standard deviations and then standard error of means of the pre-tests were computed, respectively. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean
Guided Experimental	21	11.9524	4.60951	1.00588
Free Experimental	21	11.8095	4.55652	0.99431

Table 1 shows the number of the students in the free experimental and guided experimental groups is equal, 21 participants in each group. The participants of both groups were pre-tested on reading comprehension. It was done to measure how well participants comprehend the reading texts before any treatment and filling the title choosing items that they would learn during the treatment. The results of the independent t-test comparing the free experimental and guided experimental groups are presented in Table 2.

2. Independent Samples t-test (Pre-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances	0.190	0.665	0.101	40	0.920	0.142	1.414	-2.715	3.001

assumed							
Equal variances not assumed	0.101	39.9	0.920	0.142	1.414	-2.715	3.001

Table 2 shows the observed  $t$  (0.101) is less than the critical  $t$  (1.684) with  $df=40$ . Thus the difference between the post-test of guided experimental and free experimental groups is not significant at ( $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, it came to be known that the two groups were homogeneous. In other words, Independent samples  $t$ -test analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between the scores of the reading comprehension of the two groups at the outset of the research. The following statistical procedure was carried out at the end of the course in order to figure out and compare the means, the standard deviation and the standard error of means of the two groups under study. The results are presented in Table 3.

3. Descriptive Statistics (Post-test, Guided vs. Free Title Activities )

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Guided Experimental	21	14.4286	4.38830	0.95760
Free Experimental	21	11.9190	3.32380	0.72531

Table 3 indicates that the number of the students in the free experimental and guided experimental groups is equal, 21 participants in each group. The difference between the two means is significant. Table 4 shows the results of the Independent Samples  $t$ -test comparing the post-tests is presented in Table 4.

3. Independent Samples  $t$ -test (Post-test, Guided vs. Free Title Activities )

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	$t$	df	2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	4.520	0.040	2.339	40	0.024	2.80952	1.20128	0.38164	5.23741
Equal variances not assumed			2.339	37.265	0.025	2.80952	1.20128	0.37608	5.24297

Table 4 shows the observed  $t$  (2.339) is greater than the critical  $t$  (1.684) with  $df=40$ . Thus the difference between the post-test of guided experimental and free experimental groups is significant at ( $p<0.05$ ). In order to analyze the data, two Paired-Samples  $t$ -tests were conducted. The first one was run to show whether the instruction of reading comprehension with guided-choosing title activities helped the learners to comprehend reading texts after the treatment or not. The results of the tests are shown in Table 5.

5. Descriptive Statistics (Pre and Post-test of the Groups)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test Guided Experimental	11.9524	21	4.60951	1.00588
	Post-test Guided Experimental	14.4286	21	4.38830	0.95760
Pair 2	Pre-test free Experimental	11.8095	21	4.55652	0.99431
	Post-test free Experimental	11.9190	21	3.32380	0.72531

Table 5 shows the number of the students had taken part in the pre-tests and post-tests of free experimental and guided experimental groups was equal, 21 participants in each group. The participants of both groups were pre-tested and then post-tested on reading comprehension. It was done to measure how well participants comprehended the reading texts after treatment and filling the title choosing items that they would learn during the treatment. Paired Samples  $t$ -test was run to see the difference between the free experimental groups' pre-test and post-test and the guided experimental group's pre-test and post-test means is significant. Results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Paired Samples  $t$ -test of the Guided Experimental and Free Experimental Groups

		Paired Differences		$t$	df	2-tailed)			
		Confidence Interval of the Difference							
		Mean	d. Deviation				d. Error Mean	Lower	Upper
Pair1	Pre-test vs. Post-test of Guided Experimental	-2.476	5.287	1.153	-4.883	-0.069	-2.146	20	0.044
Pair2	-test vs. Post-test Free Experimental	0.180	3.763	.8212	-1.522	1.903	0.232	20	0.819

Table 6 shows the degree of freedom, the level of significance and the observed  $t$ -value of free experimental and guided experimental groups' pre-tests and post-tests. The degree of freedom, the level of significance and the observed  $t$ -value of guided experimental groups' pre-test and post-test are 20 and 0.044 and 2.146, respectively. Since the observed  $t$  (2.146) is greater than the critical  $t$  (1.725) with  $df = 20$ , the difference between the pre and the post-test of guided experimental groups is significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ). The second  $t$ -test shows that the observed  $t$  (0.232) is less than the critical  $t$  (1.725) with  $df = 20$ , the difference between the pre and the post-test of the free experimental group is not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The results will be discussed in this section, was involved with the following research questions.

RQ<sub>1</sub>. Does a choosing free title activity as a post-reading task affect learning reading comprehension among pre-intermediate language learners?

Results of the free experimental group's pre-test and its post-test showed a slight improvement in the learners' overall reading comprehension through post-reading tasks through choosing free title activities. By looking at the means of the pre-test and post-test of the free experimental group who chose free title activities, the first null hypothesis was rejected because the progress in the free experimental group's mean in the post-test of comprehending EFL context was seen. Moreover, by comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test of the free experimental group, one can simply notice the partly usefulness of choosing free title activities. The learners who used post-reading task and the appropriate choosing free title activities based on what had been learned in the interval times could achieve a rather good result in the post-test examination. One reason for the better performance of the free experimental group on post-test than its pre-test in using post-reading task types might be due to the fact that it was motivating for teachers and learners to work on a special kind of reading comprehension activities and focused more on choosing the most fruitful titles among the proposed ones.

After analyzing the data, the difference between free experimental group's performances in two pre-and post-tests was observed. This result can be more approved by this evidence that there was a slight significant difference between the means of free experimental group's pre-and post-tests. The mean of the post-test was a little higher than pre-test. The results showed that using the post-reading tasks like free title activities had significant effect on students' reading comprehension. Post-reading tasks and activities provide a chance for students to think about the text and check their reading comprehension again. The post-reading activities have also proved interesting. Thanabalan (2013) supported the research results that language usage would be advantaged by using various post-reading activities and language learning tools, such as Twitter in the school, college or universities and rarely in the community college environment. To support the claim that post-reading activities impacts positively on different aspects and phases of language learning, Keihaniyan (2014) also designed a study to investigate the role of post-reading questions on incidental vocabulary learning with the aim of providing useful techniques for learning vocabulary in language classes. After analyzing the data, the results showed that incidental vocabulary learning has a high correlation with reading comprehension.

RQ<sub>2</sub>. Does a choosing guided title activity as a post-reading task affect learning reading comprehension among pre-intermediate language learners?

Results of the guided experimental group's pre-test and its post-test showed an improvement in the learners' overall reading comprehension through another type of post-reading tasks, specially, choosing guided title activities. The reason of this salient progress in learners' reading comprehension was the guidance they have received from the teachers when the learners were



challenging the reading texts to choose the best title. In general, the ability to learn and promote the reading comprehension of EFL context among the participants of the guided experimental group improved saliently by using guided-choosing title activities. After analyzing the data, it was observed a significant difference between experimental group's performances in two pre- and post-tests. The better performance of the guided experimental group on the post-test showed that the learners could work on a special kind of guided title for a text.

The results of this study are supported by Feez (1998), Rooney (2000), and Skehan's (1998) statements that CBI and TBLT have attracted considerable attention around the world because a task-based approach provides learners with interesting challenges and implementation is clearly related to their language needs. Morris and Stewart-Dore (1990) supported this approach in which learners are given a chance to explore the language. Successful teachers have always helped their students to create a connection between the new information they obtain with their real lives. Post-reading activities are used to help the learners to think about the passages they have read. They guide the learners to consider what they are reading to help the students make an organization of the information which they might apply regarding later activities such as presentations or reading texts.

## 6. Conclusion

Results of the study showed that post-reading tasks- particularly choosing title activities with the aim of focusing on the main points of the text- enhanced students' interest and learner's motivation. It was pointed out that in spite of some limitations on using tasks such as time barriers which are the main outstanding problems in Iranian classrooms in which the time of the course is really short to apply tied procedures in appropriate reading text. Also, post-reading tasks provide a chance for students to practice and check their comprehension at the time they are challenging to choose the best titles. By using it students' reading comprehension will improve in a number of ways by focusing their attention to the main points of the applied post-reading tasks.

The usefulness of choosing free and guided title activities is supported by Maxine and Keene's (2003) declaration in which the process of writing title is described. Writing an effective title needs a brainstorming and revising and it does not appear in one magic moment. To write a good and meaningful title and preventing the writers from writing a meaningless one, some hints should be considered. They include the prediction of the content, catching the readers' interest, the reflection of tone, and containing the keywords which helps the readers for the internet search. That is, choosing a suitable title occurred when chosen title is accordance with the content, the keywords and readers' interest. The titles may be chosen by the teacher's guidance and hints or freely and without receiving any guidance from the teacher. Application of post-reading tasks promotes students' motivation and this may them more motivated in classroom participation while students who merely and conventionally read and practice a text by using reading comprehension items. Seemingly, it is not easy to motivate the students to participate in the classroom activities. Since some of them do not have information about it and they are not interesting.

Post-reading tasks generally and especially choosing free and guided title activities may influence EFL learners' reading comprehension. Focus on language materials through choosing free and guided title activities is an influential and motivational factor for EFL learners. The instruction of reading comprehension through post-reading tasks, in this study to some extent choosing free title activities and more significantly choosing guided title activities do have more impact on the learners' reading comprehension than the other reading activities. The effectiveness of choosing guided title activities than choosing free title activities is because of the teachers' guidance and help along with the instruction of reading texts.

The results of this study may be applicable in educational settings for language learners and tutors and teachers who are interested in implicating tasks in EFL contexts. This study could be a starting point in investigation of the effect of post-reading tasks of different kinds of title activities in appropriateness of reading comprehension. Language studies in the domain reading skill are well advised to consider the implications presented in this study.

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## ANALYSIS OF FICTIONAL CHARACTERS IN DIVAN-E-SOOMANAT SERIES ACCORDING TO ABRAHAM MASLOW'S THEORY OF HUMANIST

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### ABSTRACT

"Postmodernism" from one perspective is a transformed attitude toward the universe and man, and its reflection can be seen in art and, especially, the story of postmodern, therefore, to determine the status of post-modern man, the stories of this kind can be referred. "Abu Turab Khosravi" is one of the distinguished authors in the field of postmodern fiction that his works contain characteristics of modernist and postmodernist and "court of Somen (divan-e-Soomanat)" is known the best fiction work of this author, in the field of stenography. In this speech, fictional characters of Khosravi's divan-e-Soomanat series, based on the theory of humanist "Abraham Maslow" has been examined and has been analyzed in order to determine man's place in the hierarchy of his needs pyramid. According to the survey, most people in the community of this story are at the stage of safety requirements and love. They are constantly in search of a person to experience peace next to him. In fact, most people in the community of this story seek peace with multiple excuses.

**Key word:** security; divan-e-Soomanat; love; Maslow

### 1. Introduction

Postmodernism is considered the most newfound literary doctrine, in the contemporary world. It is an altered vision of the universe and, especially, the man who has manifested in the works of this doctrine. Since, from a point of view, the emergence of any movement is a natural matter and pursuant to prove the failure of previous doctrine in meeting all human expectations, it can be said that the doctrine pursuant to the decline of modernism in the human mind and its inability in satisfying the explorer and variety-seeking human of today, has separated its path to some extent and has announced its presence in the world, although it has nurtured in the lap of modernism and has had its current place of it. "Considering the kinship relationship between modernism and postmodernism suggests that the latter understanding depends on the former. As a child that inherits the genetic characteristics of his parents, modernism is concerned postmodernism and without it, it cannot properly be understood "(Payandeh, 2011: 25), and finally, the relationship between the two can be called " link and break together "(ibid.).

### 1. Postmodernism in literature

Various ideas of theorists in this field suggest that, post-modernism is not limited to one or more particular theory, and it indicates its pluralistic nature. "Barry Louis", one of the theorists of this

doctrine has considered "time chaos in the narrative of events; the decline of the concept of time; widespread use of adoption, highlighting words as signs of material analyzer; the association of incoherent thoughts, paranoia, and a vicious circle or lack of differentiation between logically distinguish speech "(Lewis, 2004: 84), the characteristic of postmodern fiction works. "Patricia Waugh" refers the postmodern story, entitled "Metafiction" and writes in the definition of the term: "meta-fiction is a term that refers to writing fiction that consciously and systematically, attracts the attention of reader to the nature of his situation as something artificial, so that he raises questions about the relationship between fiction and reality "(Waugh, 2011: 8-9) and determines the characteristics for the metafiction to distinguish it from a modern story, and before that.

Another theorist, such as "Barain McHale", has defined the postmodern, from the perspective of the "dominant element": "McHale considers postmodernism equal to an institution or the" antithesis "of modernism philosophy. In his view, modern stories had a mainly epistemological strain; however, postmodern fictions had a mainly ontological strain. The domination of ontological in the works of postmodern fiction has led to the matter that, they have placed the nature of existence in their focus, and therefore one of the main themes of postmodern fiction is exploring in what is the nature of the world, therefore, the dominant element in postmodern fiction is ontology "(Payandeh, 2011: 338-340).

## 2. Postmodernism in psychotherapy

Postmodernism is an interdisciplinary concept that appears in various fields of social science, psychology, politics, philosophy, etc. with multiple definitions, but with harmony. "A prospective structure believes that science is just another social structure. Different scientists in different historical periods, that have studied different cultural backgrounds, had different theories about reality. A variety of theories is not a temporary condition that disappears when science progresses. The variety of theories is a permanent condition that reflects the complexity and individuality of each patient and the knowledgeable person "(Prochaska, 2008: 564). One branch of the humanities that had the serious impact of this global movement is the science of psychology, so that sometimes, the psychologist or therapists deal with such an approach to the treatment of their patients. "Postmodern theories of counseling are caused by epistemological principles and phenomenological approaches and the existential (Botlar, 1995), and philosophically, it has roots in the work of Vico (1725-1948), Kant (791-969) and Hegel 1830-1975) "(Kimiai, 2009: 52).

Phenomena in the world are constantly changing and evolving. People also change. The only signs that remain in human could be used to recognize humans. 'Behavior, feelings, beliefs and desires of society will be shaped and organized according to the codes and Simulacra patterns, the codes and patterns that blur the distinction between reality and non-reality and thus, change our understanding of the social experiences "(Ward, 2004: 17).

Therefore, counselor or therapists refer to these symptoms to analyze the character REFERENCES. What the patient says and self-expresses and what the therapist picks up from him. "We cannot fully and directly aware of patients and their problems. Different theories, different languages, different cultures create different interpretations of a patient and his situation "(Prochaska, 2008: 563).

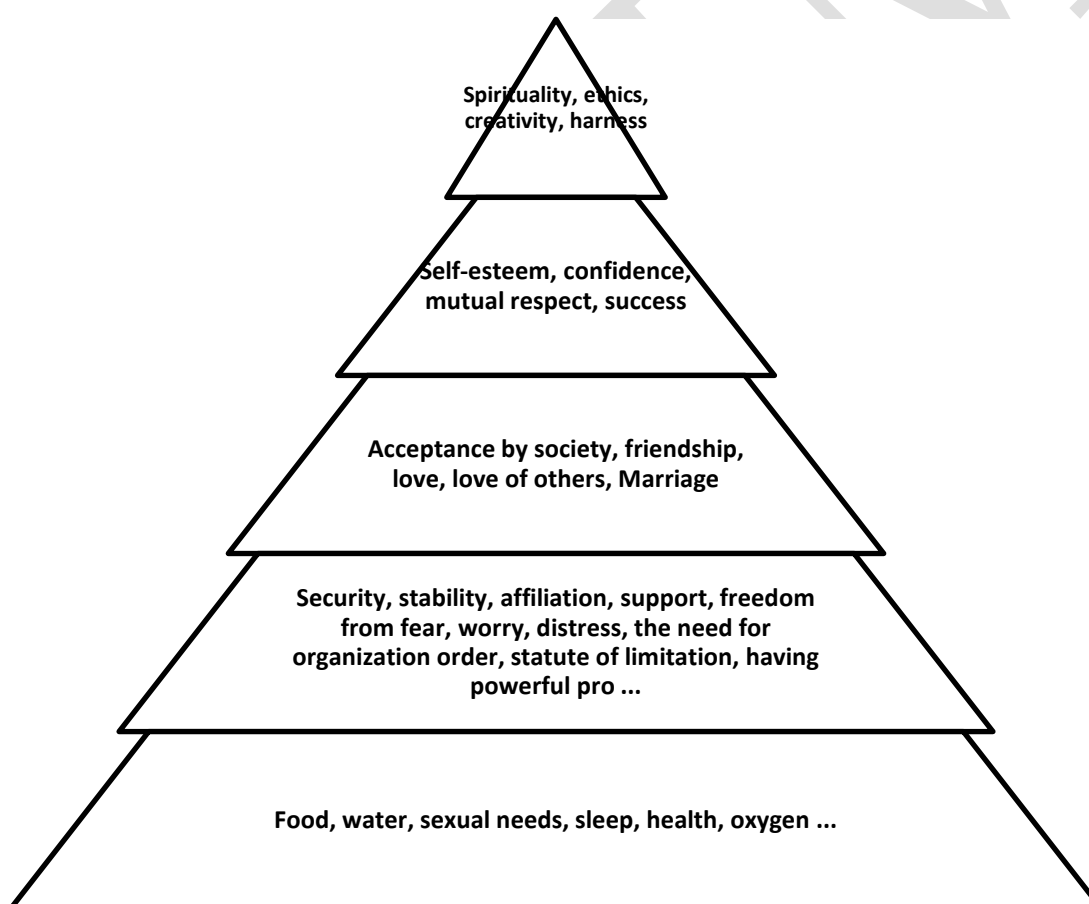
One of comprehensive and liable theories of human cognition is theory Humanist "Abraham Maslow" which is now a summary of the psychological perspective is presented in a few lines:

### 3- Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid

Human behavior is not fixed and they change when their life circumstances change. Following the disappear of any human needs, another need appears and appearing needs one after another will transform the idea of the human being, so there is no single and fixed truth.

Maslow's theory analyzes the man through his needs. He believes that the dominant human needs at any time shape the character and behavior at the same time. "Several factors determine behaviors that motivation is one of those factors and environmental forces are other factors. Motivation Stud does not negate or deny a study of the determinant factors of the situation, but it completes it "(Maslow, 1988: 63). In addition, environmental forces have a considerable role in directing needs. "In overall, our behavior is determined by personal variables (innate needs that aroused in us) and situational variables (the properties of our world that we understand them)" (Schultz, 1998: 348).

Maslow has divided the basic human needs into five groups and placed them in a pyramid, as the more basic needs for survival will be in the lower levels and less necessity needs will be at higher levels. He has divided the basic human needs into five groups, and respectively domination of one over the other, to the physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs.



(Maslow, 1988)

This article seeks to examine the effects of postmodern fiction and achieves a postmodern human definition based on the mentioned theory. To this end, Divan-e-Soomanat series of Abu Turab

Khosravi that is known as the best short story collection of him will be selected and assessed on behalf of the postmodern stories community.

#### 4. Postmodernism in Divan-e-Soomanat

With postmodernist's view to Divan-e-Soomanat series, we can say, the appearance of component "uncertainty" can be seen in all stories clearly. According to the theory of Louis, the components "vicious circle<sup>1</sup>", "paranoid<sup>2</sup>" and "chaos of time" are the features of stories in this collection of stories. Some of the stories in this collection, such as "squaring body" and "elegant and easy move" illustrates the duality of the universe and human life and the story "and I was a woman named Layla who was beautiful," embody the change and lack of stability in the human character and human life.

In most stories, the author tries to reveal the story of an event and for this purpose, he has used the technique "combination of reality and fantasy" and "assertiveness in the story" in different ways; for example, in stories "The stairs" and "Requiem for Jaleh and her murderer," the active presence of the author can be seen in the story.

#### 5. Research Background

In conjunction with Abu Turab Khosravi's works, dissertations and papers were found that can be obtained in informational sites. For example, Karimi in "Abu Turab Khosravi dilapidated book structure" (2011) and Salimi in "Review of Abutorab Khosravi works (structure and content analysis)" (2009), they have analyzed this work based on structuralism method. Heidari in the "post-modernism in later works based on the story The Nocturnal Orchestra of the wood, again from the same streets and Somen Court" (2011) has explored the formal and content features of postmodernist fiction in the works of these authors and others.

Payandeh has written a valuable article in the field of psychoanalytic criticism as "neurosis of psychoanalytic character in the story" A woman who lost her man "(2003) that it is liable. He has analyzed the Neurosis character of Hedayat's story based on the psychoanalysis findings and psychoanalytic criticism.

#### 6. Man in Court of Somen

The position of postmodern man is not as easy as stories of pre-modern human because of the attitude of this doctrine to the cosmos in the pyramid of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In such stories, the truth is as much as their readers' understanding and each reader is considered a unique interpreter of the story. Abu Turab Khosravi stories have no exception due to its nature of the postmodern. "Heresies of postmodernists' novelist will create such an atmosphere of uncertainty and confusion that even such a prominent critic David Lodge also believes that" we can never eliminate the ambiguity in the post-modernist novels because such novels are like an entangled skein. "(Payandeh, , 2003: 13).

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<sup>1</sup> Vicious circle occurs in Postmodernist fiction when the text and the world are both impermeable, so that it is impossible to distinguish them from each other. When these two cases occur, the real matter and the metaphorical matter mix in each other "short circuit" (author entrance to the story) and "Dual Link" (the real historical characters in the story) "(Lewis, 2004: 104).

<sup>2</sup> Many players of postmodernist fiction deeply feel that they are paranoid, or in other words, they expose themselves to the risk that, in every respect, they will be surrounded in another intellectual system. These stories, in various forms, reflect paranoid anxieties [modern humans]. Some of this anxiety are: suspicion of stability and durability [human relations] and restricted to any specific location or identity, a belief that society seeks to harm to the individual, and the intensification of individual planning, to confront the conspiracies of others (ibid. , p. 99).

The people in the fictional community are seeking to recover their human identity, they pass the story path; people who on the one hand, in their world of ideals, seek peace, security, beauty and immortality and on the other hand, the fear of separation, Lost, alone, death, decay, duality, change, destruction and loss will destine the rise and fall of their life story and in this way they see "dream and nightmare together" (Khosravi, 1998: 3). Eventually, it can be said, after the disappointment of classical optimism and realism of realistic look, now they experience a pessimistic look to the universe, a look that is the gift of modern and postmodern society.

Postmodern fiction characters with traits that have been calling for them will reveal their insight in the most final layers of text, so analyzing such characters is difficult, but since they shape the needs of the story and with understanding human needs, their place in the pyramid of Maslow can be determined, the humans in these stories will be analyzed based on their dominant needs and their position in a hierarchy of Maslow's needs will be discussed:

### **6-1 safety requirements**

The second stage of Maslow's pyramid of needs is dedicated to safety needs. This stage of needs includes the need for freedom from fear, security of life and lack of deprivation of basic needs. In other words, the need for self-protection, now and in the future, is at this stage. "If physiological needs will be satisfied fairly well, then a new set of needs arise that we can classify them to the safety needs (security, stability, dependence, support, freedom from fear, from anxiety and distress, the need for organizing, order, law, limits, have a strong supporter and etc. they can act as almost exclusive organizers of behavior, with enlisting all the organisms talent "(Maslow, 1988: 74).

Manifestation of safety requirements has appeared in most stories of this collection, so that we can say, most of the characters are at this stage of the needs: "One can expect that in the majority of people, fear of chaos and nihilism lead to the backwardness of transcendental needs and attention to safety requirements that have more domination "(ibid., 79).

#### **6-1-1 traces of amber man**

The story of "Traces of amber man", is the tale of a man who has a journey, and his wife, as always, follows him ... in the first reading, it seems that the man betrays his wife and the wife is tired of this affair 'the man who did not come home, his wife guessed there must be another woman "(Khosravi, 1988: 18). But with further investigation of the story, the theme of traveling and death will appear. The man wants to travel another world and the woman continues to follow him. The woman should go to the world that the man in it to reach the man and bring him back. "The man was found, he was lying on the bed, a white cloth was pulled to his chest, his face was as wrinkled before ..." (ibid., 21). The woman is looking for the man with her child. She knows where he has gone. "The man's body shape was appeared that he was following a woman that was far away. The woman recognized the body shape on the confused lines of hanging branches of willows "(ibid., 19). Eventually she finds him and returns him, "the man rose, his amber nudity revealed in the morning light. She took his hand, all three went out of the room, crossed the hall, the women and her son were on both sides of nude man who took hesitant steps "(ibid., 22). As can be seen, an eerie atmosphere dominated the whole story and the atmosphere undoubtedly expresses the mood of the characters.

#### **6-1-2 Presence**

The story of "presence" is the story of a young couple who go home along with their children, but the key does not open the lock. Man fails to open the door, "The woman laughed and said:" Maybe it is not the key; I open the door with my key. "(Ibid., 23) They see an old woman, in their own house that claims the house belongs to her. The neighbors also confirm this. Apparently, the

couple must accept that a house that belonged to them is not their own home, because nobody knows them.

The story of one hand expresses the fact that life is ephemeral and inevitably the aging will come and death comes, although this truth is inconvenient. They deny the truth and it is a reason of the fact that they flee and are afraid of the truth, but the truth finally appears, and there is no escape from fate: "The man sat behind the wheel. The woman got in. She sat her child on her knee and shook her knees. Then she bent down and kissed his face and her shoulders trembled. "(Ibid., 31).

A kind of fear of the passage of time and the coming of old and exhaustion, age can be seen in the story, as well, by reading this story, "fear of missing man, in the postmodern world and a sense of loneliness, Lost, alienation from the world around and estrangement from this strange world will attack suddenly to the mind of reader "(Tadayoni, 2008: 81).

### **6-1-3 Formation**

"The formulation" story is the event of an artist who is commissioned by Mr. Fayazi and plans to create a statue of a beautiful woman Aslani. Mr. Fayazi, who is fascinated by the beauty of Mrs. Aslani, plans to immortalize her beauty in mind. He wants to keep Aslani's stone face forever. "Trying to build a stone face and fix it, will be in the event of the idea of dealing with time and in a way, it reflects the subversion time. In other words, they want to build a stone of Mrs. Aslani's face to transfer her beauty from mortal physical to resistance body "(Malmir, 2010: 139).

Fear of loss and death and trying to maintain stability and life prevails in this story.

### **6-1-4 Jacob, Jacob**

The story of "Jacob, Jacob," is the tale of Captain Sistani and Lady Sarah that instead of moving into the future, take the past path. They now live in exile and have a mission to travel to the past. The journey implies a kind of "fear of moving into the future" to the reader consciously or unconsciously. Instead of moving into the future, they have the mission to the past.

"Many of us prefer predictability to the unknown matter; we prefer order to chaos and prefer to stay in a safe job instead of doing a new venture business" (Schultz, 1998: 345).

### **6-2 social needs (love, affection, belonging ...)**

One of the most basic human needs is the need for love and affection that are in the third stage of Maslow's pyramid. Naturally, these needs will be raised in those that in terms of physiological and safety will be at least satisfied. "After people, partly satisfy the needs of their safety, affection and belongingness needs such as the desire for friendship, the desire for a wife and children, the need to belong to a family, group, community, or nation will satisfy them. Affection and belonging involve aspects of sexual desire and human contact and the need to be kind and receive kindness ... now a person; unlike in the past will felt the absence of a friend, lover, spouse or children heavily. He is desperate for romantic relationships and forcefully will seek to achieve this objective. Now he deeply feels the pain of loneliness, isolation, being rejected, having no friends and having no roots in the community "(Maslow, 1988: 80-79).

If these requirements are met, the person automatically goes to the next step and if it is suppressed in him, it will follow the worst consequences, as Maslow says that "the failure to satisfy the need for love is the main cause of emotional incompatibility" (Schultz, 1998 : 345).



According to the survey, some of the characters in these stories are at this stage of needs that these characters are now analyzed:

### 6-2-1 Miniatures

The characters of the story "miniatures", although at first reading, are shown on the stage of needing to love; but when we consider the words and actions of these characters with accuracy, other incentives appear. This story is the story of a German couple, which they lost each other for a while and the woman takes refuge to a familiar man in a foreign country and born a child from him. She kept waiting for his husband. The man returned and the woman abandoned his children and will return to her country with his husband.

The Madam continues to think about the Captain: "Madame Schneider, who sat scowling at the piano and played the Bavarian melody, thought about Captain Schneider" (Khosravi, 1998: 1). She even sees the narrator on the board of Captain: "I thought, This is not me that with him, this is the Captain Spar Schneider, who lives with her, so I said:" How I am similar to that capped boot ghost "(ibid., 2).

However, as can be seen, in the most final layers of mind of the characters, the fear of losing his identity can be seen. He follows his principles and cannot find it in his place. "He forgot how he arrived in Tehran, he said:" I think I launch from Berlin to here and fall in this house and I have to get used to everything, breathe in this house, sleep and wake up and resume uncertainty, have the children that are not like anyone. "He said:" Perhaps it was a political organization mission that I come from Berlin and bring them into the world. "He said:" they even do not similar to you. Creatures with Mongolian features of miniatures with my green eyes "(ibid., 1).

### 6-2-2 stairs

"The stairs" is the tale of a man who sat in a park and a woman passed next to him. As the needs create events and the story does not run its natural course uneventful, the author must write the event: "Everything was started as simple as that. There was no pre-determined plan. Mr. A was an unknown man who was on the bench. It was not known how old he is, what he looks like. These are the things that the accident was determined. He put his elbow on his forehead that the woman has entered. On that day, anything was possible, it was possible that no accident happened that had the story, and he continued to wait on the bench amorphous. In that case, the fetus will be a man who remained waiting forever for an accident. However, her arrival was an event that happened "(Khosravi, 1998: 34).

The man loved her with observing the woman, and followed her. However, the woman did not interest him. She then invited him to her home and with their connection, Dal will be born.

The evidence in the story states that the need to like and to be liked in the characters of the story shape the events. "The woman passed from the front of Mr. A. After passing the woman, the sun shined to the man. Mr.A became a young man who looked to her in the first moments of his birth. The breeze shook her long hair and her blue skirt and Mr. A. rose up. He went after the woman. The woman frowned at her long eyebrows. Mr. A took a long breath and said: "Such a good weather!" She stole her eyes ... "(ibid., 34).

### 6-2-3 silky legs

The story of "Silky legs," is about a child who lives in a world of dreams. Mother is in search of his father and misses him. She is knitting a sweater that a fantasy world of a child will be drawn on it. The child lives in that world. In fact, the mother is knitting the child's world of dreams, but an invisible mouse will devour the entire world. As if, the story reflects the tragedy of war in those years. The story is not clear that the man voluntarily went to the front, or he went by

force; the only truth that exists is that, the father is not at home and mother and son are searching for him; so, we can say that the two characters of the story are on the stage of belonging. "The mouse has come down from the sky and has chewed my feet. Mother did not pay attention to anything; I looked at the picture frame. She was looking for the father among the trees and the mouse has chewed my knees and spited and began to eat my shoulders. Then the silk of my mouth was chewed ... and the mouse began to chew mom's knees and she was looking for the father into picture frames "(Khosravi, 1998: 50).

### **6-2-4 and I was a woman named Leila, who was beautiful**

The story of "and I was a woman named Leila, who was beautiful," is about a woman whose husband has changed, and has not interested in her the same as before, even he does not know her. "That night, it is possible that a woman like me finds a shadow of the man, but the man was not really Mohammad Sahebi, perhaps a faint outline of a familiar manner in him, but there was not the possibility to relate the behavior of that man with a man who was once in love with Leila"(ibid., 92).

The story highlights the fact that people change and our loved ones are not always with us. "And I was Leila that day, I guessed that I was the mother of a stubborn girl who grows up and height and asked me, what was the name and the face of the man who was in love with Leila. And she does not understand that the man is not present and there is nothing left from Leila except a postmenopausal shadow, That night, it is possible that a woman like me finds a shadow of the man, but the man was not really Mohammad Sahebi, perhaps a faint outline of a familiar manner in him, but there was not the possibility to relate the behavior of that man with a man who was once in love with Leila"(ibid., 92).

### **6-2-5 Peykar's squaring**

The story of "squaring the body" is the tale of two men who loved a woman with the name "Peykar". Both were jealous of each other and want to have all Peykar for themselves, but half of Peykar is for one and the other half are for another ... "When half of her is with one, her eyes have a half of its shine or rosy vermilion, face and black hair, a divided beauty that is not all of her presence and they do not know that they see half of her, and the other half is in eclipse and on the other side. For this reason, none of them are in the presence of all ... that they did not know that she is not all kindness, she is a half that the other half is in the presence of another, they have unfair treatment against those who rub their heads on her sanctuary "(ibid., 65).

### **6-2-6 Court of Somen**

"The Court Somen" story is also, in a way of postmodernism, has the same content of love late years. Need a lover that was formerly one of the components of story making, has been raised in this story as postmodern context. A character that, although has not historical fact, he is written on the history, as the reader of the story believes its fact and the same historical character will be overwritten in a story with postmodern style. The main character of the story is a formidable poet, as there is life in his poetry. If a butterfly writes, it lives and flies by his lover. This character creates a lover from the darkness of prisons, and prefers the dungeon of the prison with lover from freedom without her.

As can be seen, in the characters in these stories, in addition to the need for love and affection, a kind of fear and safety needs will be raised, as if each of these characters seeks for peace in life. The goal is one, although the tool to achieve it is different. "Modernists and postmodernists' writers have focused their attention on characters and situations to display anxiety and distress of the people of their day, and obviously bitter and black humor will be the flavor of modernist and postmodernists literature' (Oliai Nia, 2010: 94).

**Conclusion:**

In a definition of postmodern fiction, it is recreating a world where uncertainty and stability, anxiety, confusion, Lost, fear, anxiety and distress are the highlighted features of humans; it is a world where, according to Baudrillard, information will be provided without concerning to search for truth and meaning, by available discourses to present the simulation world to its people. Abu Turab Khosravi's postmodern fiction world is also not excluded from this category.

According to the study of Khosravi's stories in *Divan-e-Soomanat*, it can be said, Personality and Mental formation of people in this fictional society is a society that is called postmodernism. People, who are materially secure, but the truth and meaning have been lost in their lives. In "miniatures", the narrator is in search of truth and the Madam afraid of missing. She considered the real love in what that is now missing. "Footprint of amber man", is the tale of a man and woman that are constantly on the run and pass. "Presence" refers to the neglect of people from the facts that are bitter and unpleasant. "Stairs" depicts a kind of absurdity in human life. "Silky legs," depicts an atmosphere full of insecurity and "Jacob Jacob" is the narrator of the retrogressive approach of human life. "Squaring the body" recreated the duality of human life in the familiar context and the story of "and I was a woman named Leila, who was beautiful," gives objectivity to the change and instability of the postmodernism in the world of a story, as well as in other stories, we face with an atmosphere of fear, Lost, confusion and absurdity of life.

Based on the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it can be said, most people in this fictional community struggle in the second phase of needs which means the phase of the safety requirements and often look for someone to experience peace at his side. In fact, most people in this fictional community to seek peace with multiple excuses.

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## THE EFFECT OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS ON READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS: WITH A FOCUS ON GENDER

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### ABSTRACT

The literature on graphic organizers reveals that it should be considered as a vehicle that can foster learning in language classes. To this end, the study investigated whether the use of graphic organizers could result in improvement in EFL learners' reading comprehension with a focus on gender. Nelson proficiency test was administered to one hundred twenty (n=120) Iranian EFL learners. Ninety participants (n=90) were selected based on the test and were distributed into two experimental group (30 learners in each) and the control group (n=30). For a period of two months, the experimental groups were supplied with reading texts to which graphic organizers were added, whereas the control group was trained using the conventional methods in which no graphic organizers were used. Employing inferential statistics and t-test, it was revealed that using graphic organizers was effective in answering reading questions which required (1) identifying the main idea, (2) finding the supporting details, (3) dealing with vocabulary and (4) fact and opinion, and (5) making inferences. It was also revealed that both genders benefitted equally from the instructions of graphic organizers while reading. The results could be used by material developers and language instructors.

**KEYWORDS:** gender, graphic organizer, EFL learners, reading comprehension

Being able to read in English is significant for a variety of reasons. Not only is reading a fundamental language skill, but also academic success of the language learners on high-stake tests depends to their reading skill, as a separate section on TOEFL and IELTS test is allotted to the reading skill. In addition, reading in L2 provides opportunities for learning other language skills and subskills. The effect of reading on incidental vocabulary learning of language learners has already been observed by Ko (2012). Needless to mention that, on the other hand, it is hard to answer listening question without reading them first.

The reading skill of language learners may differ based on their gender, as a result; part of the literature on reading comprehension refers to gender-based studies, e.g., Brantmeier (2003). The issue was so significant that some studies suggest gender-neutral studies (Jalilevand, 2014) and some others have gauged the effect of male-oriented and female oriented topics on reading comprehension of language learners (Bugel & Buunk, 1996). Such diverse and opposing results

may indicate how significant it is to conduct a new study dealing with the issue of graphic organizers and gender.

Regardless of language learners' gender, the ultimate goal of these studies is to find a way to increase EFL learners' reading comprehension of language learners. One possible way to do so seems to be the use of graphic organizers. Prior research on the effect of graphic organizers on reading comprehension of EFL learners has revealed that graphic organizers can connect what language learners already know to their existing knowledge (Cromley & Azevedo, 2007). Graphic organizers provide a visual-verbal source for language learners (Dolehanty, 2008). In addition, comparison of the effect of graphic organizers developed by language learners and those which were developed by language teachers shows that the former group can have more positive effect on learning the second language (Griffin, Cynthia, Malone, & Kameenui, 1995).

According to the literature, graphic organizers have appeared to be an effective way to teach and learn new information and overarch concepts. The arguments for graphic organizers include the importance of connecting new information to prior knowledge which can result in a longer retention of knowledge (Jonassen et al., 1997). In a more precise description of graphic organizers, Dolehanty (2008) refers to it as a use of visual symbols for specific words to general ideas which results in more holistic understanding of the concepts. That is why, graphic organizers are referred to using other words such as concept map or cognitive organizer.

This study dealt with the effect of graphic organizers on reading comprehension of male and female Iranian EFL learners in the EFL context of Iran, as, to the researcher's best knowledge, the topic in this context is novel and Iranian EFL learners are in need of innovative approaches to increase their reading. It should be mentioned that, the use of graphic organizers depends on the type of task used in the class. As a result, the researchers were meticulous in selecting the type of graphic organizers. The type of graphic organizers used in this study were Y-chart, story Star Chart, Spider map and PMI chart as they have been among the most effective for the reading tasks.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading classes and that it is very significant to language learners' success, the Iranian EFL context seems to suffer from certain shortcomings in this regard. Not only, in most cases, are no supplementary materials used to foster EFL learners' reading comprehension in this context, but also, the material used by the language books hardly contain more visual help other than a simple picture of the reading text. As a result, language learners' reading skill may not be enhanced as much as it really could be.

Secondly, in most cases in the EFL context of Iran, the language learners are discriminated based on their gender to male and female classes as a law and not based on language learners' learning preferences or styles. This means that research is required to find out whether or not classes should be matched based on language learners' gender. In case of this study, the researchers felt the need to find out whether gender plays a role in using graphic organizers to realize whether there is a need to match reading classes based on language learners' gender.

Finally, although the use of graphic organizers on reading comprehension of language learners has been considered a significant issue, there is no plethora of research on this issue, especially with regard to language learners' gender.

### **Research Questions**

The current study was designed to answer the following research questions:

Q<sub>1</sub>: Does the use of graphic organizers have any significant effect on reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners?

Q<sub>2</sub>: If graphic organizers have any effect on reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners, which gender benefits more?

### **Research Hypotheses**

Hand in hand with the research questions, the following research hypotheses were developed:

H<sub>01</sub>: The use of graphic organizers does not have any significant effect on reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners.

H<sub>2</sub>: Male Iranian EFL learners benefit more from graphic organizers than female Iranian EFL learners with regard to their reading comprehension.

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **Graphic organizers and Reading Comprehension**

Graphic organizer is considered as an aid to language learners in form of a text information or spatial display. As stated by Robinson, Katayama, Dubois and Devaney (1998) graphic organizers discuss concepts in both directions-vertically and horizontally. However, it mostly helps with the macrostructure understanding of the text; meaning that it communicates main concepts rather than detailed information. Through retaining and retrieving detailed information gets easier as well (Xiangjing & Grabe, 2007). This is usually referred to as a shift of approaches from traditional linear text presentation to graphical concept (Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002).

Research in the past decade shows a considerable deal of effort by researchers on delving into the effect of graphic organizers in education in general and on reading comprehension of L2 learners in specific. Ciascai (2009) investigated the effect of graphic organizers as instruments that could not only represent the data, but also illustrate it in an effective manner in educational settings. What was found from her research was that graphic organizers can help enhance understanding of learners in case both text and visual graphic organizers be used.

In a different study that investigated the effect of graphic organizers on reading comprehension of L2 learners, Barron and Stone (1974) attempted to investigate how graphic organizers can affect reading vocabulary while reading. To this end, they assigned three cohorts of learners that went through 3 different graphic organizer representations, namely; advance organizer, graphic post organizer, and control. The results of the study revealed that advanced organizer (the first type of graphic organizers mentioned) has statistically more significant effect on learning vocabulary while reading. Similar findings were achieved by Griffin, Cynthia, Malone, and Kameenui (1995) who added a new aspect to the study. Not only did they investigate the effect of graphic organizers on learning vocabulary, but also they tried to understand which of the teacher-made organizer vs. student made organizer has more effect on the dependent variable. Their study revealed that in case the students made the graphic organizers more positive effect would be observed.

Simmons, Griffin, and Kameenui, (1988) investigated the reflection of graphic organizers on hierarchy of information in reading; meaning that the effect of graphic organizers on both understanding of the main idea and the detailed information was sought. The study revealed that graphic organizers help with understanding the main idea more than comprehending the detailed information.

In another study, Griffin and Tulbert (1995), attempted to investigate which type of graphic organizer is the most effective in terms of understanding reading expository texts. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that notwithstanding many prior studies which had their focus on the effect on graphic organizers in L1 reading, their study had its focus on L2 reading. The reason, as stated by the researchers was that L2 readers come across more difficult texts compared to L1 readers (Jiang, X. & William G, 2007). The study revealed that more spatial-visual graphic organizers can have more positive effect on reading comprehension of L2 readers.

Williams et al. (2005) studied the effect of graphic organizers on compare-contrast expository reading texts. The program emphasizes text structure using a Graphic organizer, and through the close analysis of specially constructed exercise paragraphs. Students were able to demonstrate transfer to uninstructed compare-contrast texts though not to text structures other than compare-contrast. Moreover, the text structure instruction did not detract from their ability to learn new content. The results provide evidence that explicit instruction in comprehension is feasible and effective as early as the 2nd grade.

Xiangying Jiang and Grabe, (2007) believed that research carried out so far to investigate the effect of graphic organizers on reading comprehension is inadequate. This conclusion was based on a student survey which revealed that graphic organizers reflect the discourse organization of a text and can help with a variety of text types, however; not all texts include graphic organizers.

Based on the literature survey on using Graphic organizer in reading comprehension amongst ESL students, it is understood that the need for Graphic organizer in reading comprehension among ESL students is not adequately researched.

### **Classification of Graphic organizers**

There are 5 main categories of graphic organizers, namely; star web, chart matrix, tree map, chain, and sketch. Li (2008) considers 8 categories of graphic organizers which differ based on the aim of the course. These categories include: KWL chart, history frames, word map, zooming in and zooming out - concepts, zooming in and zooming out -people, Inquiry chart, venn diagram, and column notes.

As for Star, Webbing, Cluster Diagrams, multidimensional that include a variety of facts and features associated to them are displayed. The star diagram provides the readers with brainstorming on the topic, as a result; the readers have access to a list of traits related to the topic. It is also used to provide the readers with the key points of the reading text.

-Another type of graphic organizer is Spider Map (also referred to as Semantic Map). Similar to a cluster diagram, Spider Map is used to reveal various aspects of a topic. The name takes after its form which is similar to a spider's web. The web aids readers to have their focus on the topic. As the learners are asked to fill in the web, they make use of their prior knowledge and can monitor the growth in their comprehension. In this way, the learners will find out in what areas they need more research.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

The main population for this true-experimental study was the intermediate Iranian EFL context. In order to find samples that could truly represent the population, the researchers carried out the study in Iran Language Institute (ILI) which is known as a governmental language institute with a considerable number of language learners. The participants for the study (N=90) were selected among 120 intermediate EFL learners in the spring semester, 2015. Nelson Language Proficiency Test was administered to 120 language learners. This test consisted of reading and

grammar sections. It included 14 cloze-test reading items based on a reading passage, and 50 grammar items. All the test items were in multiple choice formats. This test was used to prove that the candidates were at intermediate level. These 90 participants included both genders with equal proportion (45 girls and 45 boys). The participants were randomly assigned to the experimental (n=60) and control (n=30) groups. The first experimental group included 30 boys, and the second one included 30 girls. The control group consisted of 15 male learners and 15 female learners. During the study the experimental groups received instruction using the graphic organizers, whereas the control group did not receive any instructions during the study except their routine syllabus.

ILI offers courses at 13 levels to young adults. They are as follows: Start, Run1, Run2, Run3, Run4, Race1, Race2, Race3, Race4, Reach1, Reach2, Reach3, and Reach4. It was decided that the first five levels to be eliminated from the study. Therefore, the Graphic organizer instructions and reading texts were administered to the students in the sixth level, i.e., the students of level Race2. This level is considered as intermediate in ILI's classification system.

Because the classes at ILI were easily available for researcher, convenient sampling was used; that is the available classes were selected for the study and because this study needed homogenous groups, participants were selected from the same level. The Nelson Homogeneity test included 64 multiple choice questions was administered to select a homogenous sample out of the first sample selection.

Table 1

*The Participants' Demographic Data*

Group	Gender	Age	Level
Control	Male and Female	12-14	Intermediate
Experimental 1	Male	12-14	Intermediate
Experimental 2	Female	12-14	Intermediate

### **Instruments and Materials**

The instruments in this study included the assessment materials and the tasks and activities for each group. To accomplish the task, two sets of reading comprehension tests were constructed and utilized as pre-test and post-test.

### **Nelson Language Proficiency Test (Homogeneity Test)**

The Nelson Language Proficiency test was administered to prove that the candidates are at intermediate level. This test consisted of reading and grammar sections. It included 14 cloze-test reading items based on a reading passage, and 50 grammar items. All the test items were in multiple choice formats. After giving the test, students with the same proficiency level were selected.

More precisely, according to the results of the test out of 120 learners, 90 learners whose scores fell 1SD below and above the mean were selected randomly for the purpose of the study



### **Pretest**

Nelson Denny Reading Test (pretest) was administered to the participants as the pretest. It included five passages following by 30 multiple choice questions to prove that the participants were homogenous in terms of reading comprehension prior to the study. The pretest was administered to all participants, control and experimental groups before the beginning of the introduction session. As mentioned above, this pretest was given to measure reading comprehension level of every participant before the treatment phase.

### **Posttest**

Three weeks after the treatment phase of the study was over, the researcher-made posttest was administered to the participants. The researcher-made test was used as the data collection instrument in this study to measure the impact of graphic organizers on reading comprehension of the participants. The reading texts were based on the tasks which had been assigned to both experimental and control groups during the class time. There were selected from PET Practice Tests published by Oxford University Press 2003. It is worth to mention that the researcher-made posttest was piloted by giving it to a sample of 25 students. A process of item analysis was carried out for the researcher-made posttest in order to identify and discard the poor items.

### **Tasks**

In addition to the assessment materials, certain activities and tasks were practiced during the course of instruction. Eight PET reading texts selected from PET Practice Tests published by Oxford University Press (2003) were assigned to the participants of both experimental and control groups during introduction sessions. While the candidates of experimental groups were supplied with the strategies of Graphic organizers, the participants of control groups didn't receive any except the conventional techniques. With each Graphic organizer Diagram, a Reading Plan Chart was also given to the candidates of experimental groups that includes tips for a successful reading. The Graphic organizer Charts which were instructed to the learners of experimental groups include: Y-Chart, Story Star, Spider Map, and PMI.

### **Procedures**

In order to investigate the possible effect of graphic organizers on reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners, the participants were divided into two experimental groups and one control group. The participants were randomly assigned to experimental (n=60) and control (n=30) groups. The first experimental group included 30 male participants, and the second one included 30 female participants. The control group consisted of 15 male and 15 female learners.

In the second phase The Nelson Reading Comprehension test (pretest) was administered to the participants included five passages following by 30 multiple choice questions to prove that the participants were homogenous in terms of reading comprehension prior to the study. The pretest was administered to all participants, control and experimental groups before the beginning of the introduction session.

The study was carried out for eleven sessions in one and a half hours by the researcher. During the 8 treatment sessions the researcher taught the participants decoding skills, comprehension strategies including: predicting, analyzing with respect to grammatical elements, using QAR strategy to monitor their comprehension level, underscoring and highlighting keywords, making a mind movie, paying attention to introduction and conclusion and encouraging the participants to build world knowledge through reading and to relate what they know to what they read. Every session a specific type of graphic organizer was introduced to the participants and detailed explanation and instructions were presented through various examples by the

researcher. The reading material a lesson plan, and a specific graphic organizer chart or diagram related to the theme of the task were distributed among the participants. The participants were asked to read the text critically, detect how the author communicated, and use instructed comprehension strategies of Graphic organizers, the allocated time for this part was thirty minutes. Then they were asked to complete the Lesson Plan Chart and fill in the Graphic organizer Chart/Diagram within thirty minutes, and then they started answering the comprehension questions in thirty minutes. Eight PET reading texts were given to the participants within two months and each time the use of a specific kind of Graphic organizer Chart was taught to them. One task was assigned each session followed by ten True/False questions or five Multiple Choice questions.

The first Graphic organizer chart that instructed was Y-Chart Diagram (Appendix D). A Y-Chart was a three-part Graphic organizer that was used for describing three aspects of a topic. This kind of Graphic organizer was used to organize ideas and thereby clarify the readers' thinking.

The instructions of Y-Chart diagram were given to the participants. This procedure was used to brainstorm ideas on what the students knew about the topic by writing or drawing what the topic looked like, sounded like, and felt like.

The assignments were "The Great Bear Rainforest" followed by ten True/False questions and "Learn Indian Dancing" followed by five Multiple Choice questions.

The participants used the Y-chart template to organize their ideas into three alleged distinct sections, and encouraged the learners to move from concrete descriptions to ABSTRACT descriptors.

The second Graphic organizer Chart, Story Star was distributed among the participants of the experimental group. This kind of chart helped with organizing factual ideas around 5 main questions: who, what, where, when and why. The instructions of this kind of Graphic organizer were presented to the participants, they were asked to create an outline based on the text, found the answers to 5w's, and filled in the chart of Story Star.

The first text that was assigned entitled "Learn Now" followed by ten True/False questions. The second text titled, "Night Work" followed by five Multiple Choice questions. This type of Graphic organizers encouraged the students to make connections with the text by creating a visual structure.

The third type of Graphic organizer that was applied in this study was Spider Map Diagram (Appendix D). Spider Map was used to help the participants place the main topic, theme, supporting ideas and details in the legs of the Spider Map Organizer in order to organize the participants' thought. The texts that were assigned to the participants according to this type of Graphic organizers titled "Exploring Peru" followed by ten True/False questions and "Exercise can be fun" followed by five Multiple Choice questions.

The spider map made the candidates focus on main topic and supporting ideas. Learners placed the main topic, theme or concept in the center of the diagram. Main ideas and the details supporting those ideas were then filled in on the supporting branches, or legs of the spider map organizer.

The fourth Graphic organizer that was instructed to the participants was PMI Chart, a Graphic organizer in which a learner examined the pluses, minuses and interesting things associated with a topic, decision or idea.

The texts named "Music for Life" followed by ten True/False questions and "Are you shopping too much?" followed by five Multiple Choice questions.

PMI Chart helped the learners to organize their thoughts about the pros and cons of a topic or comparing the advantage and disadvantage of an action.

Finally, the 3-week delayed researcher-made posttest was conducted to measure the probable impact of graphic organizers on reading comprehension skill of the participants. The researcher-made posttest included four passages followed by twenty multiple choice questions and ten True/False questions. The test was constructed based on the reading texts covered during the class time of both experimental and control groups. It is worth to mention that the researcher-made posttest was piloted by giving it to a sample of 25 students. The comparison of the results of posttest of experimental group with the posttest of control group served as an indicator of the possible effects of the treatment.

## Data Analysis

### Grouping of the Participants

In order to investigate the probable effect of graphic organizer on reading comprehension of intermediate EFL learners in Iran, 120 participants were given Nelson Language Proficiency test. Next, 90 participants were selected among 120 intermediate EFL learners based on the Nelson Homogeneity test. The descriptive statistics of the Nelson Homogeneity Test are given below.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of the Nelson Homogeneity Test*

	N	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean	SD
Total	120	0.72	0.38	11.38	2.41

From among the 120 students who took the Nelson Homogeneity test, 90 students whose marks were one SD above and below the mean were selected as the final participants of this study. They were later divided into two groups of control and experimental.

### Analysis of the Reading Comprehension Pretest

The Nelson Reading Comprehension test (pretest) was administered to the participants to prove that the participants were homogenous in terms of reading comprehension prior to the study. The pretest was administered to all participants, control and experimental groups before the beginning of the introduction session. The Nelson test was used to evaluate the learners' current level of reading comprehension ability and would enable the researcher to investigate the possible impact of the treatment on the improvement of the reading comprehension of the experimental group. Table 3 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the two groups' pretest.

Table 3

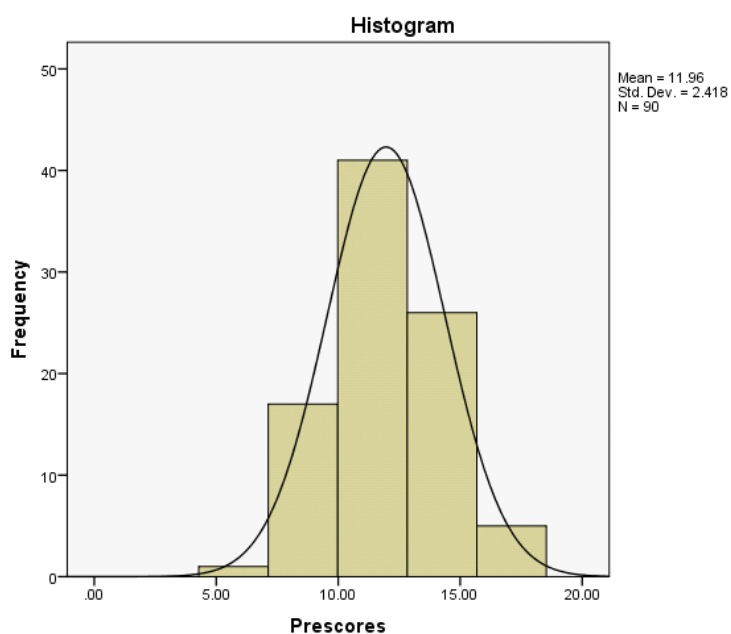
*Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Comprehension Pretest*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
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	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Control	30	11.51	1.90	-.032	.427

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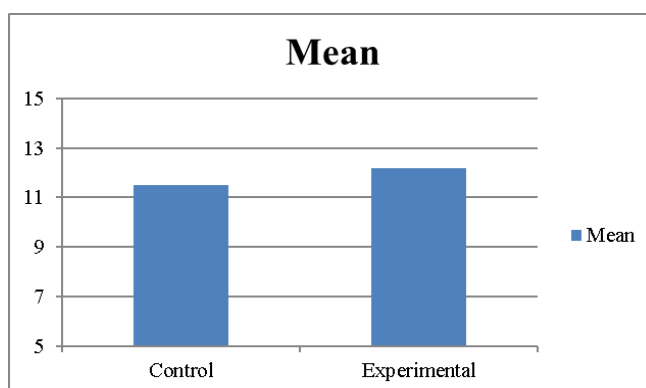
**Figure 1.** Histogram of the reading comprehension scores



The results of the skewness analysis, as shown in this Table 4.2. revealed that the assumption of normality was met in the distribution of the pretest scores of the two groups (-0.07 for the control group and -0.05 for the experimental group, all falling within the range of -1.96 and +1.96). Figure 4.1 shows the normality of the pretest scores in the two groups.

Figure 2 shows the mean difference of the two groups on the reading comprehension pretest.

**Figure 2.** The mean scores of the two groups on the reading comprehension pretest



In order to check if there was any significant difference between the two groups toward reading comprehension, an independent t-test was carried out to help making sure the initial existing difference was not of a significant importance and the two groups were homogenous.

As is evident in the Table 4.3. although the probability associated with the F-observed value (.009) was lower than the significant level of .05, two groups were not homogenous in terms of their variances; nevertheless, the probability associated with the t-observed value (.21) was higher than the significant level of .05.

Table 4

*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
Prescore	Equal variances assumed	7.150	.009	-1.23	88	.219	-.667	.539	-1.738	.404
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.37	76.20	.174	-.667	.485	-1.635	.300

It was safely concluded that the two groups belonged to the same population in terms of their reading comprehension before the treatment.

**Analysis of the Reading Comprehension Posttest**

After eight instructional sessions, the researcher-made reading comprehension test (posttest) was administered to measure the effects of the treatment at the end of the study. The researcher-made posttest was constructed based on the reading texts covered during the class time of both experimental and control groups. It is worth to mention that the researcher-made posttest was piloted by giving it to a sample of twenty five students.

A process of item analysis was carried out for the researcher-made posttest in order to identify and discard the poor items. The B-Index of the items has been calculated and the items with the B-Index > 0.19 were selected as the good ones. All items enjoyed this quality. Table 4.4. Provides the descriptive statistics of the reading comprehension posttest in the piloting phase.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Comprehension Posttest*

*Pilot Phase*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	25	7.00	16.00	12.58	2.34

The comparison of the results of posttest of experimental group with the posttest of control group served as an indicator of the possible effects of the treatment.

The mean scores, standard deviation, and the normality of the posttest scores are reported for the two groups in Table 5.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Comprehension Posttest*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Control	30	12.26	2.08	.109	.427
Experimental	60	16.13	2.65	-.397	.309

Dividing the statistic of skewness by its standard error, the researcher found that the assumption of normality was observed in the distribution of the scores of the two groups (0.25 for the control group and -1.28 for the experimental group, all falling within the range of -1.96 and +1.96). Figure 3 displays the normality of the reading comprehension posttest.

Figure 3. Histogram of the reading comprehension scores

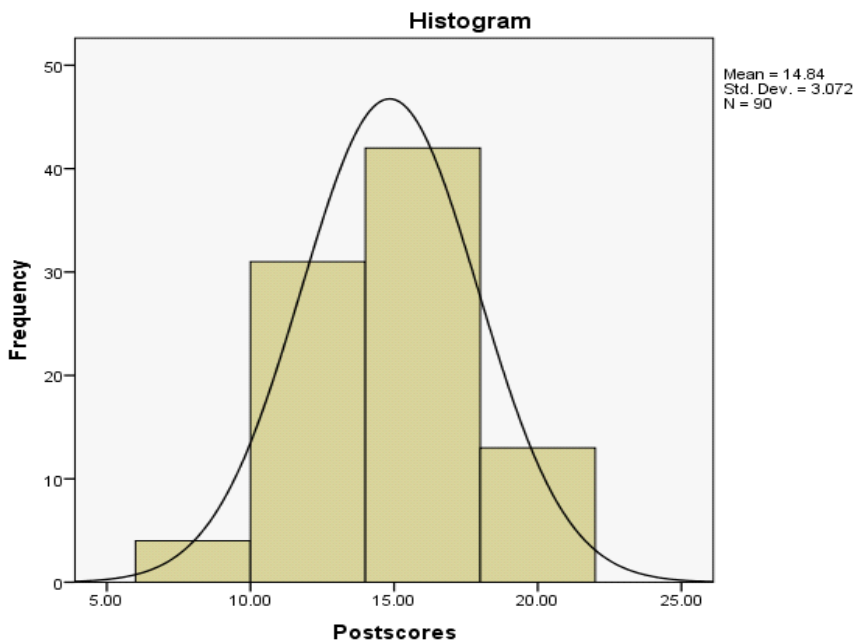
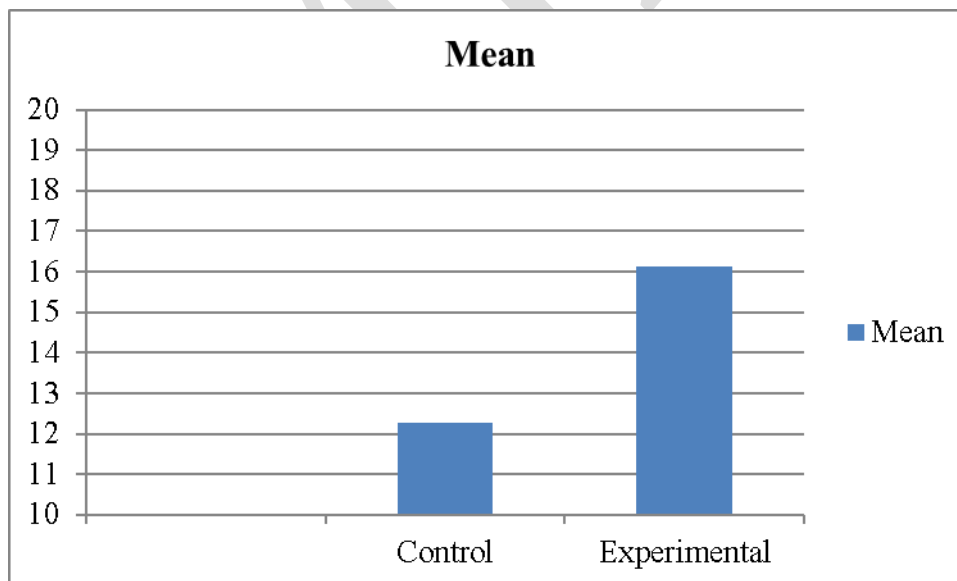


Figure 4.4 shows the mean differences of the two groups on the posttest.

Figure 4. The mean scores of the groups on the reading comprehension posttest



An independent t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the reading comprehension posttest.

As Table 5 shows, since the probability associated with the F-observed value (.319) was higher than the significant level of .05 therefore two groups were homogenous in terms of their variances. In addition, the probability associated with the t-observed value (.000) was lower than the significant level of .05.

Table 7

*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	% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper		
Post scores	equal variances assumed	1.0	.319	-6.97	88	.000	-3.86	.554	-4.968	-2.765	
	equal variances not assumed			-7.55	71.84	.000	-3.86	.511	-4.886	-2.846	

The instruments used in this study included: Nelson Language Proficiency test (homogeneity test), Nelson reading comprehension test (pretest), 8 PET reading texts which were assigned in order to practice the instructions of Graphic organizers, and a researcher-made test (posttest) based on the texts that were practiced during the study.

The study attempted to discover the effect of Graphic organizer Charts/Diagrams on reading comprehension of EFL learners.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the reading comprehension posttest.

So the first null-hypothesis as the use of Graphic organizers has no statistically significant effect on intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension **was rejected**.

That is to say, Graphic organizers had a significant impact on the performance of the EFL learners on the reading comprehension test.

**Second Research Question**

In order to provide an answer to the second research question, scores of the experimental groups' posttest were analyzed. Due to the fact that the second research question aimed to find which



gender benefited more by the use of Graphic organizers, the experimental group was divided into two groups of male and female and the results will be reported as follows. Table 4.7. Shows the mean, the minimum, the maximum, and standard deviation of these two levels of the experimental groups.

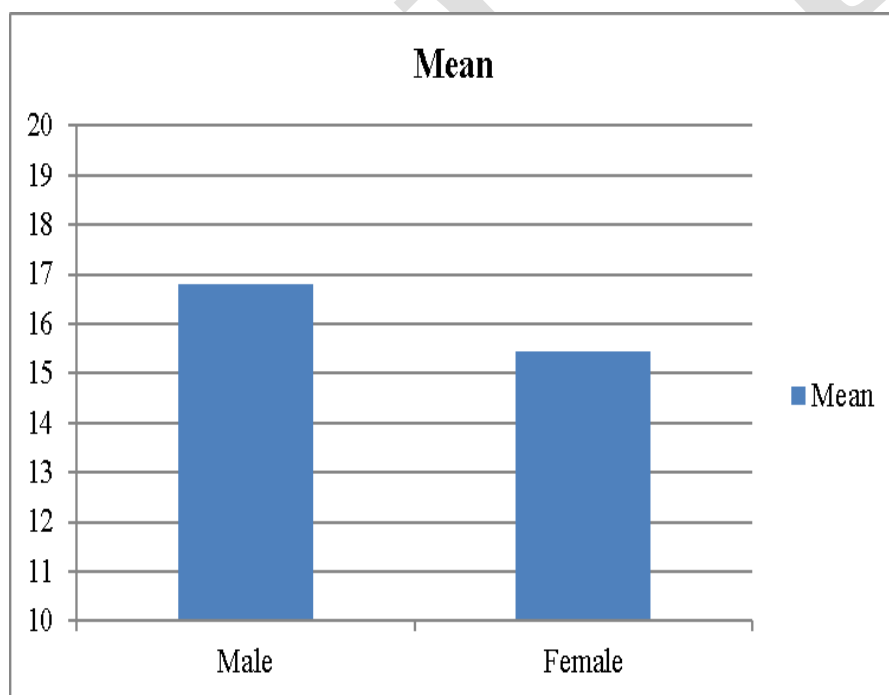
Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Comprehension Posttest Based on the Participants' Gender*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	30	8.00	20.00	16.80	2.441
Female	30	12.00	20.00	15.46	2.725

Figure 5 shows the mean differences of the two genders on the reading comprehension posttest.

**Figure 5.** The mean Scores of the Experimental Group based on the Gender on the Reading Comprehension Posttest



An independent t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the male and female on the reading comprehension posttest.

As Table 9 shows, since the probability associated with the F-observed value (.403) was higher than the significant level of .05 therefore two genders (male and female) were homogenous in terms of

their variances. In addition, the probability associated with the t-observed value (.051) was higher than the significant level of .05.

Table 9

*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
Scores on reading comprehension posttest	.70	.4	1.9	58	.051	1.333	.668	-.003	2.670
			1.9	57.30	.051	1.333	.668	-.004	2.670

Based on these results, it can be concluded that there wasn't a significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female on the reading comprehension posttest.

So the second hypothesis as the use of Graphic organizers is more beneficial in reading comprehension of Iranian males than females EFL learners was not supported.

That is to say, Graphic organizers had no significant impact on the performance of male learners in contrast with female learners on the reading comprehension test.

**Discussion**

In line with (Mc Cray, Vaughn, & Neal, 2001, p. 22) who believes that reading strategies play an important role in comprehending a text, the findings of the present study showed that the instructions of Graphic organizers play a significant role in better comprehension of a reading material. However, the effect of graphic organizers on male and female participants was found to be equal.

One of the fundamental problems many English language teachers face with is enhancing FL learners' reading ability and maintaining their interest in reading. Most FL learners have certain difficulties while reading in English since they are not aware of the effective ways of reading and understanding a text, which might cause resistance and affect their attitudes towards reading in English. Thus, research emphasizes the importance of instruction on Graphic organizers (GOs) to promote reading in a second (L2) or foreign (FL) language (Fly, Jean & Hunter, 1988; Ellis, 2004; Amin, 2004).

Reading has at all times and in all ages been a source of knowledge. The real purpose of reading is to get meaning from the text (Fletcher, 2007). Having a good appeal of knowledge of reading

techniques and strategies can guarantee achieving the native-like competence, but this important issue has been largely neglected by EFL teachers. As (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998) state, the most reading problems can be prevented by providing effective instructions. It is important that EFL teachers provide explicit instructions to help EFL learners read and comprehend successfully. Effective EFL teachers teach skills and strategies to accomplish the goal of reading.

A number of studies have revealed that GOs provide learners with a meaningful framework for relating their existing knowledge base with the text information (Stull & Mayer, 2007; Ausbel 1963). Without teacher instruction on how to use them, GOs may not be effective learning tools (Carnes et al. 1987; Clements-Davis & Ley, 1991). They can also successfully improve learning when there is a substantive instructional context such as explicit instruction incorporating teacher modeling (Boyle & Weishaar, 1997; Gardill & Jitendra, 1999).

Ellis (2004) provides three reasons why language teachers should use GOs in their classrooms. First, learners are considerably more likely to understand and remember the content subject since they help them identify what is important to know about a text. Second, because the semantic processing demands are minimized, teachers can address the content at more sophisticated or complex levels. Showing how the information is structured might be a powerful tool to aid in understanding. Third, learners are more likely to become strategic readers as they recognize the patterns of thinking, constructing and using graphic organizers. In a number of studies, the effects of instruction on GOs have been investigated considering L2 learners' attitudes towards reading in an EFL classroom. The findings revealed that language teachers should introduce the GOs to the learners following certain procedures. For instance, Fly, Jean and Hunter (1988) proposed several steps language teachers should follow while introducing GOs to learners like, presenting a graphic outline, modeling how to construct the same one, providing procedural knowledge, coaching the learners and giving them opportunities to practice individually providing feedback about the crucial parts of the procedure. In addition, Amin (2004) claims that using GOs is a powerful and an effective strategy for meaningful learning. They help learners to generate mental pictures with the information they get from what they read and also create graphic representations for that information. According to his investigation, different GOs serve different purposes such as, spider map aims to describe a central idea and problem/solution outline tries to represent a problem, attempted solutions, and results.

The current study called into question the effect of Graphic organizers on improving reading comprehension skill of Iranian EFL learners. It also shed light on the amount of the probable effect of Graphic organizers on both genders.

Graphic organizers (GO) are visual or graphic displays that depict the relationships between facts, terms and ideas within a learning task (Hall & Strangman, 2002, p. 1). The Center for Independent Learning of the College of DuPage (1998) as cite in Mede (2010) describes Graphic organizers (GOs) as diagrams or illustrations of written or oral statements.

### **Conclusion**

The outcomes of descriptive statistics and t-test indicate that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups ( the experimental group and the control group) on the reading comprehension posttest. According to the independent t-test which was run to compare the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the reading comprehension posttest, the probability associated with the F-observed value (.319) was higher than the significant level of .05 therefore two groups were homogenous in terms of their variances. In addition, the probability associated with the t-observed value (.000) was lower than the significant level of .05.

So the first null-hypothesis as the use of Graphic organizers has no statistically significant effect on intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension was rejected. It is concluded that Graphic organizers had a significant impact on the improvement of reading comprehension skill of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners. Thus the null-hypothesis is supported.

The obtained results related to the second question, examining the effect of Graphic organizers on reading comprehension of male EFL learners versus female EFL learners. An independent t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the male and female on the reading comprehension posttest. Hence the probability associated with the F-observed value (.403) was higher than the significant level of .05 therefore two levels of gender (male and female) were homogenous in terms of their variances. In addition, the probability associated with the t-observed value (.051) was higher than the significant level of .05. It can be concluded that there wasn't a significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female on the reading comprehension posttest.

So the second hypothesis stating that male Iranian EFL learners benefit more from graphic organizers than female Iranian language learners with regard to reading was not supported.

Generally speaking, the findings of this study support the use of graphic organizers to teach reading comprehension skills to both male and female EFL learners.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The prime suggestion of this study would be directed to material developers for reading courses and EFL teachers to consider Graphic organizer Charts as one of the effective techniques for enhancing EFL learners' reading comprehension ability. Involving reading courses with specific focus on teaching Graphic organizer Charts and Diagrams will result in educating EFL learners with analytical abilities that leads to better comprehension while reading a text. Also, the research reveals that learners who have been thought to use Graphic organizer Charts during reading a text will demonstrate more professionalism in the use of intellectual processes.

They will indicate the ability to analyze the text precisely, organize the information accurately, distinguish the relevant from irrelevant, as well as learning decoding skills, predicting, monitoring their comprehension level, and building world knowledge through reading.

Material developers in ELT domain could employ the findings of the present study to present Graphic organizer Charts and Diagrams and tasks in which learners' comprehension toward reading materials is enhanced.

There are a lot of conclusions which can be drawn from the present study:

This study helps teachers and students to have a positive view toward Graphic organizer Charts as a helpful tool for improving reading comprehension ability. Also it helps teachers to design different reading teaching tasks to help language learners comprehend the reading materials better and faster.

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# INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT ON LEARNING ENGLISH GRAMMAR: A CASE OF IRANIAN MSRT APPLICANTS

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## ABSTRACT

Portfolio assessment has been used for a long time. The portfolio is a useful teaching and learning tool in language learning classrooms. Portfolio assessment deals with any kind of acquired learning – knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through formal, informal, accidental and incidental learning. Although most teachers might be aware of the importance of a good assessment strategy, say, portfolio, rarely do they use it for any kind of assessment regarding the learning of grammatical points. Thus, the current study aimed at exploring the effect of portfolio assessment on learning English grammar by Iranian MSRT applicants. In this study, 32 MSRT applicants, both male and female, aged from 25 to 33, were chosen through convenience sampling from Poya-Simin language institute in Mazandaran province, a province in north of Iran. They were divided into two sixteen-member groups. The experimental group was asked to make a portfolio of both all the grammatical items taught to them and the tests taken each session. After reading their notes and tests, the teacher provided them with comments, corrections, and his feedback. The control group received no feedback, no additional comment, and the grammatical points were taught using the conventional ways. After the treatment, by pre-test/post-test comparison, the researcher found that participants of the experimental group, who were exposed to the techniques of portfolio assessment, gained better scores in the process of learning English grammar. Both high-stake and low-stake holders can avail from the findings of the study.

*Key words:* portfolio assessment, grammar test, Iranian MSRT applicants

## Introduction

Portfolio is a purposeful collection of students' work that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress, and achievements in given areas. O'Malley and Chamot (1994) define portfolio as a collection of students' work showing student reflection and progress or achievement over time in one or more areas. In the context of writing instruction and assessment, a portfolio can be defined as a collection of texts the writer has produced over a defined period of time (Hamp-Lyons, 1991) and the collection may consist of selected but not necessarily polished or finished pieces (Privette, 1993).

A portfolio, in point of fact, is a compilation of a variety of forms of evidence of accomplishment and attainment of learning outcomes (Hamidi & Montazeri, 2014). The portfolio can be a quite useful teaching and learning tool in language learning classrooms (Apple & Shimo, 2004; Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002; Epstein, 2005; Hamidi, 2016; Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; Lam & Lee, 2010; Yurdabakan & Erdogan, 2009). In realistic terms, and as Davis and Ponnampertuma (2005) assert, a student portfolio for assessment purposes is a collection of papers, reports, and other material, joint with the student's reflection on their learning, weaknesses and on their strengths. In line with this, Valencia (1990) holds that portfolio assessment is a systematic collection of student work that is analyzed to show progress over time with regard to instructional objectives. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1994), portfolio assessment is a selective collection of students' work, teacher's observations, and self-assessment that is used to show progress and set goals related to the work collected in a portfolio.

The Iranian Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology (MSRT) regularly holds a general English language exam as a qualifying English language test for Ph.D. candidates of the state universities. This test which is simply called the MSRT test has 100 questions including listening, grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary items. Since the purpose of many MSRT applicants is to learn the test clues and pass the test in the shortest time possible, any technique which can help applicants master the necessary skills should be put into practice. As portfolio assessment is one of the various types of alternative assessment methods, its application in language institute classes is significant since it can be an alternative to a traditional testing system (Davis & Ponnampertuma, 2005). Many studies have been done worldwide on the possible effect of portfolio assessment on different variables such as writing (Fahed Al-Serhani, 2007; Li, 2010; Paesani, 2006; Ruhani & Taheri, 2015), language learning autonomy (Hashemian & Fadaei, 2013; Shimo, 2003), reading (Valencia, 1990), yet, no study has been carried out seeking the effect of portfolio assessment on learning English grammar by Iranian MSRT applicants.

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of using portfolio assessment on learning English grammar of Iranian EFL learners and to explore if it is feasible to implement it in the simple exercises, assignments, and tasks that students are supposed to work in order to improve their knowledge of grammar in particular and language learning in general. Since the literature acknowledges that portfolio facilitates learning (Davies & Ponnampertuma, 2005; Moya & O'Malley, 1994), as a result, the researcher wanted to find out whether portfolio assessment could have any positive effect on improving Iranian EFL learners' grammar learning. Considering the possible effect of the portfolio assessment on learning English grammar among Iranian EFL learners, the following research questions and null hypothesis were formulated.

RQ: Does the implementation of portfolio assessment have any statistically significant effect on learning English grammar among Iranian MSRT applicants?

H0: The implementation of portfolio assessment does not have any statistically significant effect on learning English grammar among Iranian MSRT applicants.

### **Empirical Studies**

Numerous research studies have been carried out to show the possible effect of the portfolio assessment on learning the language skills. Starck (1999) explored the effect of portfolio assessment on students' use of accurate grammar and structure during writing, their general writing skills, and their attitudes toward writing. The findings of the study demonstrated that portfolios did not have a significant influence on students' use of accurate grammar and structure during writing. Similarly, Paesani (2006) conducted a



writing portfolio project whose goal was to integrate the learning of skills, content, and language competencies through literary study. Students' reactions to the portfolio writing project emphasized the perceived value of the project in boosting the development of students' writing skills and grammatical competence. Fahed Al-Serhani (2007) found that portfolio assessment had a significant positive effect on students' writing performance in general and the product skills of purpose, content, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure, and mechanics in particular. Wang and Liao (2008) investigated student satisfaction of portfolio assessment. They found that students in their portfolio assessment group experienced greater satisfaction than those in their control group. Besides that, they also found after some interviews that this assessment has a positive effect on the students' English learning process. The result of Hashemian and Fadaei's (2013) study showed that the portfolio procedures considerably improved the autonomy of the participants in language learning. They claimed that gender showed no difference in receiving portfolio assessment techniques. Ruhani and Taheri (2015) have investigated the effect of portfolio assessment on EFL learners' expository writing ability and found that the participants in the experimental group outperformed the ones in the control group in terms of their expository writing ability, in general, and the subskills of focus, support, and organization in particular.

## Method

### Participants

In this study, 32 MSRT applicants, both male and female, aged from 25 to 33, were chosen through convenience sampling from Poya-Simin language institute in Mazandaran province located in the north of Iran. The participants were all university students at different state universities of Iran.

### Instruments

**Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL):** The language proficiency test was an 80-item multiple choice test chosen out of Longman's TOEFL preparation guide book (Phillips, 2003). There were 20 questions of listening, 20 questions of vocabulary, 20 questions of grammar, and 20 questions of reading comprehension (totally 80). The reliability of the test calculated through KR-21 formula in a pilot study with 30 participants was found to be .86 which shows high reliability index.

**MSRT Pretest and Posttest of Grammar:** A 50-item teacher-made multiple choice test of grammar was developed out of the sample MSRT tests. The reliability of this test calculated through KR-21 formula was found to be .89 which shows a high reliability index based on the triple division rule (Hamidi, 2015). Participants had 38 minutes to answer the questions. This test was given to the participants of both groups once before the treatment begins and once after the treatment was over.

### Procedure

The current study aimed at exploring the effect of portfolio assessment on learning English grammar by Iranian MSRT applicants. In this study, 32 MSRT applicants, both male and female, aged from 25 to 33, were chosen through convenience sampling from Poya-Simin language institute in Mazandaran province, a province in north of Iran. They were divided into two sixteen-member groups based on odd and even listing numbers. The experimental group was asked to make a portfolio of both all the grammatical items taught to them and the tests taken each session. After reading their notes and tests, the teacher provided them with comments, corrections, and his feedback. One session after each test, the teacher worked on their weak points and the corrections they were supposed to make. The teacher noted each problem in the folder of each participant and asked them to bring some examples using the correct version. The

teacher followed the progress and the achievement of each participant in the experimental group throughout the whole process. The control group received no feedback, no additional comment, and the grammatical points were taught using the conventional ways. A standardized pre-test of grammar was given to both groups, the aim of which was to make sure that the participants were homogeneous in terms of knowledge of grammar. After 14 sessions, the same test was given to the participants as the posttest to comparatively check the progress of the 2 groups.

## Result

In this study, the researcher attempted to investigate whether the implementation of the portfolio assessment could improve the knowledge of English grammar for Iranian MSRT applicants. To ensure the homogeneity of the participants of the two groups; i.e. control and experimental groups, in terms of their general English language proficiency, a developed Longman TOEFL test (2007) was administered to the participants of both groups. The mean scores of two groups were calculated and compared to prove the homogeneity of participants in experimental and control groups regarding their knowledge of grammar prior to the administration of any treatment. The statistical analyses conducted in the present study were specified based on the nature of the study, which was quasi-experimental research. The following data analyses were used.

Table 4.1

*The Result of the Normality Test for the Comparison of the Control and Experimental Groups on Their Language Proficiency Scores*

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
TOEFL_Con	.939	16	.339
TOEFL_Exp	.968	16	.805

The result of the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality shows that the data are normally distributed for the two sets of scores ( $P > .05$ ). Therefore, the independent t-test was used for the mean comparison. The descriptive statistics of the two groups is shown below.

Table 4.2

*The Descriptive Statistics for the Comparison of the Control and the Experimental Groups on Their Language Proficiency Scores*

	Group_Con_Exp <sup>1</sup>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score_TOEFL	Cont <sup>2</sup>	5.20096	1.30024
	Exp <sup>3</sup>	6.44433	1.51894

As Table 4.2 above shows, the mean scores of the control and experimental groups are 32.62 and 31 respectively. The result of the independent t-test for the comparison of the groups for their language proficiency scores is presented below.

Table 4.3

*The Result of the Independent Samples T-Test for the Comparison of the Control and Experimental Groups*

		vene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig. t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
ore_TOEFL	Equal variances assumed	.809	.3752	32	.428	1.62500	2.02522
	Equal variances not assumed			3732	.422	1.62500	1.99945

As table 4.3 above shows, the assigned control and experimental groups were homogeneous in terms of language proficiency,  $t(32) = .802, P > .05$ .

### Testing the Null Hypothesis

As the researcher had pre- and post-test design, he chose the ANCOVA test to adjust the posttest scores for any pretest difference. However, since the assumptions of ANCOVA were not met, the gain score comparison was used instead.

Table 4.4

*The Result of the Test of Normality for the Gained Grammar Scores of the Two Groups*

		Shapiro-Wilk	
		Statistic	df Sig.
	Gain_Con	.855	16.016
	Gain_Exp	.750	16.001

The result of the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality shows that the data are not normally distributed for the two sets of scores ( $P < .05$ ). Therefore, the appropriate test for mean comparison would be the Mann-Whitney U test. The Ranks table of the two groups is shown below.

Table 4.5

*The Ranks Table for the Gained Grammar Scores of the Two Groups*

	Group_Con_Exp <sup>a</sup>	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Gain_Score	Cont <sup>b</sup>	8.84	141.50
	Exp <sup>b</sup>	25.19	453.50
Total			

The mean rank of the control and the experimental groups are 8.84 and 25.19 respectively.

Table 4.6

*The Result of the Mann-Whitney U Test for the Gain Score Comparison of the Two Groups*

	Gain_Score
Mann-Whitney U	5.500
Wilcoxon W	141.500
Z	-4.840
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000 <sup>b</sup>

The result of the inferential statistics presented in Table 4.6 above showed that the experimental group performed better on the test of grammar compared to the control group,  $U = 5.5$ ,  $P < .05$ . Thus, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis concluding that the implementation of the portfolio assessment had statistically significant effect on learning English grammar by Iranian MSRT applicants.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Results of many studies confirm that portfolio assessment has positive influence on learning (Gomez, 2000), facilitates authentic assessment of learning (Calfee & Perfumo, 1993), encourages students to do self-reflect and self-evaluate (Hebert & Schultz, 1996), and improves meta-cognitive skills (Hamilton, 1994). The result of this study is in line with the findings of Starck (1999), confirming the effect of portfolio assessment on students' use of accurate grammar. Findings of Fahed Al-Serhani (2007) support the implementation of the portfolio assessment in ELT classrooms in learning the structural points. The findings are also in line with what Shimo (2005) argues, supporting that when portfolios are used in classes, students are often able to receive more feedback to their work in progress, such as easy drafts, from both their teacher and classmates. Moreover, findings also support Shimo's (2003) claims that portfolios can assist and encourage learner autonomy especially when the portfolio assignments include decision-making or choice-making tasks which enable students to plan and organize their learning, language tasks related to both in- and outside-class activities, and optional tasks to cover students at different levels of motivation and proficiency.

The researcher carried out an empirical study to investigate the effect of portfolio assessment on Iranian MSRT applicants' English grammar learning. Students' views and reflections on the application of the portfolio assessment showed their progress and interest. First of all, the

portfolio displayed a record of their work and assignments and helps them examine what they had done. They saw the progress when they compared their new works to the previous ones, which showed they were progressing and achieving more. Most of the time they could see that students themselves pondered, made decisions, cooperated with each other, and worked on their tasks. They did not have to study hard and put themselves under so much pressure at exam night. Participants learned many new things each session and believed that having an assessment every session was fruitful. They felt some sort of responsibility over what they were exposed to and what they studied. They felt that their teacher did not teach, rather he helped them learn. Participants felt more autonomous both in doing the tasks and in recognizing their mistakes.

The current study considered the assessment process as one of the essential elements of teaching the grammatical points. In addition, it tried to modify the way assessment process is looked at as an end in itself, whereas it should be seen as a significant and integral part of teaching. This study may provide teachers with useful information in order to improve their instructional plans and practices with regard to teaching the grammatical points. By collecting, commenting on, and re-checking students' assignments, teachers can track students' progress and achievement in specific areas.

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## THE EFFECT OF LEARNING STYLES ON THE IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' PROCESSING OF THE SUBJECT/AGENT IN A SENTENCE

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to explore the efficacy of the first noun principle of input processing model (IP) with regard to the Iranian EFL learners' learning styles when different input modalities are concerned. To this end, a sample of 73 male and female Iranian freshmen took part in a study with a quasi-experimental, pretest/posttest design. The e& l construct questionnaire, the preliminary English test (pet), and a target structure test on present subjunctive were administered to them. Afterwards, the participants received treatment based on processing instruction (pi). Two parallel tests were administered to them one after the explicit information (EI), and another after the structured input (SI) activities. The data analyzed through MANOVA revealed that although the ectenic learners' processing of the first noun was basically the same as what was suggested by the first noun principle, they outperformed the synoptic group in attending to the form of the input.

**Key words:** input processing, processing instruction, structured input activities, learning styles

### 1. Introduction

Various studies in the field of SLA suggest that L2 learners possess a limited capacity for IP. What follows is that they have to act selectively when they are exposed to various stimuli; otherwise, the activities which entail the use of this limited capacity might cause interference or partial processing of the input (Benati, 2013; VanPatten, 1990; Wong, 2001). A subsidiary question to the limited capacity of the L2 learners' working memory is how L2 learners select and process the input to which they are exposed.

As VanPatten (2003) suggests, L2 learners' IP is affected by the limited capacity of their working memory, that is, when exposed to linguistic data, they cannot attend both to the content and formal features of it; therefore, adopting some internal strategies, they filter the incoming information. VanPatten (1996) introduces IP model, which comprises a series of processing principles employed by L2 learners when processing input. In order not to be overloaded by incoming stimuli, they employ these strategies to selectively attend to input.

Studying the related literature suggests that the efficacy of IP has been largely investigated in Roman languages (e.g., Benati, 2005; DeMil, 2010; Erlam, 2003; Henshaw, 2012), yet there are various domains in which the effectiveness of IP has remained unexplored. One such area could be different facets of individual differences. Aspects of individual differences, such as L2 learners' working memory, age, background knowledge, gender, etc. have been recognized as influential factors which might affect IP; however, an area of second language research, which has never been investigated is how different learning styles affect the way L2 learners process input.

The present study suggests that individual learners' approach to IP might be determined by their natural, cognitive style, rather than what has been postulated by IP principles. As Oxford (2001) argues, when L2 learners are not trained to adopt certain learning strategies, they normally gravitate toward their natural, preferred learning style; therefore, learning style might be a determining factor to IP. The researchers were also motivated to conduct the present study because of the following reasons:

As it was assumed, the learners' IP might somehow be affected by their learning style; accordingly, the result of this study might contribute to the theoretical aspects of SLA. Moreover, the pedagogical implications resulting from the findings could also be beneficial to language pedagogy in several ways:

- If different educational contexts encourage different types of learning style, then PI may or may not prove to be beneficial to the majority of Iranians, if not all.
- Guiding L2 learners to identify their own natural way of learning style and IP strategies might ensure that they can learn more efficiently.

## **2. Literature Review**

In spite of the diversity found among the SLA theorists' views regarding how language acquisition takes place, they all share the view that for normal language development to proceed, it is essential that linguistic data be somehow interpreted and processed. This highlights the fact that some kind of language input is vital for language learning (e.g. Ellis, 2008; VanPatten, 1990; Zhang, 2009). As Wong (2005) suggests, the process of language acquisition is triggered when L2 learners' linguistic developing system is provided with data. In fact, without input, language acquisition cannot take place successfully.

The way input is incorporated into the learners' linguistic system has also been a subject of interest for many SLA scholars. Schmidt (1990, 1993) suggests that L2 acquisition takes place when learners notice the features of the target language. Noticing the linguistic items leads to restructuring of interlanguage, and hence it facilitates learning. However, Tomlin and Villa (1994) contend that when the linguistic features of the input is detected, it can lead to language acquisition, yet detection might not involve awareness. Robinson (1995) concurs with Schmidt in that noticing is vital for language acquisition and it does involve awareness. He draws upon the two opposite views and introduces a third model in which detection takes place prior to noticing, that is, the incoming linguistic data may be detected by the learner, but for it to become part of the learners' interlanguage system, it should be noticed.

Because of the nature of awareness and the difficulty involved in measuring it, SLA scholars cannot easily obtain empirical support for what they suggest. However, it is widely believed that language acquisition entails some form of attention (Robinson, 1995; Schmidt 1993; Wong, 2001, 2005). Drawing upon the idea that during the act of comprehension a great deal of attentional resources are consumed, and the fact that working memory has a limited capacity for information processing, VanPatten (1996) offers his IP Model, which predicts a number of faulty strategies L2 learners adopt during IP.

### **2.1 The IP Model**

The IP model proposed by VanPatten (1996), accounts for the cognitive processes which are at work when input is processed and incorporated into the L2 learners' developing linguistic system. The model is concerned with how learners make form-meaning connections when they receive input. In this regard, VanPatten (2007) pinpoints the role of comprehension, maintaining that the act of comprehension leads to language acquisition and considers comprehension as an essential prerequisite for acquisition. The IP model predicts a number of strategies which L2



learners draw upon during comprehension. The current form of this model comprises two organizing principles, each with its own subprinciples (VanPatten, 2004).

### **Principle 1: Primacy of Meaning Principle**

VanPatten (1996, 2004) holds that L2 learners process meaning before processing it for form. Principle 1 suggests that there is a kind of competition between meaning and form to draw the learners' attentional processing resources, and it is the meaning which wins out over the form.

### **Principle 2: First Noun Principle**

Principle 2 suggests that regardless of the order of the sentence elements in the learners' first language, they initially process the first noun they encounter in a sentence as the subject (VanPatten, 1996, 2004).

Motivated by the faulty strategies L2 learners initially adopt for form-meaning mappings, VanPatten (1996) also introduces PI as an input-based, form-focused approach to grammar instruction, which can push L2 learners away from faulty strategies through specific tasks called SI activities. The SI activities provide learners with the opportunities to attend to form-meaning relationships and interpret such relations correctly without being forced to produce any output.

VanPatten (1993) proposes two different types of SI activities, referential and affective activities. Referential activities entail a particular answer which is dependent on the target structure. The learner needs to rely on it to understand meaning. Affective activities, however, are often used to present a viewpoint, belief, etc. In affective tasks, learners become involved in information processing concerning the real world and the questions asked in affective activities do not require right or wrong answers. How L2 learners react to these types of activities might be under the influence of various factors. One such factor might be the learners' learning styles.

Learning style, according to Dornyei (2005), is "a profile of the individual's approach to learning, a blueprint of the habitual or preferred way the individual perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment" (p. 121). As the existing approaches employed to discover L2 learners' cognitive styles often result in wrong diagnosis and/or ambiguity, Ehrman and Leaver (2003) introduce E&L Construct Model, which comprises the overarching categories of *synopsis* and *ectasis* to organize the learning styles reported in research studies during the past twenty years.

In foreign language learning, "synoptic learning is reliant on intuition and subconscious control, whereas ectenic learning generally occurs under the conscious control of the learner" (Leaver, Ehrman, and Shekhtman 2005, p.70). Leaver et al. point out that each of the scales is a continuum and a person's learning style might be placed anywhere along it, ranging from the synoptic to ectenic traits.

### **3. Purpose of the Present Study**

As stated before, an area of second language research which has not yet been investigated is how different learning styles might affect the way L2 learners process input. The specific aim of the study was to investigate whether or not the L2 learners' learning styles affect the way they process the subject/agent of the sentences they are exposed to. Hence, the present study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Do learning styles affect EFL learners' processing of the first noun as subject? If so,
  - 1.1. Do synoptic EFL learners process the first noun as subject?

1.2. Do synoptic EFL learners process the first noun as subject?

#### 4. Methodology

##### 4.1 Participants

Ninety-five freshmen from four intact classes at Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, took part in the study. They were all B.A. students majoring in English language translation. As a partial requirement of their studies, all the students had to take the four-credit course of Grammar I. The students who were exposed to the target structure outside the class or had more than 50% knowledge of the target structure (Present subjunctive) were excluded from the data analysis. Moreover, those who were absent at some parts of the treatment or assessment phases of the study were discarded from the research. Hence, the final sample decreased to 73 male and female participants with the age range varying from 18 to 25.

##### 4.2 Instrumentation

The instruments employed in the study comprised the following measurements:

###### 4.2.1 Assessment Measures

The assessment materials employed for the present study were the followings:

- 1) The E&L Construct questionnaire consisting of 30 items, which indicates the intensity of opposite learning styles on a Likert Scale. The questionnaire is graded from 1 to 9 in each direction (Ehrman & Leaver 2003). The obtained score then might gravitate towards one of the two ends and very rarely it is placed in the middle of the line.
- 2) A sample of PET, available at [www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams](http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams)
- 3) A background questionnaire designed and administered to obtain some demographic information about the participants
- 4) A pretest consisting of 40 sentence-level items, designed and administered to test the knowledge of the participants on the target structure (present subjunctive).

Present subjunctive is used to denote and emphasize urgency and importance. In English this structure can only be noticed in the 3rd person singular, the verb 'to be', and the passive constructions. It is formed in a subordinate clause attached to a main clause which might include lexical complements in the form of adjectives (essential, important, vital etc.), verbs (suggest, demand, request etc.), and nouns (requirement, advice, obligation etc.):

- It is *imperative* that he *study*.
- He demanded that we *be* there on time.

Adopting this target structure was stimulated by both theoretical and pedagogical reasons. The theoretical reason was predicated upon two processing problems which Iranian EFL learners might be faced with. One is *lexical preference principle*, which states that learners rely more on the lexical items than the grammatical forms to get meaning from the input (VanPatten, 2004). Since learners first process the lexical items in the main clause that denote importance or urgency, they might fail to process the subordinate clause that contains the subjunctive form and conveys the same notion. In this sense, the subjunctive marker is [+redundant] and, therefore, has lower communicative value.

The other processing problem is related to VanPatten's (2004) *sentence location principle*, which states that learners tend to process items in the sentence initial position before those in the final or medial positions. As the subjunctive is located within the subordinate clause in the medial (or final) position, it is less likely to be processed than if it is in the sentence-initial position.

Furthermore, learning present subjunctive for Iranian EFL learners is problematic, because it deviates from the rule governing the third person, singular s-marker in indicative present tense sentences. Furthermore, the discrepancies between the two languages might also cause the interpretation and production of this structure to be difficult for the Iranian EFL learners.

- 5) Two comprehension-based grammar tests containing both listening and reading sections. Their formats followed those of the SI activities they were practicing in the class. The grammar tests contained 40 items, 20 items for each component (i.e., reading and listening parts).

#### 4.2.2 Instructional Materials

The instructional materials were prepared in line with PI guidelines (VanPatten, 1996, 2002). The lesson encompassed EI followed by SI (referential and affective) tasks. EI was aimed at expatiating the target structure orally to the participants and presenting some explicit explanations concerning the typical processing problems that L2 learners are usually faced with when they interpret the sentences containing the key form. The referential activities prompted the learners to make form-meaning mappings and affective activities pushed the learner to process the information presented in the input to express his/her viewpoints. The activities were all comprehension-based and at sentence-level comprising aural, and written tasks.

#### 4.4 Procedure

To obtain content-related evidence, the test items were meticulously examined by three Iranian university faculty members. On the basis of their viewpoints, several items were either discarded or modified. The test was piloted on 50 freshmen majoring English Translation at Islamic Azad University North, Tehran Branch. Using KR-20, the reliability estimate of the pretest was measured to be 0.74.

The treatment materials were also evaluated by three university instructors in terms of the complexity, relevance and number of each activity. To find about the feasibility of the procedure, the instructional material was piloted on the same 50 freshmen who had been the subjects for piloting the pretest. The feedback received from the pilot study led to the selection of 20 referential and 10 affective task items. The research study and administration of the required assessment measures lasted 6 sessions. The following steps were taken in the main phase of the study:

The E&L construct questionnaire was administered to determine the participants' learning styles. The scoring procedure of the questionnaire was adopted from the scoring key of the E&L learning style questionnaire. A sample of PET was used to ensure that the participants had almost the same general proficiency level. The time allocated for the test was 90 minutes. The correct answer to each item received one point while there was no penalty for false responses. After the main administration of the test, the participants were rendered a score based on their performance and those participants whose scores fell within the range of one Standard Deviation above and below the mean were chosen for this study. A background questionnaire was also administered to collect some demographic information about the subjects and to exclude those who had the chance of being exposed to target structure alongside the study. A pretest was administered to examine the participant's knowledge of the target structure. The students scoring more than the arbitrary cut-off score of 50% on the test were excluded from the study.

For the treatment, all the participants were exposed to PI. The first stage of the study (i.e., offering explicit information) was followed by a posttest, so that the researchers could have more reliable evidence regarding how synoptic or ectenic learners would benefit from the EI to process the input and also to compare the results with those of the posttest following the SI activities in the next stage. Attempts were also made to equalize the administration sessions for both tests in stage one and two to enhance the reliability and the internal validity of the measures.

## 5. Results

The following steps were taken for the data analyses of the present study:

The KR-21 Reliability Indices for the tests administered in this study are displayed in Table 1. Amongst the tests designed for the study, the reliability index of Reading Test Two ( $r=0.79$ ) has been the highest and the reliability index of Listening Test One ( $r=0.60$ ) has been the lowest.

**Table 1.** KR-21 Reliability Indices

	N	Mean	Variance	KR-21
PET	73	.04	35.734	0.74
Target structure	73	.55	34.918	0.74
presentsublisten.1	73	.64	24.371	0.60
presentsubread.1	73	.86	29.092	0.67
presentsublisten.2	73	.36	28.594	0.67
presentsubread.2	73	.66	41.673	0.79

An independent t-test was run to compare the synoptic and ectenic groups' mean scores on the PET. The results of the independent t-test ( $t(59) = .782$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $r = .10$  representing a weak effect size) indicated that the two groups enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment.

An independent t-test was also run to compare the synoptic and ectenic groups' mean scores on the pretest of target structure. The results of the independent t-test ( $t(71) = 1.25$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $r = .14$  representing a weak effect size) revealed that the two groups were at the same level of English structure knowledge prior to the administration of the treatment.

### 5.1 Major Research Question

A multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) was run to compare the synoptic and ectenic groups' means on the reading and listening tests 1, and the reading and listening tests 2. The assumptions of homogeneity of covariances and homogeneity of variances - as tested through the Box and Levene's Tests - were also met. The Box's test was not significant (Box's  $M = 15.33$ ,  $p > .001$ ). The Levene's F-values were all also non-significant indicating that the groups enjoyed homogenous variances

The results of multivariate tests ( $F(4, 68) = 7.82$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .31$ , representing a large effect size) indicated that there were significant differences between the ectenic and synoptic groups' means on the reading and listening Tests 1 and 2. Thus the major null-hypothesis was rejected (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Multivariate Tests; Present subjunctive Listening and Reading 1 and 2 by Groups

Effect <sup>a</sup>	Hypothesis df	df	Partial Eta Squared
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ercep	Pillai's Trace <sup>1</sup>	468	.967
	Wilks' Lambda <sup>1</sup>	468	.967
	Hotelling's Trace <sup>1</sup>	468	.967
	Roy's Largest Root <sup>1</sup>	468	.967
Group	Pillai's Trace <sup>1</sup>	468	.315
	Wilks' Lambda <sup>1</sup>	468	.315
	Hotelling's Trace <sup>1</sup>	468	.315
	Roy's Largest Root <sup>1</sup>	468	.315

Based on the results depicted in table 3, it can be concluded that:

- A: The ectenic group (M = 22.41, SE = .72, 95 % CI [20.96, 23.85]) significantly outperformed the synoptic group (M = 17.23, SE = .67, 95 % CI [15.88, 18.58]) on the listening test 1 (F (1, 71) = 27.32, p < .05, partial  $\eta^2$  = .27, representing a large effect size).
- B: The ectenic learners (M = 23.52, SE = .82, 95 % CI [21.88, 25.17]) were significantly more successful than the synoptic group (M = 18.53, SE = .77, 95 % CI [17, 20.07]) on the reading test 1 (F (1, 71) = 19.56, p < .05, partial  $\eta^2$  = .21, representing a large effect size).
- C: The ectenic learners (M = 25.17, SE = .80, 95 % CI [23.57, 26.77]) did significantly much better than the synoptic group (M = 19.89, SE = .74, 95 % CI [18.40, 21.39]) on the listening test 2 (F (1, 71) = 23.15, p < .05, partial  $\eta^2$  = .24, representing a large effect size).
- D: The ectenic group (M = 28.17, SE = .95, 95 % CI [26.26, 30.08]) significantly outperformed the synoptic group (M = 21.59, SE = .89, 95 % CI [19.80, 23.37]) on the reading test 2 (F (1, 71) = 25.29, p < .05, partial  $\eta^2$  = .26, representing a large effect size).
- E: The ectenic group's mean score (M= 22.41) improved significantly from listening test 1 to listening test 2 (M=25.17). Likewise, the ectenic group's mean score (M= 23.52) improved significantly from reading test 1 to reading test 2 (M= 28.17).
- F: The synoptic group's mean score (17.23) improved significantly from listening test 1 to listening test 2 (M=19.89). Likewise, their mean score (M= 18.53) improved significantly from reading test 1 to reading test 2 (M= 21.59).

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics; Present subjunctive Listening and Reading 1 and 2 by Groups

Dependent Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
PrSJLC1	Ectenic	22.412	.725	20.967	23.856
	synoptic	17.231	.676	15.882	18.580
PrSJRC1	Ectenic	23.529	.825	21.885	25.174

	Synoptic	8.538	.770	17.003	20.074
PrSJLC2	Ectenic	15.176	.802	23.577	26.776
	Synoptic	9.897	.749	18.404	21.390
PrSJRC2	Ectenic	18.176	.957	26.268	30.085
	Synoptic	11.590	.894	19.807	23.372

### 5.2 Minor Research Question 1-1

A multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) was run to compare the synoptic group's means on the listening and reading tests 1 and 2 (Table 4). The results of multivariate tests ( $F(3, 36) = 24.40$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .67$ , representing a large effect size) indicated that there were significant differences between the synoptic group's means on the reading and listening tests 1 and 2. Thus the minor null-hypothesis 1-1 **was rejected**.

**Table 4.** Multivariate Tests; Present subjunctive Tests (Synoptic Group)

	Effect	Value	F-Hypothesis	df	Error df	Sig.	Eta Squared
Prsubj	Pillai's Trace	.670	24.400	3	36	.000	.670
	Wilks' Lambda	.330	24.400	3	36	.000	.670
	Hotelling's Trace	2.033	24.400	3	36	.000	.670
	Roy's Largest Root	2.033	24.400	3	36	.000	.670

Since minor research question 1-1 targeted the comparison between listening and reading Tests 1 and listening and reading Tests 2, a Repeated Contrast was computed. The results depicted in table 5, suggested that

A: There was not any significant difference between the synoptic group's means on the listening test 1 ( $M = 17.23$ ,  $SE = .67$ , 95 % CI [15.87, 18.59]) and reading test 1 ( $M = 18.53$ ,  $SE = .86$ , 95 % CI [16.79, 20.28]) ( $F(1, 38) = 3.48$ ,  $p > .05$ , Partial  $\eta^2 = .084$  representing a moderate effect size) though the moderate effect size value of .084 indicated a noticeable difference between the two means.

**Table 5.** Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts; Present subjunctive Listening and Reading 1 and 2 (Synoptic Group)

Source	Contrast	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Prsubjunctive	LC 1 vs. RC 1	66.692	1	66.692	3.489	.069	.084
	LC 2 vs. RC 2	111.692	1	111.692	3.671	.063	.088

Error	LC 1 vs. RC 1	726.308	38	19.113
	LC 2 vs. RC 2	1156.308	38	30.429

B: There was not any significantly difference between the synoptic group's means on the listening test 2 (M = 19.89, SE = .78, 95 % CI [18.31, 21.48]) and reading test 2 (M = 21.59, SE = .93, 95 % CI [19.70, 23.47]) (F (1, 38) = 3.67, p > .05, Partial  $\eta^2$  = .088 representing a moderate effect size) although the moderate effect size value of .088 indicated a noticeable difference between the two means.

### 5.3 Minor Research Question 1-2

A multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) was run to compare the ectenic group's means on the listening and reading Tests 1 and 2. (Table 6). The results of multivariate tests (F (3, 31) = 46.26, p < .05, partial  $\eta^2$  = .81, representing a large effect size) indicated that there were significant differences between the ectenic group's means on the reading and listening tests 1 and 2. Thus the minor null-hypothesis 1-2 **was rejected**.

**Table 6.** Multivariate Tests; Present subjunctive Tests (Ectenic Group)

	Effect	Value	F Hypothesis	df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pre-subjunctive	Pillai's Trace	.817	46.267	3	31	.000	.817
	Wilks' Lambda	.183	46.267	3	31	.000	.817
	Hotelling's Trace	4.477	46.267	3	31	.000	.817
	Roy's Largest Root	4.477	46.267	3	31	.000	.817

Since minor research question 1-1 targeted the comparison between listening and reading Tests 1 and listening and reading Tests 2, a Repeated Contrast was computed (Table 7). The results indicated that

A: There was not any significantly difference between ectenic group's means on the listening test 1 (M = 22.41, SE = .73, 95 % CI [20.92, 23.89]) and reading test 1 (M = 23.52, SE = .69, 95 % CI [22.11, 24.94]) (F (1, 33) = 3.35, p > .05, Partial  $\eta^2$  = .092 representing a moderate effect size) although the moderate effect size value of .092 showed a noticeable difference between the two means.

B: The ectenic group had a significantly higher mean on the reading test 2 (M = 28.17, SE = .91, 95 % CI [26.32, 30.03]) than listening test 2 (M = 25.17, SE = .75, 95 % CI [23.63, 26.71]) (F (1, 33) = 17.71, p < .05, Partial  $\eta^2$  = .34 representing a large effect size).

**Table 7.** Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts; Pre-subjunctive Listening and Reading 1 and 2 (Ectenic Group)

Source	Contrast	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Prsubjunctive	LC 1 vs. RC 1	42.471	1	42.471	3.357	.076	.092

	LC 2 vs. RC 2	306.000	1	306.000	17.716	.000	.349
Error	LC 1 vs. RC 1	417.529	33	12.652			
	LC 2 vs. RC 2	570.000	33	17.273			

## 6. Discussions

The present study was aimed at finding out the efficacy of the first noun principle of IP model when learning styles and input modality were concerned. The results of the data analysis revealed that the ectenic group significantly outperformed the synoptic group on the listening and reading tests 1. What follows is that the ectenic learners avoided the erroneous strategy of choosing the first noun they found in a sentence as its subject. As analytic learners, they worked well with rules and could retrieve the linguistic information given to them during EI. This finding suggests that learning style as a factor might cause an EFL learner not to adopt a meaning-based approach towards IP and focus on the form of the input.

The resultant data are in line with Han and Peverly's (2007) research, which posited a challenge against the IP model by suggesting that IP for some learners who have little knowledge of the target language can be form-based and that when input is grammatically incomprehensible to the learners, it would induce a form-based approach. The study is also compatible with Park and Han's (2008) report, which indicated that zero beginners adopt a form-based approach towards IP, yet some knowledge of the target language and the resemblance between mother tongue and L2 cause predilections in the learners to process input for meaning. Several other studies (e.g., Han and Liu, 2013; Han & Sun, 2009; Park, 2011) also reported the same findings.

The result also indicated processing the written input seems to have been easier both for synoptic and ectenic learners, for they could benefit from regression and revision, which could obviously minimize the cognitive load of their working memory. This is largely compatible with Wong's (2001) research. She introduced input modality as a variable which affects L2 learners' IP. Her research findings revealed that the attentional capacity of the L2 learners' working memory is more taxed when processing the aural input. The finding also supports several other studies which underscore the effortfulness of the aural IP (e.g., Johnson, 1992; Leow, 1995; Murphy, 1997).

The results also indicated the synoptic group benefited from the SI activities, through which they could practice the strategies taught to them during the EI stage. The result is largely consistent with VanPatten and Oikkenon's (1996) research, in which they investigated the role of EI, and concluded that SI activities alone were sufficient to cause improvement on interpretation and production tasks and that EI was not necessary for PI. Wong (2004) also reported that SI was sufficient to improve the learners' production and interpretation abilities and that EI played an insignificant role. The result is incompatible with Benati's (2004) research on the role of EI in the interpretation and production of Italian third person future forms. He reported that EI might have an effect, albeit minimal.

Contrary to what was expected, the results of multivariate tests displayed in Table 6, suggested that the ectenic learners process the first noun as subject/agent of the sentence. However, upon comparing the results, one could infer that although the null hypothesis was rejected, the ectenic group's mean scores in all administered tests were significantly higher than those of the synoptic group. The discrepancies found between the results of the data analyses belonging to the ectenic and synoptic learners pinpoint the importance of learning style as a factor affecting the way IP takes place.



## 7. Conclusions

The study indicated that the generalizability of the IP Model should be regarded with caution, for the First Noun principle does not seem to be strongly evidenced when it suggests a single approach towards IP for all types of EFL learners. The study offered some pedagogical implications for language teachers, as well. As it was revealed, when exposed to input, the analytic learners, who have a more conscious control over their learning process (the ectenics), were able to correctly identify the subject of a sentence. In other words, certain learners might not adopt the First Noun Principle as their default erroneous strategy. What follows is that being informed about the impact of individual differences affects the nature of classroom activities teachers carry out in language classes. When teachers are well aware of the learners' differences regarding their IP and possible processing problems, then they would modify EI, which mainly focuses on informing the learners about the faulty strategies they usually employ. They also judiciously design SI activities, which are aimed at pushing learners to alter their erroneous strategies in educational contexts.

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## INTER-GROUP ACTIVITIES VS. INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES AND TRANSLATION TRAINEES' ABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effect of inter-group activities compared to individual activities on translation trainees' ability at undergraduate level. The main question which the current study tries to answer is whether inter-group activities have any positive effect on the development of undergraduate level translation ability or not. The second question to be answered in the current research is that can inter-group activities in compare with individual activities be considered a more effective way of translating texts? And the last question raised in the present study is that what specific positive effects are in doing translation activities in form of groups. To this end, 120 university students took part in the current study. They were all sixth semester students and passing "Islamic text translation" course. In order to make sure that all the participants were at the same language proficiency level, the researcher used a standard OPT test. According to the criteria, 60 students who received 31 to 40 score were selected as intermediate level and participated in the study. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups, experimental and control group. As only 28 students were needed for the experimental group \_seven groups of four \_ two of them were omitted by chance. The students in control group translated individually as common way of translating texts in Iran, and the students in experimental group activated as groups. The same instructions were to both groups. The difference was only the method they were asked to do the translation tasks. The students in experimental group were to work in small groups containing four students in each. Each student was responsible for special duty. The first student translate the passage, the other one reviews the translated text, the third student's responsibility is to find out the words' meaning in Persian, the last one is the team manager, managing the time and controlling the translation procedure. All four trainees involved in the translation process. They involve in the activity with their critical points of view. After each one or two session there was a quiz. The results of the post-test data analysis confirmed there was significant difference between the control and experimental groups' performances. The experimental groups outperformed the control group. Based on the scores obtained, it is resulted that collaborative activities leads the students to improvement.

**Key words:** Intergroup activity, cooperative learning, translation, inter-rater reliability

## 1. Introduction

Translation course in universities is holding in the way that students translate individually and the teacher him/herself rates the translations. This paper is to investigate a different view toward teaching translation in which the number of students is more than only one student and the number of raters is more than only one teacher. There is a different view toward inter-group translation and that in such a translation one student is diversified as translator, the other one as the reviewer, the third member is the terminologist and the last one as the project manager.

With the expansion of human communications through the world, translation and teaching translation has gained enormous importance around the countries and especially in academic systems. In Iranian universities teaching translation and interpretation is coming into interests as the need for communication expands. In the present curriculum each student translates individually. His/her work of translation only affects his/ her translation proficiency score and the student is responsible for his/her work. But in this study the researcher investigated how inter-group activities affect the accuracy and fluency of the translation, what positive effects group translation has on students' translation knowledge.

Most of the previous studies investigated the effect of collaborative tasks through teaching all four skills of the second language, but none or hardly some of them investigated the effect of collaborative activities on translation. In this study the researcher tried to deal with more accurate and fluent translation through teaching how students work together to translate.

## 2. Review of the Literature

The phenomena of translator training in universities back to the second half 20th century and raises sharply in late 1980s and early 1990s. The development in translation training from an individual class activity to a team- based activity has recently come to the translator trainers, interest. That late development is why most practitioners, and indeed most translator trainers, have probably not received formal training of this kind. The development, principles and the main scoring criterion of intergroup translation which will be the main focus of this article, must thus be understood in terms of its antecedents and alternatives.

It goes without saying that teachers of translation, when elaborating their programs, must also decide what kind of knowledge and what kind of competence he is to transfer to the student. Other subjects in the curriculum should include the teaching of technical terminology and specialized jargon, text analysis, etc. The analysis of texts, reading well, especially literary texts and texts on aesthetic theory is, in my view, extremely important to translate well. The student should be taught to read carefully, to be sensitive to different styles, registers, writing techniques, etc. If he is able to read well, he will look for phrases which are repeated or which are typical of that author. He will underline the terminology used, the register, proverbs, style, grammar, intention of the text, inter-textual elements, modality of discourse, punctuation, use of toponyms, titles of films or books,

the intended situation of the translation itself, and many authors have since underscored The common class activity in the worlds' translation classes might be to have individual students translate a text then read out their translations and have them evaluated, either directly by the teacher or by other students, who can propose alternatives. Nord (1996) proposes diversifying this through different combinations of the translation instructions, partial/complete translation, small group work, guided translation exercises, use of parallel texts, sight translation, simulated interpreting situations, 'gist' translation, documentation and reviewing (the list is translated in Kiraly 2000).

Kiraly (2000) and more especially Gouadec (2007) recommend that these considerations be packaged into large translation projects on which students should work as small groups, often

with diversified roles (translator, reviewer, terminologist, project manager). Others, starting from Nord (1988, 1996), are more concerned with issues of pedagogical progression, arguing that simpler, analytical and declarative tasks should precede the more complex procedural projects.

According to Neubert (2000), translation requires a complex set of knowledge and skill. These skills are unique and often dramatically differ from each other. The sheer variety of topics a single translator has to process during his/her career means that –translators cannot be fully competent in all the fields they have to deal with (Neubert & Schäffner, 2000).

### Existing Rubrics for Translation Assessment

The first step in translation assessment is to establish a model of quality and then to transform it into a set of metrics that measure each of the elements of that quality. Muzii (2007) believes that a comprehensive set of criterion must assess the quality of translation from several perspectives during the production process. Making a single, all-encompassing metric is not only troublesome, it is ironically likely to be useless since a simple metric would not reveal all the problems. Creating multiple metrics that assess the various aspects of what is to be measured - in this case translation- can help recompose the overall framework and give an indication of which parts of a process work well and which part does not.

Rubric, which etymologically refers to decorative text or instructions medieval documents penned in red ink and later on in academia, refer to notes that a teacher penned in red ink while grading a paper has come to refer to a scoring tool in modern academic jargon. Rubrics are often supported and used in alternative assessments in education (Virginia Education Association and Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 1992; Mc. Tighe, 1997; Wangsatorntankhun, 2007) but have gained ground as a way of establishing written guidelines or standards of assessments for formal, professionally-administered essay test. Observing how rubrics are used in academic settings and adopting and adapting rubrics for use in the many functional areas of student affairs, Stevens and Levi (2004) write, "At its most basic, a rubric is a scoring tool that lays out the specific explanations for an assignment. Rubrics provide detailed descriptions for what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable levels of performances" (p. 3).

Riazi (2003) describes the rubric as an attempt to delimitate consistent assessment criteria. He emphasizes that it allows teachers and students alike to assess criteria which are complex and subjective and also provide ground for self-evaluation, reflection, and peer review. It is aimed at accurate and fair assessment, fostering understanding, and indicating the way to proceed with subsequent learning/ teaching. This integration of performance and feedback is called ongoing assessment.

Farahzad (1992, p. 274) maintains that two main features are to be checked in scoring for each unit of translation:

- a. Accuracy: the translation should convey the information in the source text (ST) precisely, i.e. the translation should be close to the ST norms.
- b. Appropriateness: the sentences should sound fluent and native and should be correct in terms of structures.

She declares that unnatural translations which convey the ST 's meaning receive half a score, whereas in accurate translations receive no score, no matter how appropriate an natural the target test sound. In error recognition items, one score is given for spotting the error and another one for correcting it.

Farahzad (1992) believes that since the item assesses a wide variety of competences, the examiner may find it convenient to approach the text as the unit of translation and adopt this system, especially with a large number of students.

### **3. Methods of Research**

#### **3.1 Research question**

The following research questions were formulated for this study:

- Do inter-group activities, compared with individual activities, have any significant positive effects on translation-trainees' ability at undergraduate level?
- Can inter-group activities, compared to individual activities, be considered a more effective way of translating texts?
- What are the specific positive effects of inter-group activities compared to individual activities?

#### **3.2 Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study:

- Inter-group activities do not have any significant positive effects on translation trainees' ability at undergraduate level.
- Inter-group activities, compared to individual activities, cannot be considered a more effective way of translating texts.

#### **3.3 Participants**

60 students whose scores ranged from 31 to 40 took part in the current study. The score ranged from 31 to 40 was recommended by the writers of the test. Then, the learners were divided into two groups. 30 students were randomly selected as the control group and the next 30 participants were known as experimental group. But as only 28 learners were needed for the experimental group (seven groups of 4 learners), two of the learners were removed by chance.

#### **3.4 Instruments**

Oxford Proficiency Test (QPT) was used to make sure the participants were homogeneous in terms of their language proficiency. During the treatment, the students were taught four different translational competence such as language competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural competence and transfer competence. Beside this, the instructor taught the criterion (Accuracy, Appropriateness, Naturalness, Cohesion, and Style of Discourse) by which the translated texts were to be rated.

As translation is a subjective matter, three raters were asked to score the translation in order to reach to objective scores.

#### **3.5 Procedure**

Prior to taking any steps, the participants were required to take a proficiency test. Based on the scores obtained from the test, the participants whose score ranged from 31 to 40 were selected to take part in the study. 60 students were selected as the participants from total 100. They were assigned into two groups of 30. But as the experimental group only needed 28 participants, two of them were randomly distracted.

Two days before the beginning of the treatment sessions, the four participating groups took the pre-test. The data analysis of the scores obtained from the pretest revealed no statistically significant difference among the four groups.

The whole research project spread out over 8 sessions. The classes were met for 90 minutes, once a week. The students were all in 6<sup>th</sup> semester, studying Islamic translation texts. They all had passed the same courses in the prior semesters. The participants have completed the basic translation courses. They had received individual translation tasks as the common translation instruction in Iranian universities.

The instructor followed the material provided by the researcher for both experimental and control group. All paragraphs according to the related competence were ready to be worked on as tasks. The following are the steps, which were taken in the groups:

First, similar topics were assigned to all groups.

Second, students handed their translation texts to the instructor for feedback. Students in each group received the same translation knowledge called "translational competence" such as language competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural competence and transfer competence which were proposed by Neubert in 2000. Beside this, the instructor taught the criterion by which the translated texts were to be rated. Five criterion of the selected rubric model presented by Farahzad in 1992 were known as "Accuracy, Appropriateness, Naturalness, Cohesion, and Style of Discourse". In each session or two, a quiz was taken in both experimental and control group based on what they have received in each session.

Items	Score
Accuracy	20 percent
Appropriateness	20 percent
Naturalness	20 percent
Cohesion	20 percent
Style of discourse/choice of words	20 percent

Third, in order to maintain within-group uniformity for the sake of the research, all translation tasks were timed. Thus, students in both groups were given 30 minutes to compose their texts.

The main variation between the two conditions, individual and group translation or control and experimental groups, was that whereas the students in the control group carried out all stages in the translation process individually, these were carried out by students of the experimental group. Group translation used in the current study is inspired by collaborative learning theory, sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky (1997), interaction theory of Michael Long (1983). According to Gouadec (2007) each group includes four trainees and based on his model the role of four group member is diversified as; translator, reviewer, terminologist and project manager.

The first student translated the passage by using the competences he/she got and the criterion he/she learned in the each session.

The other one reviewed the translated text who was responsible for upgrading the translation and carrying out any corrections and adaptations needed to bring the translation up to the quality required.

The third member was to identify the critical terminology in the source material, identify the relevant terminology sources, get hold of the required terminology, validate the terminology, and forward the terminology to the translator.

The last one was the team manager who found and managed all the information and documentations needed. In such case, the information and documentation manager worked from a list of points that translator wanted clarified. He identified the relevant resources centers, found the relevant documents and forwarded it to the translator. They involve in the activity with their critical points of view.

#### 4. Result and discussion

The parametric test of Pearson product-moment correlation was used to estimate the test- retest reliability analysis for the translation test as well as the correlation coefficient among three raters who took part in the scoring procedure. Moreover, the parametric test of independent samples T-Test and paired samples T- Test were also run to answer the research question. The assumption of Pearson correlation as well as T- Tests; namely, normality was examined before running the main statistical analyses. Normality was assessed by computing Skewness and kurtosis values and obtaining trimmed means. The following table highlighted the relationship between these distributions and showed the normal distribution of these variables, too.

Table 4.1

Statistics for the Translation test Scores

		Statistic
<b>administration</b>	Mean	4.09
	5% Trimmed Mean	7
	Skewness	3.7
	Kurtosis	1.3
<b>second administration</b>	Mean	10.81
	5% Trimmed Mean	2
	Skewness	0.7
	Kurtosis	0.3
<b>Rater 1</b>	Mean	7.99
	5% Trimmed Mean	5
	Skewness	0.7
	Kurtosis	3.3
<b>Rater 2</b>	Mean	3.86



	5% Trimmed Mean	.1	
	Skewness	.3	.7
	Kurtosis	.3	.3
<b>Rater 3</b>	Mean	.3	.08
	5% Trimmed Mean	.3	
	Skewness	.3	.7
	Kurtosis	.5	.3
<b>pretest scores</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>.0775</b>	<b>.07277</b>
	5% Trimmed Mean	.0740	
	Skewness	.238	.314
	Kurtosis	.269	.618
<b>posttest scores</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>.8463</b>	<b>.12025</b>
	5% Trimmed Mean	.8886	
	Skewness	-.360	.314
	Kurtosis	-.817	.618

To compute the 5% Trimmed Means, the top and bottom 5 percent of the cases were eliminated and a new mean value was calculated. The original means and the new trimmed means were compared for all the test scores and it was found that extreme scores were not having a strong impact on the means. In other words, since the trimmed mean and mean values were nearly the same for the translation test scores, the values were not too different from the remaining distribution and thus these cases were kept in practice in the data file. In addition, Skewness and kurtosis estimates were also provided as part of this output that gave information about the normal distribution of scores for the tests. Meanwhile, the Skewness and Kurtosis values reported in the table were all within the range of  $\pm 2$ , confirming that the distributions were normal.

#### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for the Pre -Test Scores of Translation Test

After selecting homogenous participants and dividing them into two groups (control and experimental), they were administered a translation test to examine the possible initial differences between the two groups regarding their translation ability.

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show the results of an independent samples t- test used to analyze students' scores in the pretest of translation.

Based on Table 4.3, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in pretest of translation ( $p > .05$ ), that is: the control and experimental groups were almost at the

same level of proficiency in terms of their translation ability in the administered translation test at the beginning of the study.

Table 4.2

Group Statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups' Pretest of Translation

Group Statistics			
Groups	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
pretest scores control group	7	3.00	1.0396
experimental group	7	3.15	1.0128

For the translation test administered at the beginning of the study, the mean scores for the control and experimental group were ( $M=3.00$ ) and ( $M= 3.15$ ), respectively. The standard deviation for the experimental group was slightly lower than that of the control group ( $SD_{\text{experimental group}} = .53$ ,  $SD_{\text{control group}} = .56$ ).

Table 4.3

Independent Samples Test for the Pretest of Translation (Control and Experimental)

	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	Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Pretest scores	1	.10	-.06	56	.29	-.155	.145	.446	1.136	
	1		-.06	5.9	.29	-.155	.145	.445	1.135	

Based on Table 4.3, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in pretest of translation ( $p > .05$ ), that is the control and experimental groups were almost at the same level of proficiency in terms of their translation ability at the beginning of the study.

The first research question addressed in the present study was:

**RQ1:** Do types of translation activities (Inter-group versus individual) have any significant effects on translation trainees' ability at undergraduate level?

The following null hypothesis was suggested:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Types of translation activities (Inter-group versus individual) do not have any significant effects on translation trainees' ability at undergraduate level.

Concerning the research question, i.e., whether types of translation activity affect EFL learners' performance on the English translation test, an independent sample T-test was run to the results of the posttest of translation. It was applied to compare the experimental and control groups in terms of their performance on translation test after receiving the specific treatment. The results showed that intergroup activities affected the performance on the translation test of the two groups differently ( $t=13, .00 \leq .05$ ). In fact, learners' performance in the experimental group (Mean =4.66) far outweighed that of the control group (Mean =3.08) in posttest of translation.

Table 4.4

Group Statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups' Posttest of Translation

	Groups	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Posttest scores	Control group	1.5298	1.0096
	Experimental group	1.73482	1.06327

Table 4.4 depicted the values of the means and standard deviation along with standard error of mean for the two groups on posttest of translation. The mean score of the experimental group (mean<sub>experimental group</sub> = 4.66) was (1.58) points higher than that of the control group (mean<sub>control group</sub> = 3.08).

However, the standard deviation for the experimental group was a little lower than that of the control group ( $SD_{\text{experimental group}} = .33, SD_{\text{control group}} = .55$ ).

Table 4.5

Independent Samples Test for the Control and Experimental Groups' Performance on Posttest of Translation

	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	Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Posttest scores	1.92	.09	13.00	56	.00	-1.574	1.121	1.817	1.332
			13.21	3.2	.00	-1.574	.119	1.814	1.335

The independent sample T-test procedure offered two tests of the contrast between the control and experimental groups. The assumption for the first row was that the variances of the two groups were similar. The Levene statistic assessed the fairness of the variances. The significance index of the statistic was (.09). Since this value was higher than (.05), it could be assumed that the

groups had equal variances and thus the second test was ignored and the findings of the first test (first row) were documented.

The results of independent samples t-test for the posttest of translation in tables 4.4, and 4.5 showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups in their performance on posttest of translation (sig= .00, p≤0.05).

According to the findings, although the two groups were homogenous in terms of their translation ability (as depicted by the results of the pretest), the experimental group who worked on inter-group activities significantly performed better than the control group. The following figure depicts the two groups in posttest of translation at the end of the study.

### Calculating the Effect Size for Independent-Samples T-Test (Posttest Scores)

Effect size statistics provided an indication of the magnitude of the differences between the groups. Eta squared was used to compute the effect size. Eta squared can range from zero to one and represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent (group) variable. Eta squared value for t-test was calculated using the information provided in the output. The formula for eta squared is as follows:

$$\text{Eta squared} = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N1 + N2 - 2)}$$

Replacing with the appropriate values from the table above: Eta squared= 169/ 169 + (30+ 28-2) = (.75). The guidelines (proposed by Cohen 1988, pp. 284-7) for interpreting this value are 1 = small effect, .3 = medium effect, .5 = large effect. It was seen that that the effect size of (.75) is large effect. Expressed as a percentage (eta square value was multiplied by 100), 75.11 percent of the variance in posttest scores was explained by groups. In sum, the independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the posttest scores for control and experimental groups. There was significant difference in scores for control ( $M = 3.08, SD = .55$ ) and experimental group ( $M = 4.66, SD = .33; t(56) = 13.00, p = .00$ , two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 1.574, 95% CI: -1.817 to -1.332) was large (eta squared = .75). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected implying that types of translation activities (Inter-group versus individual) have significant effects on translation trainees' ability at undergraduate level.

In order to investigate students' progress within groups, two paired t-tests were also run, which showed the subjects' progress in pre-test and post-test that are shown in Tables 4.6, and 4.7.

Table 4.6

Paired Samples Statistics for the Translation Test

Groups		n	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>control group</b>	1 tal pre	27	.56940	.10396
	al post	61	.55298	.10096
<b>experimental group</b>	1 tal pre	77	.53592	.10128
	al post	07	.33482	.06327

The mean score of the control group for the translation test improved from ( $M= 3.00$ ) in pre- test to (3.08) in post- test; that of the experimental group increased from ( $M= 3.15$ ) in pre- test to (4.66) in post- test.

Table 4.7

Paired Samples T- Test for the Translation Test

Groups		Paired Differences					T	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Deviation	Error Mean	% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
Control group	pretest – posttest	3.083	34941	3.063	213	04	1.30	.20
Experimental group	pretest – posttest	4.665	.669	126	.762	1.24	1.87	.00

As depicted in Tables 4.6, and 4.7, both control and experimental groups had proceeded in the post-test of translation. Based on the results of paired t-tests, this improvement was statistically significant simply for the experimental group but not for the control group ( $P_{\text{experimental group}} < .05$ ,  $P_{\text{control group}} \geq .05$ ). In other words, the experimental group made a noticeably higher advance as compared to the control group in the posttest of translation.

**RQ2:** Can inter-group activities, compared to individual activities, be considered a more effective way of translating texts?

The following null hypothesis was suggested:

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** Inter-group activities, compared to individual activities, cannot be considered an effective way of translating texts.

In response to the second research question raised in the current study it is said that the students in the groups feel much more responsibility for the task they undertake. The other positive effect of the inter-group activities interestingly was that the students were able to find and correct the mistakes of the English text. This was not happened in the control group.

The students in the experimental group were not only cognitively but they were emotionally empowered. Cognitive improvement more or less happened for both control and experimental groups for the instructions they received, but the students in the experimental group were highly improved emotionally. The reason was that they feel more comfortable among their group members. Cooperative atmosphere in groups made students feel free to ask their questions and solve their problem with no shame.

**RQ3:** What are the specific positive effects of inter-group activities compared to individual activities?

The specific positive effects of inter-group activities compared to individual activities resulted from paired T-test for the experimental group ( $P_{\text{experimental group}} < .05$ ) that in compare with that of the

control group ( $P_{\text{control group}} \geq .05$ ) showed a high improvement within the experimental group. Besides paired T-test results the specific effects of inter-group activities in relation with the rubric criterion (Accuracy, Appropriateness, Naturalness, Cohesion, and Style of discourse) presented by Farahzad and rated by three raters will be discussed in the following:

As one of the students was responsible for revising the translated text, he/she was able to correct the text syntactically. Moreover, the team manager who was had the responsibility of searching for appropriate sources of information helped the reviser and translator to solve any cognitive problems and the accuracy of the translated text improved from pre- to post-test.

The terminologist's helps to the translator made him/her much more confident for choosing the best equivalents in Islamic context. Even the manager who was almost selected among the group members as the head of the group tried to find strongest equivalents for the translator and reviser and give suggestions for having more natural translation.

All four members were practiced with critical points of view and at the same time responsible having an appropriate and accurate translation.

#### 4.2 Variables

In this study, inter-group activities were considered the independent variable and translation scores were the dependent variable.

#### 4.3 Result

This study suggests inter-group activities as a useful method to use in translation training courses. The results of the study, quantitative analyses, skewed toward the positive impacts of inter-group activities on translation trainees' ability among undergraduate level students.

#### 5. Implications of the study

The findings of the current study, though not generalizable to all settings of training in translation classes, have valuable implications on the role of inter-group activities in improving translation ability. The findings of this study have the following pedagogical implications for the teachers, material designers, curriculum developers, and teacher-training bodies:

1. Textbook writers, especially in the context of translation studies, do not include a sufficient amount of information on inter-group activities.
2. Training through collaboration would improve translation trainees' ability and should be included in translator training instruction.

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## DETERMINANTS OF LANGUAGE TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the determinants of language teachers' experience from Iranian foreign language teachers' perspective. Twelve male language teachers (including three Arabic, three french, and six english language teachers) were selected from the foreign languages center of imam ali university tehran, iran. Data was collected using in-depth interviews with the participants. Inspired by the classic grounded theory, the researchers followed Corbin & Strauss (1990) levels of coding (open coding, axial coding, and selective coding) to analyze the qualitative data. The analysis of the collected data revealed the latent pattern behavior of the participants. Considering language teacher experience as the core category of the research, the researchers found four key factors namely, '*factors related to the nature of experience*,' '*teacher factors*,' '*contextual factors*,' '*time factor*', and '*factors related to practical issues*.'. Language teachers and teacher educators are encouraged to take account mentioned factors in teachers' professional development.

*Key-words:* Experience, Language teacher, Experience Definition

### 1. Introduction

Teachers may be considered as one of the most important factors that play significant roles in every educational system. There are some variables, which influence teachers' effectiveness, among those variables teaching experience is an overlooked domain. Rice (2010) argued that in general education "teacher experience is probably the key factor in personnel policies that affect current employees: it is a cornerstone of traditional single-salary schedules; drives teachers transfer policies that prioritize seniority, and it is commonly considered as a primary source of inequity across schools and, therefore, a target for redistribution" (p.1). Therefore, it can be claimed that teaching experience and teacher experience may promote effectiveness.



On the language teacher's experience, some questions can be proposed. Some of the discussed issues in the pertinent literature are as the following: What is the relationship between teacher experience and teacher productivity? Does the experience promote effectiveness? Do learners achieve higher levels of proficiency when taught by more experienced teachers? Nevertheless, the term 'language teaching experience' is not straightforward as it seems, and there may be different interpretations of the term. The sources of observed complexities may refer to the diverse understanding of "language teacher experience. "By doing so, this study aims to define the term from the Iranian teachers' perspectives and to determine different possible constructs of 'language teacher experience.'

## 2. Review of Literature

Considering the related literature, while "there is abundant research on what effective teachers is" (Covino & Iwanicki, 1996, p. 325), as far as the authors were concerned, there have been no specific study on the definitions and constructs of language teacher experience. Therefore, determining constructs of language teacher's experience in the area of language teacher education has been an overlooked and understudied domain that requires an in-depth analysis.

In every educational setting, teacher experience may be deemed as a central factor that may affect teacher professional development. "It is a cornerstone of traditional single-salary schedules; it drives teacher transfer policies that prioritize seniority, and it is commonly considered a major source of inequity across schools and, therefore, a target for redistribution"(Rice, 2010, p.1). There is multiplicity of factors that have an impact on students' outcomes. Among these factors, teacher effectiveness and what teachers do in the classroom will have the greatest impact on students' achievement (Jensen et al., 2008; Aaronson, Barrow & Sander, 2007; Hanushek et al., 2005; Rockoff, 2004; Rice, 2010; Leigh, 2010). Therefore, improving the quality of teachers and their teaching behaviors in the classroom context is one of the most effective ways to enhance students' achievement. Teacher experience, as one of the constructs of an effective teacher, may promote teacher effectiveness and may influence teachers' behaviors in classroom practice. However, it is not clear to what extent experience affects teacher performance and which teacher (more experienced or novice) performs better.

In majorities of educational contexts, the same responsibilities are put on the novice and experienced teachers' shoulders. Less experienced teachers are most of the time expected to carry out the same set of complex tasks and responsibilities as more experienced teachers. The evidence for such a claim can be traced to the fact that in most of the educational settings in general and language teaching classroom settings in particular lesson planning and teaching material are the same for both new and experienced teachers.

The conducted studies in the relevant literature (e.g., TALIS 2008, Covin & Iwanicki, 1996) compared the performance of new and more experienced teachers together. However, the reasons, why new and experienced teachers perform differently in the classroom have not been investigated by these studies. It was also taken to be granted by authors that the readers know the meaning of language teacher experience. In other words, they know what is meant by language teacher experience, or what are the determinants of language teacher experience, is it just regarding years of teaching? Alternatively, Is that means teaching in different courses? And many other similar questions can be proposed

## 3. Research Questions

The current study was conducted to investigate the following research questions:

1. What is language teacher experience? The aim is to define the term from Iranian EFL teachers' perspective.

2. What are the constituents of language teacher experience? Different determinants of the term are identified by considering Iranian EFL teachers.

#### 4. Method

##### 4.1 Participants

The participants included 12 foreign language teachers (3 Arabic, 3 French, and 6 English,  $M_{age}=32.5$ ,  $age\ range=24-49$ ), from Imam Ali University Foreign Language Center, Tehran, Iran. The participants were selected based on the convenient sampling.

##### 4.2 Design

Based on Corbin and Strauss (1998), Grounded Theory is a theory derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. In this research tradition, the researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind rather the researcher starts with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data. This paper aimed to build, identify, develop, and relate the determinants of 'language teacher experience. Based on this theory, factors that function as the building blocks of the theory are identified. In this study, through a qualitative design, the researchers investigated the definition, interpretation, and the constructs of language teaching experience from Iranian language teachers' perspectives.

##### 4.3 Procedures

Data were collected in face-to-face interviews with the teachers. The interviews were conducted in Persian, the interviewer, and interviewees' first language. After each interview, the data were translated into English and transcribed into Microsoft Word files. It should be noted that data collection and data analysis, as Glaser (1998) mentions, are not seen as a distinct process in grounded theory; rather they are concurrent processes. Therefore, the analysis of the qualitative data was done after each interview. After the analysis of the first four conducted interviews, a pattern appeared. After the eighth interviews, the main categories emerged based on the coding procedures in the grounded theory. Interviews continued until the saturation point. Saturation in Grounded theory occurs when no new properties emerge (Glaser, 1998). Data were coded through three stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During the coding process, memos were written by the researchers based on analytical rules (Glaser, 1998). These memos included researchers' critical reflections on the field notes. The relationship of the memos to the core variables was taken into account. If there was no relationship between a memo and the core variables, it was put aside for the analysis. Finally, the memos were used to connect and integrate the concepts to make the grounded theory.

##### 4.4 Data Analysis

The analytic process in each step started with the open coding of data from the collected interviews. In the open coding stage, the first stage in data analysis in grounded theory, the focus was on the following questions: *what is the definition of experience in general, what is the definition of language teacher experience, who is an experienced teacher, and what are the characteristics of an experienced teacher?* The analysts tried to keep "theoretical sensitivity" (Glaser, 1998) to avoid description when collecting, coding and analyzing data. When the core category had emerged, the selective coding began to relate the categories to the core category.

##### 4.5 Results and Discussion

The results and discussion are reported based on the emerging categories and concepts. Under each main category, the concepts constituting the main categories are elaborated.

#### 4.5.1 The nature of experience

This category was deduced from the interviewees' answers to the initial research questions. These questions focused on the participants' interpretations and definitions of the term experience in general and language teaching, in particular. The emerging concepts constituting 'the nature of experience' as a category included, *definition of experience, experience as a multifaceted concept, experience as an innate concept, experience as a set of skills and strategies, experience as a transferable concept, experience as a valuable asset in language teaching, and experience as an ongoing process.*

##### 4.5.1.1 Definitions of experience in general and language teaching, in particular

In order to have a clear understanding of language teacher experience, it is important to have a clear definition of the term 'experience' and 'teacher experience' in general. A dictionary definition of the term included some concepts involving 'processes', 'doing', 'observation', 'skill', 'encountering', and 'perceiving'. Boud & Walker (1990) considered experiences as "a continuing, complex series of interactions between the learner and the learning milieu, unified by reflective processes which assimilate and work with the learning potential of the environment, and can move the learner to take appropriate action within the experience." (p.66)

A young Arabic language teacher graduated recently in Ph.D in Arabic literature, defines experience as "a set of knowledge, behavior, and interactions that a teacher earns during his/her teachings."

His definitions and interpretations of the term experience may be influenced by his academic studies, because his field of studies was Arabic and most of the religious text in Iran is in Arabic.

*There are some religious statements about the experience too. Imam Ali said, "a person who has more experience, makes less mistake", or "better selection is the result of experience".*

His view of the term was different from the other teachers' view towards the definitions of experience and language teacher experience. Therefore, it can be claimed that the definitions and interpretations of the term experience are influenced by the teachers' personal, political, cultural, and even religious beliefs.

Some teachers defined the term from the theoretical point of view while considering it as an ABSTRACT term. That is to say; it is controversial whether the term 'experience' is an ABSTRACT concept or a concrete one.

##### 4.5.1.2 Experience as an ABSTRACT issue

The definition of language teacher experience is influenced by the interpretation of experience, in general. In an interview with one of the English teachers, he considered 'experience' as an ABSTRACT idea, or an ABSTRACT issue, therefore, difficult to define. On the other hand, mostly the term experience has been defined regarding practice, hence it cannot be considered as an ABSTRACT issue. The interviewee who was an English teacher argued:

*"I did not say that it is exactly an ABSTRACT idea. By ABSTRACT, I was defining the term, I didn't talk about being practical or being impractical, you know this expression, might be relevant, practice makes perfect, so this might be related to experience it means that the more you practice, the more you work, the more experience you will get."*

##### 4.5.1.3 Exposure

The other pivotal concept in defining the term experience is the concept of "exposure". This concept emerged as a sub-concept under 'the definitions of the term experience' as a subcategory of the 'the nature of experience'. 'Exposure' and 'experience' are closely related terms. Based on a dictionary definition, exposure is the experience of something (Oxford Dictionary, 2000). Exposure to

different contexts also determines the personal definition of experience. Here the concept of 'exposure' has property and dimension. One of its properties is the fact that, by being exposed to a particular context, teachers feel different behaviors and attitudes. Its dimension can be referred to the fact that every context or every situation is unique, therefore, different from each other and has its particular characteristics.

#### 4.5.1.4 Experienced teacher

Knowing different interpretations and definitions of experience in general, and language teacher, experience, in particular, help us to determine characteristics of an experienced teacher. The definitions of an 'experienced teacher' were asked from almost all of the participants of the study. A competent English teacher characterized an experienced teacher regarding management skills and knowledge factor. This notion is mentioned by one of the participants:

*"An experienced teacher is both knowledgeable and also has a good management skill. That is to say, management skills and knowledge determines an experienced teacher."*

Knowledge factor and management factors have been considered two separate categories in the current study. Knowledge factor has some properties and dimensions.

#### 4.5.1.5 Experience as accumulated knowledge

Experience and knowledge can be considered two inseparable concepts. On one hand, experience can be considered sets of knowledge; on the other hand, knowledge may be taken as sets of experience.

'Experience as an accumulate knowledge' was a concept that emerged during the open coding stage. In the axial coding stage, we put this theory under 'knowledge factor category'. However, at the selective coding we considered this concept one of the subcategories of the nature of experience, under the 'definition of experience,' because it was more related to the nature of experience and the definitions of experience.

*"Experience is something that gathered during the time; it is a mass of knowledge teachers teach in some courses you know complied during the time. It is the kind of knowledge. It is a unique knowledge that everyone has it."*

#### 4.5.1.6 Experience as a conception of self

This was the concept that emerged during the analysis of initial interviews. In the axial coding stage, we put this concept on the subcategory of teachers' psychological factor. However, in the selective coding stage while writing memos for the concepts we put this concept under the 'definition of experience.'

*"Teacher experience refers to teachers' self-conception of their performance in the class; it is formed by the attitudes of teachers and students towards the performance of teachers."*

Therefore, teachers' experience can be dimensional based on their performance and the attitudes towards teachers' performance in the class.

#### 4.5.2 Teacher Factors

'Teacher factors' was the second category of the determinants of language teacher experience. This category included some factors like language teaching factors, successful teacher, teachers' behaviors, knowledge factor, teachers' interaction ability, teachers' reflective practice, psychological factors, management skills, up to datedness, individual differences factors, personal experience effects, readiness, and teachers' scope.

#### 4.5.2.1 Language teaching factor

'Specificity of language teaching' as a concept emerged during the analysis of the third interview. Language teaching is specific; therefore, language teachers' experience may be different from the experience of other teachers. Participants in this study had the same attitudes towards 'Specificity of language teaching'. Following was a sample, from an interview with an English teacher.

*"most of the language teachers have different experience from teachers of other disciplines or academic fields, since language is dealing with humanity, it is part of human being."*

#### 4.5.2.2 Factors characterizing a good teacher

Closely related to 'teacher factors' is the definition and characteristics of a 'good teacher'. The final goal of determining the concept of 'experienced teacher' is identifying a good teacher. Successful teacher in the related literature has been defined differently by different scholars. Having a contagious enthusiasm, creativity, encouraging, patience, motivating, having humor, challenging students, being knowledgeable, having fairness, being up to date, and being actor were the characteristics of a good language teacher that can be found searching the related literature (e.g. Borgs 2006; Shishavan; 2009; Brosh 1996; Crawford; 2004). In the current study, 'successful teacher', as a concept, has emerged as one of the subcategories of teacher factor. A successful teacher has many different properties with the related dimensions.

The term 'experience' is closely linked to 'success'. Most of the participants mentioned some of the characteristics of 'successful teacher' or the 'good teacher.' The participants unconsciously referred to the characteristics of successful teachers during the interview.

A successful teacher is a teacher who has more experiences. A proficient English teacher believes that the more experienced the teacher, the more success comes to him or her. He/she cites an example, arguing a teacher who has 30 years' experience is more appealing than a young teacher and those who have been teaching just for a few years but were successful are rare cases.

One of the principal aims characterizing an 'experienced teacher' is identifying a good teacher or introducing a successful teacher. In an interview with the participants, some of the interviewees considered experienced teachers equal to the successful teacher. For instance, an English teacher describing an effective teacher mentioned: *"an experienced teacher is a successful one, but not vice versa."* That is; experience leads to success. However, a teacher may be a successful teacher even without experience.

A good teacher has some properties. A good teacher should feel students and should have a mutual understanding with learners. When the interviewer asked a question to an English teacher regarding the characteristics of an experienced teacher, the interviewee answered in the following way:

*"There are people who have many years of teaching experience, but they are not so professional and are not good teachers, experience is just one of the elements, but again I confirm that the concept of experience, somehow is a flurry concept, it is vague, that's why the question cannot be answered very in an exact way."*

Analyzing the other interviewees yielded some concepts concerning the characteristics of a successful teacher. Being up to date, having good management skills, integrating knowledge and experience, devotion, the ability to transfer his or her knowledge, having the instructional knowledge, were other properties of a successful teacher. Following are some of the extracts from the interviews:

#### 4.5.2.3 Up to date Knowledge

Being up to date is another characteristic of a successful teacher. This concept is independent of the years of teaching because a teacher may teach for several years but neglect their professional development. This point is clearly mentioned by the young English teachers participating in the study.

*"But being an experienced teacher can be a sign of being more successful provided that while the experienced teacher has the years of teaching experience, he also must have updated his knowledge, not just using his previous knowledge."*

An up to date teacher knows how to deal with the generation gap issue. Generation gap is an important variable in defining experienced teacher. Sometimes an experienced teacher does not take student generation into account. That is to say, young teachers who have taught for a few years at most can adapt themselves to the contextual factors more quickly.

#### 4.5.2.4 The ability to transfer Knowledge

Ability to transfer knowledge was another concept of the teacher factor category. A successful language teacher, irrespective of knowledge, is a teacher who can easily transfer his or her knowledge. The following is a comment by a French teacher:

*"An experienced teacher who is not able to transfer his information (whether intentionally or unintentionally) to others is not a successful one."*

#### 4.5.2.5 Dynamic teacher

A successful teacher is a dynamic teacher. Firstly, this concept emerged during the analysis of an interview with a professional English teacher. Following is an extract from interview with an old English teacher:

**Interviewer:** *What is your opinion about the belief that a teacher with four years' experience is more successful than a teacher with 30 years' experience?*

**Interviewee:** *This is a teacher who is not dynamic and uses uniform teaching methods.*

Therefore, a teacher may teach for many years, but not be a successful teacher, because he or she does not try to change his ways of teaching.

*"For example, I know an Arabic language professor who is teaching in various universities: Islamic Azad universities, state universities, and different academic institutes, for 15 years. If he was teaching in one place, his experience was different from now."*

#### 4.5.2.5 Experience as treatment with the learners

The teachers' behavior toward students may be called treatment. It may be an influential factor in defining the concept of 'teacher experience'. Hence, experience can be pinpointed as a kind of 'treatment'. Treatment as a separate concept emerged as a subcategory of 'teacher factor'. The subcategory of 'treatment' included three different concepts, namely *experience as treatment with students*, *the experiences a kind of behavior*, and *experience as an encountering*.

The teacher's manner or the way that teachers treat different students in different contexts may influence language teacher experience. An experienced teacher does not treat all of his or her students in the same manner. In other words, the teaching practice of an experienced teacher varies from one context to another, from one class to another, and even from one student to

another. The following extract was one of the closing comments of an English teacher who has taught English in a military academy for about four years.

*"however, another matter during the class is (that) an experienced teacher has a different manner during the class, for example you are a student, I treat you in a particular way, I cannot treat you as like other students, for example you treat a major or a colonel can you treat them like or same as a sergeant, is it possible? ...not, not at all."*

Therefore, 'coping with' or 'dealing with' or 'encountering with' students in different manners may be considered the other subcomponent of language teacher experience. "In this regard 'experience' is a 'dealing with.' Dealing with various events, encountering, situations, different types of personalities, different behaviors and attitudes, different interactions and everything that happens during a class practice. In response to the definition of experience, one of the young English teachers says *'Everything that we encounter with during our life is (an) experience, and everything that a teacher encounters with during class is called language teacher experience.'*

### 4.5.3 Time factor

The third main category determining the experience of a language teacher was 'time factor.' By time factor, we mean considering teachers' experience regarding years of teaching or the period of language teaching. In a common sense, experience is defined regarding years of teaching. Overall, analysis of the sub-concepts of this category suggests that language teacher experience cannot be defined just regarding years of teaching. However, time factor (i.e., years of language teaching) is an important factor in defining the term experience. This concept was the most mentioned concept by the participants of the study. Defining the experience regarding years of teaching has both pro and con views.

An English teacher talks for considering experience in term of years of teaching in the following way:

*"You know, when you start your teaching,...you don't know about the situation of the class, the environment, the Institute, the context, after two or three semesters, you can understand everything from students, teachers, supervisors, (and) the headmaster of the institutes,"*

Hence, being experienced teacher takes time. To put another way, time is an important factor in shaping the experience of a language teacher.

A French language teacher has a similar point of view regarding the term experience. When this teacher was asked about considering language teacher experience regarding years of teaching, following was the answer:

*"Yea, this can be true. In fact, it is defined regarding years of teaching. Obviously, everybody's mind unwillingly goes toward more teaching years."*

One of the interviewees, an English teacher, stated that regarding research, mostly, researchers consider teacher experience regarding years of teaching. However, based on their definition, there are some important points for consideration. These years of teaching have some characteristics. First of all, teachers' teaching in these years should not be repetitive, that is to say, they must be dynamic; they should change and improve themselves in these years.

Those who reflect upon language teacher experience regarding years of teaching mentioned the following reasons. Based on the interviews, the common sense of experience is the years that a teacher performs the job. Following is an extract taken from an interview with an English teacher discussing the importance of the time factor.

*"regarding years of teaching, I think quantity is important, by quantity I mean years of experience is important because every year every month, every session, every minute, every second, you learn new things, and you experience new things."*

#### 4.5.4 Contextual Factors

Contextual factors were the fourth and the penultimate emerging category in the analyzed data. Context plays an important role in shaping teachers' experience. "One way to look at experience is to consider it as an interaction between a learner and a social, psychological and material environment or" (Boud and Walker, 1990, p.62). In this study, contextual factors as a separate category involved some concepts like teaching at different courses and experiencing different situations. Teaching in different courses needs different experiences, so the teacher, to be called an experienced teacher, should experience different contexts. Because, as an English teacher mentioned, every context is specific and requires a different set of skills. An English teacher notes this comment in an interview.

*"...I mean that different context needs different strategies, needs different experience, if you are limited to a single context, I think again you are not equipped with a wide range experiences..... what I am trying to say, is that it is better to experience different context, we should not limit ourselves to a specific context."*

When a teacher experiences different contexts his or her *readiness* increase. Readiness as a concept emerged as a subcategory of the contextual factor. It is one of the properties of a successful teacher. A successful teacher is ready to experience every situation in every time.

*"I like to add another point to experience 'to be ready,' you know readiness.... Without any preparation exactly ready to experience even difficult situation that might be daunting, I think being ready, and readiness is related to experience, it means that it comes out of experience."*

Overall, considering the interviewees' point of views, different context and situations need different skills and strategies, regardless of the language. Contextual factors affect teachers' experience because as one of the French teachers argues "Teaching at different situations helps teachers to become aware of contextual factors affecting their performance." Contextual factors referred to the factors such as learners' age, gender, and learners' educational level, learners' behavior, learners' level of proficiency, course textbooks. All these factors can be considered significant factors in shaping language teacher experience. Based on the teachers' comments, it is the nature of contexts that determine teachers' experience. It is the context of teaching that determines teaching method, teaching behavior, and teachers' actions. The related textbooks are changing; therefore, teachers can learn from these changings.

#### 4.5.5 Practical Issues

Practical issues included some concepts including the 'application of knowledge', 'implementation of theories', and 'experience as an accumulated practice'. Some of the interviewees in this study defined the term experience as the 'application' or 'implementation' of knowledge. It can be considered as a kind of conversion, converting theory into practice. The teacher may be a knowledgeable teacher, but his ability in transferring knowledge may be inadequate. A related concept emerged from the data were 'transferring ability' or 'transferring power'. The more powerful 'transferability', the more experienced a teacher will be. An Arabic language teacher defining the term experience from his personal point of view argues:

*"From my perspective, experience means to obtain a valuable set of information in each field, like language teaching through the implementation of theories."*

Practice and experience are closely related terms. When referring to the experience as a separate concept, practice becomes the first thing that comes to some teachers' mind. The term 'practical



issues' was the superordinate term for some sub-concepts like 'application' and 'experience as an accumulated practice'. An English teacher connected knowledge and practice in the following way:

*'Experience is the knowledge gained by practice; I can call myself an inexperienced teacher. Because I gained knowledge by practice, in my opinion, knowledge is not just enough for an experienced teacher,*

Overall, considering the emerged factors constituting language teacher experience, the following diagram can be proposed.

Insert Figure 1 here

As the diagram shows language teacher experience, include three major categories namely *teachers' factors, factors related to the nature of experience,* and *contextual factors*. These factors, in turn, involves many other sub-factors showing language teacher experience is a multifaceted factor.

## 5. Conclusion

This study intended to investigate Iranian foreign language teachers including (Arabic, English, and French) teachers' definitions and interpretations of the term language teacher experience. Years of teaching are crucial, nevertheless, it is just one constituent of language teacher experience. The main categories emerged from the analysis of collected data included, *the nature of experience, teacher-related factors, time factor, contextual issues, and practical issues*; the analysis of data supported the view that language teacher experience is a multidimensional factor, which has numerous properties and dimensions. Language teacher experience as a multifaceted concept has many concepts and categories some of which emerged in the current study. Further studies can take into account this study to conduct a mixed method research that uses triangulation of data, to have a more in-depth view of language teachers' experience. Furthermore, they can take into account different contextual factors' effect on teachers' attitudes toward language teacher experience. Finally, since language learners' also play an important role in shaping teachers' experience, further studies are suggested to elicit learners' view toward the concept of language teacher experience, which in turn leads to have a more comprehensive understanding, firstly from the concept of 'the experienced teacher' and then 'the successful teacher.

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## IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' USE AND PREFERENCES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

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### ABSTRACT

The present study investigated Iranian efl learners' use and pREFERENCES of language learning strategies. The participants of the study consisted of 178 efl students at some available branches of Islamic azad university, Fars provine. From these participants, 120 upper-intermediate efl learners were selected based on their performance on oxford's quick placement test, version two (2004). To investigate the language learning strategies of efl learners', oxford's (1990) strategy inventory for language learning was administered. In order to analyze the data, the mean score was calculated and the frequencies of the language learning strategies were reported. Based on the analyzes of the data, it was concluded that Iranian efl learners were in general moderate language learning strategy users. More detailed analyses of the data ranked the order of the applications of strategies as; social, metacognitive, cognitive, memorey, compensation and affective strategies from the most to the least frequent strategies applied by the participants of the study.

**Keywords:** language learning strategies-efl learners- strategy use

### 1. Introduction

In order to communicate effectively, individuals need to express what they mean in different ways in their everyday communication. To achieve this goal, they employ a wide range of strategies. Learning strategies are considered as special manners of information processing that can enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information. Richards, Platt and Platt (1992, p.209) argue that "learning strategies are intentional behavior and thoughts that learners make use of during learning in order to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information".

The strategies that L2 learners employ in the process of learning the target language have been categorized by many professional experts ( O'Malley, 1985; Rubin ,1987; Oxford, 1990; Stern's 1992) in the area of foreign/second language learning. However, in the present research, Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies is applied. Oxford (1990, P.8) provided one of the most applicable definitions that have been cited most recurrently in the literature of L2 learning strategies: "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations". This definition is a reflection of what language learners intend to do and the specific actions they can take.

In fact, when studies concentrate more on language learning, the strategies and techniques that learners employ to learn the second or foreign language come to the center of attention. In the present study, from among the techniques L2 learners frequently employ, language-learning strategies are the focus of attention. Once the techniques and strategies of efficient language learners are recognized, teachers better know to select the appropriate materials and teach in regard with the real needs of the learners. Furthermore, being familiar with the characteristics, techniques, and strategies that learners use facilitates language-learning process for both teachers and learners. In addition, with this knowledge and awareness, learners' L2 learning process can be enhanced through learners' training by their teachers.

Based on the above objectives, the following research questions have been posed.

RQ1: How good are Iranian EFL learners in the use of language learning strategies?

RQ2: What are the language learning strategies that Iranian EFL learners apply in their language learning?

### **1. Review of Literature**

In the area of language learning strategies in ESL/EFL contexts, a number of studies specify that learning strategies play an important role in successful language learning. In the last three decades, numerous studies of learning strategies have been done chiefly to determine the type of language strategies L2 learners use, as well as factors influencing these choices. One of the widely reported studies is that of Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978). This study included highly successful adult L2 learners and adolescent classroom learners of L2 French. The researchers employed intensive face-to-face interviews with adults and observed the class of adolescents. The results indicated that interviewing L2 learners was more effective than observation as many of the language strategies L2 learners employ are mental and consequently not directly observable.

Gan, Humphreys, and Hamp-Lyons (2004) reported a comparative study of successful and unsuccessful EFL learners. The findings indicated that unsuccessful learners employed rote-memorization, while the successful learners use a systematic strategy and supplemented rote learning with strategies for boosting what they had already learned. Halbach (2000) came up with a similar finding after analyzing the use of language learning strategies of EFL learners. She recognized that the unsuccessful learners lacked critical self-awareness; they rarely employed the monitoring and self-evaluation strategies in the process of L2 learning. In another study, Takeuchi (2003) recognized the characteristics of Japanese successful language learners via their biographies. Finally, Griffiths (2008) investigated good language learners with regard to such individual different factors such as motivation, age, personality, and attitude.

Taken together, these studies specified a successful language learner as one who is a mentally active learner, monitors the process of language comprehension and production, provides opportunities to practice communication in the target language, uses background linguistic and general knowledge, employs different memorization techniques, and asks questions for

information and clarification. Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to learning objectives of L2 learners. These objectives probably vary by general purpose in language learning including the need for survival communication skills, an official requirement in school or academic study, passing tests, travelling to another country. Consequently, the setting of learning together with language learners' objectives, according to Cohen (1990), specify the types of learning events engaged in and thus the types of learning strategies that can be expected to best help language learning. Due to the fact that language learners use different types of strategies, they may consider priority over some strategies compared with others.

Yılmaz (2010) carried out a study to investigate EFL learners' learning strategies at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey. The study examined the relationship between preferred language learning strategies, gender, and proficiency level as well as self-efficacy beliefs. One hundred and forty EFL learners (23 males and 117 females) were recruited. Oxford's (1990) 50-item Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was employed as the instrument in the study. The results indicated that the EFL learners employed compensation strategies, as their preferred language learning strategy, and affective strategies was the least frequent. Compensation strategies reported in this study involved filling the gaps of knowledge via guessing, repeating and using gestures, whereas affective strategies were employed for handling feelings and motivations of EFL learners. The researcher reported that the findings were consistent with those of a study of Chinese EFL learners (Chang, 1991) with a frequent use of compensation strategies. The findings also displayed that learners' use of particular language learning strategies relied on their cultural and educational background. The researcher also proposed that gender and proficiency level in the target language influenced EFL learners' strategy use; yet, the researcher admits more research is needed in the area of gender role, as the gender imbalance was huge in the study.

A similar study examining language-learning strategies employed by bilingual learners was conducted by Purdie and Oliver (1999). The study investigated EFL learners' language efficiency beliefs and their attitudes toward the target language with regard to the use of language learning strategies. The study comprised 58 participants recruited from four schools in Australia. The participants were from different main cultural backgrounds, namely Asian (N=25), European (N=23) and Arabic (N=10). Information about the participant's educational and cultural background, attitude toward the variable of the study was obtained through a structured interview. In addition, a 5-point Likert scale inventory was employed to examine EFL learners' language learning strategies in greater details.

The study found that the degree of discrepancies between strategies was significant in recognizing what EFL learners did when they were strategic in their language learning performance. The most frequently employed strategies were cognitive strategies including repeating and analyzing. Social strategies such as cooperating with other individuals and developing cultural understanding were the least frequent strategies among the learners. It was revealed that different cultural and educational backgrounds meaningfully influenced learners' strategy use, and, referring to Bialystock (1978), the kind of knowledge essential for a given activity may also have influenced their use of strategies.

Similarly, Yang (1999) carried out a study to examine college EFL learners' beliefs about language learning and their language learning strategies. Five hundred and five EFL learners were recruited from six public and private universities in Taiwan. A Likert-type questionnaire and open-ended questions as well as forty-nine items of the SILL (Oxford, 1990) was employed in the study. It was revealed that learners in this study had some contradictory views and beliefs being reflected in their use of language learning strategies. Learners' self-efficacy beliefs about learning the target language were significantly related to their use of all kinds of language learning strategies, especially functional practice strategies. Besides, learners' beliefs concerning the value and nature of learning English were strongly related to the use of formal oral-practice

strategies. The researcher proposed that proper beliefs might have improved EFL learners' efficient use of language learning.

More recently, Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) investigated the overall language learning strategy of ESL students, and its relationship with L2 proficiency. Fifty-five ESL learners studying in an Intensive English Program at a large Southwestern university, USA participated in the project. The SILL (Oxford, 1990) self-report inventory was employed to examine the frequency of use of language learning strategies, and a separate individual background questionnaire was employed to collect demographic information about the participants. The findings of the study revealed that ESL learners were fairly aware that the strategies were a major part of their L2 learning process. Meta-cognitive strategies were the most frequent strategy, which aided them in directing and organizing as well as planning language learning. Affective and memory strategies were the least frequent ones. Female ESL learners tended to use affective and social strategies more often than male ones. Meanwhile, learners at the intermediate level employed more strategies than beginners and advanced level learners concerning teacher intervention in the learning process. More strategic ESL learners advanced along the continuum of proficiency level in L2 faster than less strategic ones.

Sheorey (1999) also carried out another study to examine strategy use among Indian college English learners. A total of 1,261 freshmen studying in Indian colleges were recruited for the study. These learners learned an indigenized (Shridhar & Shridhar, 1994) form of English; that is, they learned English in their native contexts with little or no support from English natives. The study indicated that Indian female learners used language-learning strategies more frequently than males. English learners indicated strategy usage that was similar in some aspects to those studying in other contexts, though they were learning an indigenized form of the target language. Advanced learners more frequently used learning strategies than lower level learners, particularly functional practice strategies such as watching original English movies, imitating the pronunciation and intonation English native speakers. In short, it was found that functional practice strategies assisted these participants develop their practical and communicative performance in the target language. It was also revealed that examination-oriented memory strategies were of a great help for the learners in their examination-oriented pedagogical system. Sheorey also reported that learners' cultural and educational backgrounds affected the use of some kinds of strategies.

Rahimi, Riazi and Saif (2008) examined the language strategy use of 196 Iranian EFL learners at a post-secondary level to specify what features and factors can affect learners' use of strategies. The results of a strategy questionnaire and attitude inventories indicated that motivation was the main predictor of EFL learners' use of strategies; yet, gender was found to have no role in forming strategies employed by learners.

In another attempt, Hajhashemi, Ghombavani and Amirkhiz (2011) investigated the relationship between the multiple intelligences and Strategy of Iranian high school EFL learners. The participants included two hundred and twenty-nine students who responded to McKenzie's (1999) multiple intelligence inventory and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The findings revealed positive correlation between MI profiles and language learning strategies use among the EFL learners. The findings also displayed that meta-cognitive strategies and social strategies had the highest frequency use.

Similarly, Nikoopour, Farsani, and Neishabouri (2011) studied the strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was adopted for data collection. The findings of their study showed moderate use of language-learning strategies by EFL learners. Among the strategies they frequently adopted, metacognitive strategies were the most frequent and memory strategies were found to be the least.

Salehi & Bagheri (2011) also took the issue into account by investigating the relationship between learning styles and strategies of EFL learners. Two questionnaires and think aloud protocols were adopted to examine this relationship among 110 Elementary level EFL learners. They concluded that between the group learning styles and the metacognitive strategies, the kinesthetic styles and the cognitive, the auditory styles and metacognitive and social strategies, and the compensation strategies, the visual styles and memory strategies meaningful relationships were observed.

In one of the few studies touching the variable of gender in Iranian EFL context, Zare (2010) examined the use of language learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners with regard to gender. Having collected self-report data, a Chi-square test was run. The findings indicated that Iranian EFL learners are moderate strategy users. Also the findings revealed that females outperformed males in the use of language learning strategies.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Participants

The participants of the present study were originally 178 available male and female Iranian EFL undergraduate and graduate university students majoring in TEFL and English translation at the Islamic Azad University, Kazeroun, Abadeh, Lar, Marvdasht and Sepidan branches, Fars province. These students participated in a standard test of English proficiency, i.e. Oxford's Quick Placement Test (QPT) version two and overall 120 upper- intermediate students were selected based on their scores on the test. Meanwhile, they were at the average range of 27 years old.

### 2.2 Instrumentation

#### 3.2.1. Quick Oxford Placement Test (QPT), version 2

In the present study, Quick Oxford Placement Test (QPT), the paper and pen (P&P) version was administered in order to assign the learners into upper-intermediate level of language proficiency and homogenize the participants. The test consists of two parts. Part I is taken by all candidates and part II is for higher ability students only. The typical reliabilities according to Geranpayeh (2003) were close to 0.9 for the 60 item test and 0.85 for the 40 item test.

#### 3.2.3. Oxford (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

The most inclusive taxonomy of language learning strategies and the most widely employed strategy scale has been proposed by Oxford (1990). Oxford developed the SILL to measure language learning strategies for ESL and EFL learners (Version 7.0). This test took about 30 minutes for the students to complete. The SILL consists of 50 items in the two dichotomous constructs of direct and indirect learning strategies, which is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Oxford (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)**

ect strategies	Memory	9 item
29 items	Cognitive	14 items
	Compensation	6 items
irect strategies	Meta-cognitive	9 items

21 items	Affective	6 items
	Social	6 items

In administering the SILL, respondents were asked to reflect on their use of language learning strategies in five-point Likert-scale items from “(1) never or almost never true of me” to “(5) always or almost always true of me.” This questionnaire has been widely checked for its reliability and validity in multiple ways (Oxford, 1996). For example, Oxford and Nyikos (1993) found Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.96 for SILL. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) established its predictive criterion-related validity using its correlative relationship with language performance measures like course grades and proficiency ratings.

### 3.3. Data Collection Procedure

As the first step in data collection, 178 Iranian male and female graduate and undergraduate EFL university students majoring in English translation and TEFL were randomly selected from among available branches of the Islamic Azad University, Kazeroun, Abadeh, Lar, Marvdasht and Sepidan, Fars province. In order to observe the ethical issues, all these students were informed of the purpose of the study. These 178 students were asked to take part in a test of language proficiency, Quick Oxford Placement Test (QPT) in order to be homogenized and based on their scores on the test, 120 upper intermediate students were recruited for the study. One week later, these 120 participants were requested to answer the questions of the Oxford (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Having collected the completed questionnaires, the researchers analyzed the results.

### 3. Results

In order to analyze the use of language learning strategies by EFL learners in general, the mean score was calculated. According to the criteria of mean (Oxford, 1990), a mean score equal or above 3.50 was interpreted as strong strategy users, ( $3.50 \leq M \leq 5.00 = \text{strong}$ ); a mean score equal or above 2.50, but below 3.50 was interpreted as moderate strategy users ( $2.50 \leq M < 3.50 = \text{moderate}$ ), and a mean score below 2.50 was considered as weak strategy users ( $M < 2.50 = \text{weak}$ ). Table 1 reports the mean score of the participants in SILL in general.

**Table 2 Mean score of the participants’ scores in SILL**

Valid	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
120	3.31	3.42	.00 <sup>a</sup>	.70724	500	.00	4.46

Considering Table 1, the mean score is about 3.31 ( $m=3.31$ ). Concerning the criteria of Oxford (1990) mentioned above ( $2.50 \leq M < 3.50 = \text{moderate}$ ), the participants of the study were on the whole moderate in using language learning strategies.

In order to have a detailed analysis of the data in regard with different parts of SILL, the mean scores of the participants in different parts of SILL are reported in Table 2.

**Table 3 Hierarchy of the Mean score of the participants’ parts of SILL**

	N	Mean	Median	Mode	d. Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum



	Valid	Missing							
Social	120	0	3.6500	3.7500	3.33	1.03609	1.073	.00	5.00
Cognitive	120	0	3.5991	3.8333	4.00	.91628	.840	.00	4.78
Meta cognitive	120	0	3.5839	3.7143	3.21	.81028	.657	.00	4.71
Memory	120	0	3.3546	3.4444	3.33 <sup>a</sup>	.80114	.642	.00	5.00
Compensation	120	0	2.9444	3.0000	2.67	1.01927	1.039	.00	5.00
Affective	120	0	2.7792	3.0000	3.00	.88776	.788	.00	4.83

As it was concluded in the previous section, the participants of the study were moderate strategy users on the whole. Meanwhile, the reports of the participants' performance in different parts of the SILL according to Table 3 are as follows:

Social strategy with the mean score of 3.65 ranked as the most frequent strategy applied by the participants of the study; cognitive strategy with the mean score 3.58 ranked as the second frequent applicable strategy by the participants; while, Meta cognitive strategy with the mean score 3.59 ranked as the third frequent applicable strategy. In Sum, according to the criteria of Oxford (1990), the participants of the study were strong in the use of social, cognitive and Meta cognitive strategies. Meanwhile, memory strategy with the mean score of 3.35 ranked the fourth frequent strategy, while compensation strategy with the mean score of 2.94 and affective strategy with the mean score of 2.77 ranked as the least frequent strategies respectively.

In what follows, the frequency of the mean score of the participants' use of social strategy is tabulated.

**Table 4 Frequency of the mean scores of the participants' use of social strategy**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Weak	11	9.2	9.2	9.2
Moderate	32	26.7	26.7	35.8
Strong	77	64.2	64.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

According to the tabulated data, about 64.2 % of the participants of the study were strong in using social strategy; 26.7% of them were moderate users of this strategy and only 9.2% of the participants were weak considering the use of this strategy.

Table 5, reports the frequency of the mean scores of the participants in using meta-cognitive strategy.

**Table 5 Frequency of the mean scores of the participants' use of Meta cognitive strategy**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	weak	10	8.3	8.3	8.3
	moderate	26	21.7	21.7	30.0
	strong	84	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

According to the tabulated data, the majority of the participants of the study (about 70%) were strong in use of meta cognitive strategy; 21.7% of the participants were moderate in the use of this strategy and only 8.3% of the participants were weak in the use of Meta cognitive strategy.

In Table 6 the frequency of the mean scores of the participants in the use of cognitive strategy is reported.

**Table 6 Frequency of participants' use of cognitive strategy**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	weak	6	5.0	5.0	5.0
	moderate	36	30.0	30.0	35.0
	strong	78	65.0	65.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 6, 65% of the participants (N=78) were strong in the use of cognitive strategy while 30% of them (N= 36) were moderate and only 5% of the participants (N=6) were weak in using cognitive strategy.

In table 7, the frequency of the mean scores of the participants' use of memory strategy is tabulated.

**Table 7 Frequency of the mean scores of the participants' use of memory strategy**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	weak	9	7.5	7.5	7.5
	moderate	60	50.0	50.0	57.5
	strong	51	42.5	42.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

According to the tabulated data pertaining to part A of SILL, among the 120 participants of the study, 50% of them (N=60) were moderate in the use of memory strategy and 42.5% of them (N=51) were strong while only 7.5% (N= 9) of the participants were weak in the use of this strategy.

In Table 8, the frequency of the mean scores of the participants in the use of compensation strategy is reported.

**Table 8 Frequency of the mean scores of the participants' use of compensation strategy**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Weak	21	17.5	17.5	17.5
	Moderate	70	58.3	58.3	75.8
	Strong	29	24.2	24.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 8, among 120 participants of the study 17.5 % of them (N= 21) were weak in the use of compensation strategy, 24.2% of the participants (N= 29) were strong while 58.5% (N=70) were moderate in the use of this strategy.

In Table 9, the frequency of the mean scores of the participants employing affective strategy is reported.

**Table 9 Frequency of the mean scores of the participants' use of affective strategy**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Weak	37	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Moderate	56	46.7	46.7	77.5
	Strong	27	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Based on the tabulated data, 46.7 % of the participants were moderate users of this strategy; 30.8 % of them were weak applying this strategy and only 22.5% of the participants were strong users of this strategy.

In sum, based on the analysis of the collected data, it can be concluded that the participants of the study applied social strategy as the most frequent strategy in their language learning. Cognitive strategies and meta cognitive strategies ranked as the second and the third applicable strategies by the participants of the study, respectively. Meanwhile, memory strategy ranked as the fourth frequent strategy, while compensation strategy and affective strategy respectively ranked as the least frequent strategies applied by the participants of the study in their language learning. Furthermore, based on the frequency of the mean scores of the participants in different parts of SILL, it can be inferred that the participants of the study were strong employing social, cognitive and meta cognitive strategies; while, they were weak in applying memory, compensation and affective strategy.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the analyses of the related data which were presented before, it was found that Iranian EFL learners are in general moderate strategy users in their language learning. The result is in line with Nikoopour et al., (2011) who studied the strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. The findings of their study indicated moderate use of language-learning strategies by EFL learners. Also Zare (2010) examined the use of language learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners with respect to gender. The findings were nearly the same as the present study and indicated that Iranian EFL learners are moderate strategy users.

As it was mentioned social strategy was the most frequent strategy applied by the participants of the study. However, it is in contrast with Yilmaz (2010) who indicated that EFL learners employed compensation strategies, as their preferred language learning strategy. Furthermore, the present study confirmed Yilmaz (2010) and Nikoopour et al., (2011) and Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) who reported affective strategies as the least frequent learning strategies. According to Li (2002) compensation and affective strategies help lower the students' anxiety in achieving pragmatic competence. However, they were the least frequent employed learning strategies by the participants of the present study. The findings also confirm Tuncer' (2009) findings reporting that bilinguals were more likely to employ cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. The results of the study also are in line with Gan, Humphreys, and Hamp-Lyons (2004). They conducted a comparative study of successful and unsuccessful EFL learners and the findings indicated that unsuccessful learners employed rote- memorization, while the successful learners used a systematic strategy and supplemented rote learning with strategies for boosting what they had already learned.

Considering the findings of the present study, language teachers can be assured that by concentrating more on language learning, the strategies and techniques that learners employ to learn the second or foreign language come to the center of attention. In the present study, from among the techniques L2 learners frequently employ, language-learning strategies are the focus of attention. Once the techniques and strategies of efficient language learners are recognized, teachers better know how to select the appropriate materials and teach based on the real needs of the learners. Furthermore, being familiar with the characteristics, techniques, and strategies that learners use facilitates language-learning process for both teachers and learners. In addition, with this knowledge and awareness, learners' L2 learning process can be enhanced through learners' training by their teachers.

Meanwhile, teachers are required to convey knowledge of language learning strategies and skills that can help students become more proficient in their language learning. Moreover, language teachers are recommended to take learning strategies of their learners into close considerations and attempt to recognize and specify learners' strategies in order to support less efficient learners to gain success and master the target language. Instructors can specify these strategies via observations, inventories, interviews and similar instruments. By doing so, instructors will be able to help language learners to identify and appreciate the power of language learning strategies in the process of L2 learning. Via learning strategies, instructors can also assist learners to keep their motivation, and confidence and try to achieve the objectives of learning the target language.

As a final remark, based on the results of the present study evidencing the students' moderate knowledge of language learning strategies, the researcher highly recommends that teachers, material developers, test designers and test makers pay special attention to language learning strategies of EFL learners. In this way, they can provide the students with more appropriate practices to enable them to do the tasks as expected and desired.

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# THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES IN THE LEARNING OF VOCABULARY, GRAMMAR AND READING AMONG EFL LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the effects of differentiated instruction (di) in the increase of vocabulary, use of grammar and development of reading skills of English as foreign language (EFL) learners. This research proposes the application of di strategies such as double entry journal, reading charts and project menus which consider learners' interests and needs. Di focused in the development of multiple intelligences to get students full potential. To accomplish the objective of the study a group of 43 university students of fourth level was selected. The students' scores of standardized pre-tests and post-tests were examined to verify the learning of efl. The results of the study showed that after the application of different di strategies there was a significant improvement in the learning of English.

**Key words:** differentiated instruction, English as a foreign language efl, multiple intelligences, di strategies

## 1. Introduction

When teachers plan an activity some students participate actively but others do not show any interest. We know that students have different backgrounds and learning experiences, therefore, we cannot expect that all learn in the same way. In the past, the Behaviorist approach was applied in Ecuadorian education. For many years, we witnessed that English was taught through repetition. Students listened to the lecture, copied and memorized the information. There was no development of critical thinking. Teachers applied the same methods and instruction to all students equally. Besides, there was not encouragement to improve educators' skills to teach a foreign language. As a consequence, the teaching of English in Ecuador was criticized for the lack of training of instructors since only a percentage less than twenty percent approve the national examinations (INEC, 2012). In addition, students were not enthusiastic about learning EFL in schools and the level of English was low (Education First, 2015).

The current government is promoting changes in education. Therefore, the Ministry of Education in Ecuador (MinEduc) has made changes in the English Curriculum designed to improve the quality of education in public school. The new model is based upon the principles of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) and the Contemporary Communicative Language Teaching Approach (Chomsky, 1970-1980) as the model to develop students' communicative skills in public high schools. These principles are "First, Language is a system for the expression and conveyance of meaning. Second, the primary function of language is interaction and communication and third the structure of

language reflects its functional and communicative uses" (National Curriculum Guidelines, 2014, p. 5). The levels of proficiency that are applied in the Ecuadorian educational system are divided according to the school year. These are: A1.1 for eighth grade; A1.1 for ninth grade; A2.1 for tenth grade; A2.2 for first year of Bachillerato; B1.1 for second year of Bachillerato and B1.2 for third year of Bachillerato. For university, students are required to obtain the level B2 (upper intermediate) in a foreign language as a requirement for graduation (Academic Regulation Regime, 2016).

According to the new trends, English teachers need to employ new methods and strategies to promote the communicative approach for the learning of EFL in the scholar system. Nevertheless, some teachers continue applying the same methods and strategies that applied ten years ago. They have not considered that every student is unique. So, everyone learns in different forms (Garner, 2006). In order to students reach their maximum potential, teachers should take in consideration students' needs and interests. According to Herrera and Murry (2016) it is important to consider students background knowledge that allows making students grown from the known to the unknown. In addition, Tomlinson (1999) explained that "Even though students may learn in many ways, the essential skills and content they learn can remain steady. That is, students can take different roads to the same destination (p. 12). So, tlearners can demonstrate their knowledge through different paths.

Many studies have been carried out in different countries that remark the benefits of applying DI in different setting. For instance, Baumgartner, Lipowsky, and Rush (2003) demonstrated that reading willingness and skill was improved after applying DI tasks in primary and middle school. Kelly (2013) demonstrated that students that received DI performed better in fractions and percent units. This study also revealed that instructional strategies that are based on DI and the use of multiple intelligences enhance students' performance in mathematics. According to An-Chih Cheng (2006) and Chien (2012) the use of DI can impact on motivation of students to learn English through the use of activities such as grouping, jigsaw activities, literature circles, Socratic seminars and tic-tac-toe assignments and analyzing students interests. The results demonstrated that students were more motivated with DI since they had choices when working and could participate actively. In addition, Alavinia Parviz and Farhady Sima (2012) demonstrated that after applying DI taking into account students' multiple intelligences and learning styles, they concluded that DI had a positive influence in the learning process. In addition, working in small groups helped students to empower the knowledge of English.

As you can notice, DI has been utilized in different setting with good results. However, In Ecuador, studies about the application or implications of DI for the teaching of EFL have not been applied yet. One of the reasons is that many teachers do not know the importance of differentiate in the class. For that reason, it is necessary to aboard this topic to offer an idea of the relevance and the effects of utilizing DI in EFL classrooms.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Differentiated Instruction

There are many methods that can be applied in the learning of a new language. One way to engage all students in the learning of a foreign language taking into account students' differences and assets is Differentiated Instruction (DI). Differentiation is a two-step process where first, you analyze the degree of challenge in your current instructional plan and then you adapt, modify or create new approaches to instruction based on students' needs and interests (Heacox, 2012, p. 7). Therefore, teachers can start to differentiate based on their current plans in order to provide specialized instruction according to all students' profiles.



Another important aspect to consider in DI is that not all students start at the same level. For that reason is important that educators investigate in advance the needs and interest of learners to provide adequate support according to students' needs. Thus, educators need to compile relevant information on their students. When educators determine students' readiness, they can design the level of difficulty of a task, when they know topics of interest, they can decide what students' skills need to be improved and then choose the material to use. When teachers know their students learning pREFERENCES they decide how to group them such as group work, peer work or individual work.

It is important to teach students that working in collaborative groups help them enhance their learning. DI has been developed based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978). He mentioned that social interaction is the basis for language and learning. Walqui and Van Lier (2010) explained Vygotsky's idea of construct zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD describes learning as the result of the interaction with someone more accomplished than the learner. Scaffolding activities help to develop the knowledge, too. So ZPD and scaffolding are related. The teacher has to challenge student to appropriate the knowledge and reconstruct it (p. 8). We have to provide activities that challenge students to be better in any activity they do.

Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Walqui and Van Lier (2010) elaborated a model of teaching that uses DI in American schools. It is called Quality Teaching English for Learners (QTEL). It is novel and it focuses in varied learning opportunities to develop students' potential. It employs different strategies such as the double entry journal, which allows students to think about an answer. Thus, students develop their critical thinking and learn English at the same time.

## 2.2 Characteristics of DI

Educators can use DI to strengthen students' potential by adapting the content, the process, the product and the environment. Heacox (2012) mentions four characteristics of DI:

- (1) Rigorous: Educators plan instruction that challenge students based on their capacities. If the task is too easy, students will get bored, if the task is too complicated, students will be frustrated.
- (2) Relevant: DI focuses on essential learning. DI is utilized to provide tasks that focus on significant learning. It is not just about having fun in class but learning in a different way. DI is not focused on the quantity but the quality of the activities.
- (3) Flexible and Varied: DI offers students the opportunity to make choices about how they will learn and how they will show it. Students can work alone, with a peer or in a small group. Students can also decide topics that are interested in analyzing them profoundly.
- (4) Complex: DI is utilized to challenge students and make them analyze and reflect about a topic or concept deeply instead of just overlooking it.

These characteristics show what to do to be a better teacher as well as how to promote the use of DI in our classrooms.

## 2.3 Multiple Intelligences

In order to support students' learning, teachers plan varied activities and use different ways of teaching to engage students. In this process, educators can consider Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences model (2006). All of us are intelligent, simply there are different ways to demonstrate what we know. Garner's model mentions nine types of intelligences: verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial/, bodily kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist and existential. Soltani & Rajabioon (2016) mention that "teachers with a high level of awareness of students' learning style can help them better in

terms of vocabulary learning, and also create a fresh and fun atmosphere in the classroom compared to the teachers without such an awareness level" (p. 219). Therefore, teachers should take time to know more about students' intelligences when planning a class, and before applying a strategy or activity in class.

Santangelo and Tomlinson (2009) indicated that students of an introductory level graduate course of Education and Psychology of Exceptional learners had a positive results applying DI in their classes considering students' profiles (multiples intelligences), levels of readiness and interests. The researchers applied a variety of materials and strategies such as flexible grouping, providing options for expression, supporting text comprehension, offering choices and being flexible with the timeline. As result, the authors found that DI increased students' learning and the quality of instruction impacted them positively. Students said that asking about their multiples intelligences was beneficial because teachers could know the diverse ways of learning, different goals, experiences and interests based on diverse students' personal circumstances. In addition, they mentioned that the use of diverse activities and material promoted active learning and engagement, along with the use of cooperative learning that allowed them to express their ideas freely.

## 2.4 Strategies of DI

In order to improve the teaching of English, there are many strategies to Differentiate Instruction in the content, process and product. In this study we will mention some of them which can be applied in an English class.

### 2.4.1 Content

We can differentiate the curricular content or what students need to learn. Santamaria (2009) stated "teachers can readily incorporate aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy to DI with confidence. By doing so, they can make content more accessible to students who are Cultural and Linguistic Diverse, thus increasing students' opportunities to experience increased classroom success (p. 240). Teachers do this by focusing on the most important concepts, processed and skills. Heacox (2012) mentioned that the content can be differentiated when:

- (a) the teacher pre-assess students' knowledge and skills to plan the activities according to readiness;
- (b) when the teacher gives students choices about topics to explore in depth; and
- (c) when the teacher offers students basic and advance resources according their levels of understanding (p. 10).

The teacher needs to choose the most relevant topics for students. Sometimes, the time is not enough. So, it is important to choose what is more helpful according to learners' reality. For that reason, educators need to plan to differentiate the content based on students' level of proficiency and interests through the use of tiered activities. Heacox (2012) stated "When you tier activities by complexity, you address the needs of students who are at introductory levels of learning as well as those who are ready for more advanced work" (p. 98). In order to apply this strategy, teachers divide students in groups according to their level of proficiency. It is important to remember that teachers need to have this information in advance. There are two types of groups, basic (groups A) and more advances (groups B). Each group works with the same reading but with a different level of complexity. Groups get a reading with a basic vocabulary and groups 2 work with a more challenging reading. At the end, all groups complete a chart (see Figure 1) and a graphic representation of the story which encourage them to show what they learned in different ways.

*Figure 1: Sample of a Reading Chart Basic Level*

ng: Miami! A great place to live	Group # 1 : _____	Date: _____
Before I read	While I read	After I read
Miami is located in USA	Miami is a place with a lot of places to visit	Miami is popular for its beaches and shopping centers

Adapted from Baumgartner et al. (2003)

Both groups are going to complete the chart. On one hand, students of basic levels will use simple sentences according to the complexity of their reading. On the other hand, students of group B will write the same number of sentences with more complex structures and vocabulary. Groups A and B will do the same work with differentiated content. It is essential to remember making tiering invisible. It means that students should not notice that they are being divided according to the difficulty of the reading. In that way students will feel comfortable working in their groups. For instance, the teacher can use color codes (blue team) or different names (wildcats). Teachers also need to be enthusiastic when the activities are introduced (Heacox, 2012, p. 104).

Another example of how to differentiate content for reading is the use of activities that Baumgartner, Lipowsky, and Rush (2003) demonstrated in their study. They utilized self-selected readings and gave access to a variety of reading can have positive results in improving reading skills in students. In Ecuador, teachers can use selected reading asking students to read a book that they prefer in English or the teacher can provide a list of them according to their level. It is important to remember that the readings must be interesting and meaningful. In that way, students will be curious and engaged in learning something new. Students also need to have access to texts with different levels of complexity. Therefore, teachers can use extra material besides the book to get students engaged not only in the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar but also in the development of reading skills.

### 2.4.2 Process

Educators can modify the process or “how” to teach according to students’ learning pREFERENCES and styles. It is essential that educators find diverse forms to make students understand and engage in learning the topic. Even if the content is the same, it can be conveyed in different ways. Differentiation has to be made adding complexity to the tasks and creating opportunities to get to students develop their critical thinking, being able to express their thoughts about the topic. To differentiate the process teachers should know about their students multiple intelligences that Gardner (2006) presented. In that way, educators can plan specific activities for all diverse groups of students. As it was mentioned before, the first step to differentiate is to have precise and clear information about students’ multiple intelligences to plan the different activities that will be put in practice.

Walqui and Van Lier (2010) demonstrated how to use QTEL in the process of a lesson. A strategy that called my attention was the Double-Entry Journal (p. 170) (see Figure 2). It can be applied to any foreign setting. It consists of selecting and writing on the left side of a poster a quotation, main idea or fact from a text. On the right side of the poster students write a reaction, opinion or connection. We can provide formulaic expressions as hint as a scaffold. Furthermore, based on the Multiple Intelligences theory, we can ask students not just to write but draw or prepare a play about the reading.

*Figure 2: Sample of a Double Entry Journal.*

Reading Intelligent homes of the future.	
From the text	om your thinking
the future, an intelligent house can turn up the heat in the bedroom before the homeowner wakes up" (line 23)	I think..... believe that .....

Adapted from Walqui and Van Lier (2010)

This strategy differentiates the process since students read the same text and decide how they are going to present what they have understood. Also, it is helpful for the teacher because he/she can discover if students understand the content and vocabulary of the reading and what need to be reinforced.

### 2.4.3 Product

Product is the final result of the process of learning. Differentiation of the product can be based on the works Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy (1984) and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (2006) since they offer challenge, choice and variety in how students demonstrate what they have learned (Heacox, 2012, p. 11). This activities can be utilized to differentiate the product are: Choice boards or Project menus. These projects will allow students to demonstrate or apply what they have learned in the unit. Regardless the strategy chosen, the teacher has to give clear explanations about the assignment to avoid frustration (Tomlinson, 1999).

A project menu (see figure 3) or choice boards offer different and varied tasks based on multiple intelligences prepared by the teacher according to students interest and skills. Students have the opportunity to choose two activities from the list to be done and presented in class. In this way, students are free to show what they learned about the topic. It is important to remember that this strategy can be applied at the end of a unit since students can incorporate vocabulary and grammar learned in the whole unit of study. According to Anderson (2010), project menus helped students achieve the curricular standards as well as engaged students as active participants in their learning. They were able to create, make decisions and demonstrate what they had learned.

Figure 3: Sample of a project menu

Final Unit project menu
<p style="text-align: center;">Choose of the following options as your final project for the unit Number 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Say and act out ten activities that you do every day.</li> <li>2. Make a poster with ten activities that you do daily.</li> <li>3. Research ten extra activities that you do daily that are not included in the book.</li> <li>4. Create a jeopardy game describing seven daily activities.</li> <li>5. Create and sing a song using ten daily activities.</li> </ol>

Adapted from Algozzine & Anderson (2007)

Choice boards and project menus allow students to develop their full potential because they demonstrate those abilities. For example, if students have musical intelligence they can sing a song or if students have linguistic intelligence they can say and act using the vocabulary and grammar learned in class. They have the chance to decide how they are going to display their knowledge and development of skills. Students will choose an activity according to their capacities. In that way, they reduce anxiety and truly can show their knowledge in the best form they can.

After explaining the concept of Differentiated Instruction and its characteristics, the importance of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2006) and mention some strategies to apply DI in the classroom, this study attempts to answer this research question? Does the implementation of DI strategies with students of fourth level of English improve their vocabulary, grammar and reading skills of English?

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Participants**

The participants of this study were (n=43) EFL students of fourth level of English from Técnica del Norte University. They attended to intensive English spring classes in 2016. The participants are among 21 and 25 years old, male and female. All of them speak Spanish as their mother tongue.

#### **3.2 Instruments**

The aim of this study was to improve students' vocabulary, grammar and reading skills. For this purpose a quantitative design was employed. The instrument used in this research was a standardized test. The test was taken from the textbook the students were using. It is Empower B1 (Cambridge, 2015). The test consists of questions about structure, vocabulary and reading comprehension with a maximum possible score of (30) points. The test is aligned with the B1 (CEFR) and it is used in all the countries where the book is utilized, the questions were not modified. Thus, the reliability and validity of the test was ensured. The teacher subjected her students test scores to a repeated-measure t-test, since the same students were measured twice in her one-group pretest-posttest design applied before and after the implementation of the DI strategies.

#### **3.3 Procedure and Data Analysis**

This study was carried out at Técnica del Norte University during spring classes. The researcher explained the students that they were going to participate in a research. Everyone was willing to participate in the analysis. After that, the pre-test was applied. Then during classes, the teacher employed DI strategies such as the doubly entry journal, reading charts and project menus based on students information about their multiples intelligences. Students worked in pairs, groups and individually. Next, at the end of the unit the students took the standardized post-test to compare and check the learning of grammar, vocabulary and the improvement of reading skills. To analyze the results, the researcher chose the data from the sections of reading, grammar and vocabulary of the standardized tests to answer the question. A series of statistical analysis were applied to the collected data. Finally, one way ANOVA was run to analyze the data.

### **4. Results**

The purpose of this study was to improve students' vocabulary grammar and reading skills of English. After analyzing the data obtained from the pre and post-tests. The results appeared in the tables below

**Table 1:** Repeated Measure Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Pair 1</b>	pretest	43	6.87	1.782
	posttest	43	7.61	1.022

**Table 2:** ANOVA Table

Source	df	SS	MS	F-stat	p-value
treatment	1	11.959	11.959	6664	0.2485
error	84	177.286	2.111		
total	85	189.245			

## 5. Discussion

From the descriptive-statistics table, it can be seen that across the 43 students, the mean score of the posttest was higher (7.61) than the pretest mean score (6.87). Therefore, it can be concluded that the students had improved.

The researcher examined the results of her repeated measure analysis, noting that the obtained p-value from the t test was equal to 0.024 clearly less than 0.05. Therefore, she could answer her research question by concluding that there had been significant improvement in her students learning of vocabulary, grammar and reading skills over the summer course of English and as result of the application of DI strategies.

## 6. Conclusion

After mentioning that the learning of English in Ecuador had low scores (English First, 2015). One of the causes was because the old educative model was based on repetition and memorization. Nevertheless, new trends in education are appearing. One of them that is becoming more accepted in schools around the world is the use of Differentiated Instruction. It helps to reach students' full potential through the development of students' ZDP, multiples intelligences and interests. These strategies are used to differentiate the content, process and product. For instance, this study mentioned the double entry journal, reading chart and project menu which can be used to improve learners' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar and reading skills.

The main purpose of this research was to identify what is the effect of DI in the in the learning of a foreign language in university students of fourth level. To examine the effect a standardized pre-test and post-test were applied. The results of one-way ANOVA indicated that there was a positive effect after the implementation of DI strategies. Thus, DI is a good alternative to motivate students to English.

The findings support the results that Baumgartner, Lipowsky, and Rush (2003) and An-Chih Cheng (2006) analyzed before explaining that DI can have an encouraging result in different settings. Therefore, we can conclude that DI helps to improve readings skills and learning of grammar and vocabulary. However, it is necessary to continue to collect more data about more students of different levels to confirm the positive results of the intervention. Besides, more studies

should be carried out implementing different DI strategies applied in other settings involving the development of the four basic English skills: listening, reading writing and speaking according to the reality of learners and schools.

To sum up, the use of DI strategies such as project menus, readings charts and double entry journal might encourage students to ignite ideas, activate their knowledge and participate in an English class more actively. As a result, they will improve not only their reading skills but also the learning of vocabulary and grammar. As statistical results show, different strategies that take into account students interest and abilities have a positive influence in the learning of EFL.

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# A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE IRANIAN DEAF STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS POWERPOINT USAGE IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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## ABSTRACT

Recent developments in the field of education have led to a renewed interest in using power point for deaf students. Based on different studies, the PowerPoint program as a common multimedia tool has a crucial role in teaching and learning through providing a suitable understanding of the text as well as motivating students. This paper has mainly focused on evaluation of the deaf student's attitudes toward PowerPoint usage in English learning. The current qualitative study has aimed to assess the motivational effects of the PowerPoint presentation regarding to promote reading comprehension skill of deaf and hard of hearing (d/hh) students. To this end, in the present research a semi-structured interview was conducted across 8 male participants of d/hh who were exposed the PowerPoint presentation in one semester. The qualitative data were analyzed using max q software. The results have revealed that most of the students preferred the PowerPoint presentation for English learning and it seems that this technology application promotes their learning interest due to increasingly engagement in class activities. The findings have also demonstrated that most of the students have positive attitudes towards power point and using it in language skills teaching.

*Key words: Deaf students; Reading Comprehension; Technology; PowerPoint; Visual intervention.*

## Introduction

Recent developments in the field of education have led to a renewed interest in the PowerPoint usage in learning English. Today, developments of new technology increasingly help to remove educational difficulties, mainly for students with disabilities. Educational technology has been used by many persons based on teachers and learners' demands in recent years. Due to tremendous improvements in the technology area, learning a foreign language as a challenging process needs motivation and encouragement elements which affect student's attitude to create enjoyable tasks in classroom. Many researchers believe that integrating information and communication technology in education supports pupils in their own constructive thinking and engages them in cognitive operations (Teo, 2006). Pemberton, Borrego and Cohen (2006) conducted a study on using PowerPoint to enhance learning and found that the use of PowerPoint creates a strong learning environment and intrinsically motivate students to learn and participate in classroom activities. According to Ozaslan and Maden, (2013) as the student demographic change, there is a need to integrate technology into the field of education. One

main domain of this technology is multimedia learning, which is applied in different forms such as computer mediated learning, role-game, PowerPoint, etc.

However, a major problem with PowerPoint is the use of it by deaf and hard of hearing. Although there have been some other researches on this issue especially during two past decades in Iran, though, there are some significant factors which should be put under emphasis to illustrate the attractiveness of more and more studies on it. So far, nevertheless, there has been little discussion regarding PowerPoint usage to promote the learning process of deaf and hard of hearing students. Hence, there will be some suggestions or advice as the result of this study which may help the curriculum designers face the problems in integrating PowerPoint into high schools EFL classrooms. By studying different situations involve individual with disability such as hard-of-hearing or deaf students, considering this point that our learners are individuals with specific limitations and educational needs, make a path to further research in this domain.

Today the more rely on PowerPoint as a multimedia aid and other visual presentation media in educational environment have made a necessity for more research in different areas especially assessing the effective factors in efficient learning. Some studies reported that differences in reading comprehension ability of D/HH students contribute to strategies and skills during reading, not to hearing loss level (Benedict, 2012).

Since nearly a high percentage of D/HH students struggle with literacy barriers, anticipating and managing a fundamental educational framework is needed to improve literacy-dependent skills and often it requires pause for consideration over monitoring and designing strategy. Genc Ilter (2009) and Moeller, Carr, Seaver, Stredler-Brown, & Holzinger, (2013) believed that technology usage in EFL classroom brings a lot of benefits into learning environment and provides real world in which students can be motivated easily. Through supplying digital stimuli, the perceptions and thinking process of students are guided in a way that they effectively learn and progress based on some certain criterions for successful performance in academic area.

Like hearing bilingual peers, deaf students require learning environment in which there is minimum stress in instruction. There are many strategies that we can use to provide effective and productive learning condition for students with disabilities, specially deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Through different visual method and designing accessible soft-ware program such as PowerPoint under educational situation, we can relatively remove barriers in disable students' learning stream. It seems because of the physical and mental limitations among D/HH students in Iran, there isn't enough motivation and interest in learning English. Therefore, there should be some effective drivers to reveal their capacity in developing learning process. As a matter of fact, the current study aimed to help hearing impaired students who lack learning motivation mainly in English course book. This study used this model to understand students' attitudes and the factors that influence these attitudes. The successful integration of PowerPoint in education is largely affected by students' attitudes and their willingness to embrace the technology (Pekta & Erkip, 2006). Studying students' attitudes can help us to answer some questions relating to acceptance and usage of technology in teaching and learning.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The researcher intended to explore the viewpoints of deaf students towards technology usage typically PowerPoint presentation in English learning as a second language.

### **Review of the Literature**

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on deaf and hard of hearing students. Different studies worldwide offer various ideas regarding to use of assistive technology in educational setting. Many innovations in technology lead to effective-applied strategy in learning system. Strickland (2013) explains three complementary interconnections

learning theory i.e. meta-cognition language transfer, intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning. He claims that after teaching tool in the class, student motivation for engagement in an activity will be increased. Similarly, teacher can produce opportunity for students to reach intrinsic motivational learning, and apply adequate self-regulating strategies. Mayer (2009) believed that someone learns better from animation, pictures and words rather than words alone. He writes in his book "Multimedia Learning": "...multimedia designs that are consistent with the way the human mind works are more effective in fostering learning than those that are not" (p. 13), and has noted to cognition theory of multimedia learning and states that this theory involves three fundamental assumptions.

Garberoglio (2012) states in the point of technology aid, computer-mediated communication creates opportunity for meaningful interaction and allows direct, collaborating learning process, finally improves deaf students' motivation, attitude as well as self-efficiency. Ilter (2009) pointed out to the positive effect of technology on both teacher and student interest due to active mood in interactional environment. Ozaslan and Maden asserted that if the content is presented via PowerPoint as a typical visual tool, learning process will be facilitated and material appears more appealing. Samiei Lari (2014) believed that the most important aim of applying new methods of teaching language is to improve students' motivation towards learning process. She conducted a study across 28 female students of a secondary school in Lar. Based on the responses given by the experimental group to the questionnaire, the Samiei Lari's findings showed that most of students had a positive attitude towards using PowerPoint and they believed that benefits of PowerPoint promised facilitated learning. "Key features of active learning—discussions and exchanges, questions, improvisations, and off-the-map developments ensure that learners actively participate in knowledge creation rather than simply passively consume information" (Hill, Arford, Lubitow, & Smollin, 2012, p. 251).

Ozaslan and Maden examined the issues of PowerPoint presentation usage in the Department of Foreign Language Education (FLE) at Middle East Technical University (METU) with the aims to access the related attitudes of teachers and students towards this multimedia tool. The findings were obtained through interviews with 3 instructors who deliver lectures in linguistics, literature and English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology courses. The interview consisted of the general ideas about PowerPoint application, expectations and problems related to PowerPoint usage. The findings suggested positive attitude of both teachers and students towards applying PowerPoint presentation. The teachers reported that the PowerPoint presentation is an effective tool in order to provide visual aids and they believed that it makes the course material more appealing and increases student's concentration on content in the class

Another study was conducted by Kahruman, cevik, and Kodan (2010) which investigated university students' attitude towards the use of PowerPoint according to some variables such as gender and academic units attended. The students were asked open ended questions to clarify their opinions concerning to the use of PowerPoint presentation. The findings obtained from qualitative data reported that students believed that through featuring visuals and increase motivation, as well as raising interest and attention of the PowerPoint presentation increase the retention of information in their mind. They stated that it is more beneficial when use PowerPoint in classes in which visual elements are in forefront than other classes and learning process take place more easier than traditional method.

In one case study, Mazlina, Ananthi, and Herawan (2012) have developed a new multimedia courseware for students with disabilities mainly hearing impaired pupils. They argued by this application, the deaf pre-school children could improve their sign language through watching video and colorful animation pictures to interaction with deaf peers. With providing the alphabetical selection and watching the pictures, the students will be allowed to select the number and picture along sign language explanation. During the study, researchers observe that the pre-school students understood about objectives of the materials tended to be taught

and each of the pupils participate happily and enjoy with the courseware and at the end, they manage to face the learning objectives and choose the module. The designers of this multimedia courseware believe when the traditional method is taught, the students have to recall back previous day lesson by teachers' explanation, while this method was used to make sure that the students remember the previous materials which taught before by new courseware. Therefore, the multimedia system identifies some considerable advantages such as increasing language performance, and extra features of using language in related area.

Davis (2012) pointed to incorporation of assistive technology (AT) devices as a facilitator in planning of instruction to increase interaction between all students with or without disability and with various needs and abilities. Davis conducted a phenomenological research on educator's perception and experiences regarding the use of AT for students with severe or multiple disabilities (SMD) in order to gain insight into their behaviors. His study involved 10 participants, nine women and one man, who were interviewed at four different schools. All were currently serving at least one student with SMD and all had experienced some type of AT devices with the student in the past. Based on the findings, Davis concluded that every educators working with student with SMD should receive training using AT to engage this population in literacy-related activity. He believed that AT as a key element in learning activity expanded collaboration with others and enhanced student engagement in learning process. Talebinezhad and Azizi Abarghoui (2013) reported the positive attitude of students toward integrating CALL into the curriculum in general. Their study consisted of 45 boys and 61 girls studying in first, second, third and pre-school classes. Based on the questionnaire data, they revealed positive attitude toward the use of CALL to improve reading and listening receptive skills. The researchers pointed out that the curriculum designers should work hard in order to offer sufficient REFERENCES to the teaching English.

It is worthy to mention that, in most of the studies the hearing student's perceptions have been considered and deaf community and their educational attitudes toward the technology application mainly PowerPoint usage has been ignored. By the way, in addition to many researches, the current study aimed to explore the deaf viewpoints into motivational factors in language learning. This study can be useful for teacher to discover the crucial role of PowerPoint presentation in active engagement of deaf students in the classroom in order to introduce a useful foreign language teaching process.

## Methodology

### Participants and setting

The eight male D/HH students were recruited from Seyed Jamal Adin Asadabadi (Baghcheban) an urban exceptional school for deaf students located in Yousef Abad district in Tehran. The participants aged 17 - 21 and all of them had hearing loss. In the current study, the eight students were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview and to answer five pre-determined questions based on their attitude towards implementation of technology devices such as PowerPoint presentation. Based on Creswell (1998), 7-10 participants are typically enough when a researcher wants to conduct the qualitative inquiry.

### Instrument

A semi-structured interview was planned with pre-specified questions for gathering the qualitative data related to students' attitudes toward PowerPoint presentation. The data were analyzed using Max Q software. Max Q was common software which was used to describe the qualitative data and analyzing them.

### **Procedure**

At first, the participants were asked to answer the interview questions and challenge their ideas in order to give more explanation about whether they prefer PowerPoint presentation or not and why. The statements were recorded and transcribed case by case by the researcher and interpreter. In the second stage, throughout determining the themes and concepts, and finding some similarities and common viewpoints regarding to PowerPoint usage, the coding process of data conducted in transcription, and interview information was categorized into meaningful segments based on various statements. The third stage involved examining primary theme as a separate entity. In the next stage through exploring connections between themes, the researcher was intended to decide which themes were central and which ones may be secondary for the study. Finally, by looking for meaningful relationships between themes, the data interpretation was conducted.

Transcripts of eight interviews were analyzed and description of responses represented in a framework in which the common comments were derived and were anticipated some specific themes related to integration of technology with learning English as a second language.

The participants were asked some main questions such as following questions:

- Do you have any background knowledge regarding PowerPoint program or not?
- Whether the PowerPoint presentation has been used in the class for non-English books?
- Do you think the PowerPoint presentation is beneficial for text understanding process? How? And, what is your idea about attractiveness feature of this method? Is it interesting program?
- What is your idea regarding use of colorful images and animation excited in this program? What do you think about it?
- Do you think these pictures and animations can affect your learning?

The voices and pictures of participants were recorded and analyzed using Max Q software. The records conveyed as a textual data to Max Q software and then similarities between the different ideas were extracted and finally the common themes were gained from descriptive data.

### **Results**

The intention of the qualitative approach was to look for insights and to derive more information out of the deaf students' viewpoints. Due to paucity of qualitative research paradigm (Patton, 1990), the researcher was interested in delving into the essential role of technology in participants' language learning and their direct experiences with technological interventions.

The first interview question involved the previous acquaintance of deaf students about PowerPoint usage in classroom. The majority of eight participants claimed that prior to the study they had not been exposed to such educational program and only three persons stated that they had slight knowledge about it. Nearly all of them thought may be due to time-consuming and complexity of PowerPoint presentation and also because of educational constraints in exceptional schools, the strength of the PowerPoint effects were ignored by educators and even students themselves.

The second question of current study came back to students' background knowledge about PowerPoint software and its application (Do you have any background knowledge regarding to PowerPoint application?). The intention of such question was to explore the participants'

insights towards PowerPoint presentation regarding to comprehension progress before and after application of this technology device. Lack of sufficient knowledge about technology applications had led to students rely just traditional method and class content rather than trying the new learning methods.

All the eight students declared that they were not familiar with PowerPoint software and they stated that they had not any background knowledge about it. With having prior knowledge towards this program, the students' ideas could be changed and the amount of the efficient effects could be affected by their experience.

The responses of the participants to this question can be stated as follows:

- a) Since the eight participants announced that they have not been used this program before, the increasingly amount of effectiveness of the PowerPoint presentation could be evident. Only one participant claimed that he had slightly information about the computer design.
- b) After exposing the PowerPoint presentation six persons of eight participants who had not any prior knowledge about computer usage, believed that this educational program was very interesting method. The common viewpoint of students demonstrated that the PowerPoint program made many developments in their learning English course.

The third interview question was: Do you think that the PowerPoint presentation had an effect on your reading comprehension ability? Why? How?

Among eight interview participants two persons claimed that because of the weakness of their eyes, and spreading the projector lights in dark screen they suffered from sore eyes and could not completely concentrate on the content material displayed on screen. Despite this, they confirmed significant role of the program and pointed to stimulating engagement aspects of PowerPoint slides. They asserted that during displaying of slides, they could response to question asked by teacher comfortably without any stress and participated in class discussion. Therefore by arousing interest and attraction, they increasingly motivate to engage in learning process.

The next question involved if the existence of animations and images were appealing or not? Why?

Nearly all of the participants verified the attractiveness and charming features of PowerPoint slides involved animations and pictures, and believed the design:

- Led to decrease boring time and stress inherent learning process.
- Narrated the events illustrative and explained the vocabularies in a tangible way.
- Made bridge between images and words and; vocabulary meaning was effortless and; more information retained than traditional method.
- Led to meaning interaction in the mind due to displaying of pictures and animations.
- Helped students with difficulty in reading and with eye weakness to learn quickly through big pictures and words.
- Needed short time to record the information in the mind.
- Led to retrieval process of prior information took place quickly.

The majority of the participants claimed that animations and pictures beside big words aided them to organize their learning process and comprehend the story passages in sensible manner.

The final question of interview consisted of offering the participants' views regarding to continue to learn English course with or without PowerPoint presentation (traditional method which involved teacher oral teaching and explanation). The participants were asked whether they prefer the new method based on employing the intervention or continue the traditional method.

Only one person stated his absolute disagreement for PowerPoint usage, because as mentioned before he suffered from eye weakness and believed that the teacher helps him to easily master on text. He claimed that he could not focus on the screen and lights of board due to disturbing him. All of the participants announced that it was the first time that they were exposed to the PowerPoint design and so this educational program seemed very interesting design for them to participate in an active classroom. Nearly one-third of the participants argued that they could make connection between words and related images and pointed to the stimulating engagement aspects of PowerPoint design. The participants believed that pictures and animations helped them to organize their learning processes and guided their thinking about story comprehension in a sensible mood.

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the Iranian deaf students' attitude towards PowerPoint usage in learning English. It showed that students had positive attitudes toward PowerPoint usage. Moreover, this study identified the key determinants of attitudes towards it. According to the result of qualitative analysis, implication of technology devices such as PowerPoint presentation increases learning motivation via teacher-student interaction and attending in discussion. Stone (1999) suggested that employing discussion questions on the slides will develop classroom activity and discussion engagement.

Our first and second interview questions were: Do you have any background knowledge regarding PowerPoint program or not and whether the PowerPoint presentation has been used in the class for non-English books? (These questions were made due to educational and physical limitation among deaf and hard of hearing students). They were related to pervious acquaintance of deaf students about PowerPoint usage in classroom and background knowledge regarding to PowerPoint application. The present study suggested that the majority of eight participants had not any background knowledge towards PowerPoint program more likely because of time-consuming of the implementation of the such program, inadequate technical equipment in school and also unfamiliarity of the deaf students with PowerPoint program thereby the advantages of this technology device have been ignored by educators and deaf students. As Kahramana, Çevik, and Kodan (2011) found some technical problems during displaying PowerPoint slides and asserted that inattention to remove these problems will lead to distract the students and cause boredom. They suggested that prior their classes, the educators should control the classroom environment and technical devices and try to minimize the factors which may be cause distraction. However, it should be mentioned that regarding to inherent limitations in deaf education area, it is highly expected these problems and call more attention to remove these barriers.

The third interview question was: Do you think that the PowerPoint presentation had an effect on your learning process? Why? How?

Except two participants who were suffering from eye weakness, the others asserted that during displaying the PowerPoint slides they could easily answer to the questions without any stress and participated in class activity. Therefore, the researcher found that implication of technology devices such as PowerPoint presentation increases learning motivation through teacher-student interaction and attending in discussion engagement. The finding is in line with Stone's (1999) study who suggests that employing discussion questions on the slides will develop classroom activity and discussion. The study pointed out to explicit effect of PowerPoint program on

comprehension skill, and suggested that the reason of influence got colorful pictures and big words on the board and it seems that they could make connection between words and related images easily and could control the learning process. This confirms the findings of previous study (Rankin & Hoaas, 2001) which revealed that use of PowerPoint presentation make the learning of material easier and more convenience. There are also other corresponding researches that found obvious motivational effect of technology usage mainly PowerPoint presentation on learning process. The findings are in line with study of Samie Lari; Kahraman et al; Kuo, Yu, & Hsiao, (2015); Mazloomi Mahmoodabad, Zeynolabedini, & Shahbazi, (2012) that all introduced the PowerPoint presentation as a powerful teaching tool to present multimedia instructional materials and manage interactive learning activity in educational setting for hearing students with the aim of supporting and improving the learning process. Similar findings were found by Afshari, Ghavifekr, Siraj, and Jing (2013). Their findings indicated that the students had moderate attitudes towards CALL and moreover perceived ease of use, subjective norms, and perceived usefulness were significant predictors of computer attitudes. Here, one main difference is the novelty of current study in terms of considering D/HH learning process and crucial role of technology to make content more fun during this process.

The fourth question was: Were animations and images appealing or not? Why?

In regard to the specific use of animation and pictures, this investigation revealed that the big and colorful pictures and animations aided to comprehend the text easily thereby the learning process took place quickly. The result is correspond with O'Dwyer 's (2008) finding. He asserted that utilizing visual elements such as pictures, animations, and charts make the lessons more interesting.

Mayer also believed:

" When words and pictures are both presented, learners have an opportunity to construct verbal and visual mental models and to build connection between them... adding pictures to word resulted in improvements in students' understanding of the explanation." (Multi-Media Learning pp. 223, 235)

As cited in Kahraman et al; Burke and Apperley (2004) demonstrated that half of participants claimed utilizing animations in PowerPoint slides increased learning to a great extent.

In the current study the responses of participants to the final question demonstrated that they all agreed the PowerPoint presentation method along teachers' oral explanation. In fact, the greatest part preferred the new technological method; at the same time because of unfamiliarity with this device the role of teacher was critical to clarify the materials. The finding supports the suggestions of Lin (2014) who believed that the teacher consultation leads to positive outcomes in D/HH students' reading comprehension and claimed that teachers' scaffolding instruction improve deaf learning and specify the areas of weakness that required modified instruction. In deaf community education, the role of teacher and interpreter is crucial due to physical and learning limitations inherent this community. However, in regards to PowerPoint preference the main part of the participants claimed that they agreed this technique along with teacher explanation, because they believed that the teacher clarified materials existed in slides and helped them to organize the information in mind.

Regarding to motivational aspect of PowerPoint presentation, some researchers contended that employing the PowerPoint program in class strengthen teaching circumstances and motivate students to follow learning process (Harrison, 1998; Samiei Lari). In general, the findings revealed the high positive attitudes of deaf students toward PowerPoint presentation in English learning mainly reading comprehension skill and confirmed the previous studies in terms of efficient motivational drivers of the technology devices Talebinezhad & Azizi Abarghoui



reached to the same findings. The result of the study also is consistent with study conducted by Iliter. She found the technology as a dynamic and challenging motivating element in EFL learning and reported that 71% of natural science students and 77% of social science students claimed that using technology enhanced their motivation. 57.6% natural science students and 56.6% of social science students also found use of PowerPoint in the classroom made content more enjoyable, and declared that technology-based classrooms maybe good solutions for demotivated students.

In addition to advantages of utilizing PowerPoint, some students argued that providing such supporting teaching tool is time-consuming and technical defects occurred during presentation which caused distraction in students. Some others believed that the showing time was short and took long time to capture the content. They had unanimity to enhance the execution time of presentation. This perspective derived lack of prior knowledge about the technology program.

### Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to determine the viewpoints of deaf students towards technology usage typically PowerPoint presentation in English learning as a second language. The findings of this study showed the effectiveness of technology application in deaf education and language learning. This study also revealed that the students' attitudes approved the beneficial function of PowerPoint program to increase learning. Therefore, the results of content analysis seem to present the highest positive viewpoints towards this technology strategy. The implication of the current study is to provide educational opportunities to educators and teachers in order to apply some forms of technology and pave way to remove instructional barriers with focus on reading comprehension area in second language learning of students with hearing loss. However, it is suggested that the association of these factors is investigated in future studies. Further investigation and experimentation into the the current topic is strongly recommended. In sum, the student's engagement in learning process led to an increase in teacher-student interaction as well as motivational situations and provided more opportunities to remove the problems due to low self-confidence among deaf students. They also pointed to crucial role of the teacher to clarify the content and claimed that in addition to PowerPoint usage, oral explanation of teacher could aid to reach stable situation of learning.

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# RETHINKING OF SELF- MONITORING AND SELF- RESPONSE ROLES IN TEACHING GRAMMAR KNOWLEDGE TO IRANIAN ELT TEACHERS

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## ABSTRACT

In the present days, learning and teaching researchers have emphasized the change which teachers, tutors, and trainers' constraint knowledge traet in re-sizing and trimming what they perform in educational space. Regarding english language as a subject to teaching, although the prominence of instructor knowledge about language grammar has also been stressed, but the lack of empirical insight into the relationship betwven teachers' self-monitoring of grammar knowledge and self- response have been observed. With particular attention to the grammar, this article indicates and discusses information obtained from self - feed back and conversing to teachers of a kind who backwash the issue. The result of the study indicates that enabling teachers to progress and maintain a logical and realistic awareness of their knowledge about the grammar have to be prominent goal for teacher's education and development programmms.

**Keywords:** grammar knowledge, self-monitoring, self-response, teaching grammar, language teaching programmms

## 1.Introduction

Cognitive science is a relatively new field emerging in the mid - 1950 with the work of cognitive psychologists, linguists such as [2] and the establishment of artificial intelligence as a research areas. The study of cognition in language learning deals with 'mental representation and information process' and seeks to develop ' functional and neurological descriptions of the learning processes which, through exposure to representative experience, result in change, development, and the emergence of knowledge'. The usefulness of a cognitive approach to grammar instruction in ESL/EFL becomes clear when we consider the problem with purely communicative approaches. These communicative approaches tend to be based on theories which distinguish between language acquisition and learning. These theories claim but experiencing it meaningfully, as a tool for communication - perhaps with target grammar structures physically highlighted or embedded within communicative activities such as task - or content - based activities as recommended by current 'focus - on - the form ' approaches to grammar instruction.

This view may be acceptable for many ESL classrooms, although considerable research shows that when students receives only communicative lessons, with no instruction on grammar points, their level of accuracy suffers. However, such an approach is not useful by itself in EFL context because adequate access to communicative use of English is not usually available, and students

need to develop accurate English grammar and vocabulary skills to pass exams. According to [1] a cognitive learning has three components: 1) input, 2) information process, and 3) output. In information processing approach, the top - down and bottom - up processing are suggested to operate simultaneously to interpret incoming information. Here the individual combines new information from input with existing information stored in the long - term memory - new knowledge being developed from the interaction of input with prior knowledge. [1] pointed out that knowledge has been divided into two general types: 1) procedural /implicit knowledge which is the knowing of how to do something and is generally unconscious, 2) declarative /explicit knowledge: is knowledge about something. It is factual information which is conscious, and is thought to consist of proposition (language - based representation) and images (perception - based representation).

## 2. Review of the Related Literatures

### 2.1. Grammar Knowledge of English Language Teachers

The effect of teachers' knowledge of subject matter on instructional decision - making has prominent theme in research on teacher cognition. A series of studies conducted into a range of school subjects by few researchers that exploring this issue for further implications. Regarding English as particular language, the findings provided clear and concise examples of the relationship between teachers 'self - monitoring knowledge about grammar and their instructional trials. In one study, a well - developed teacher in comprehensive understanding of literature, but who was uncertain of understanding grammar, represented argumentatively different teaching behaviors during the time of giving literature and grammar lessons. In this way, [5] reported those English teachers who were uncertain of their knowledge of grammar tried to avoid teaching it whenever possible. It is essential to say that teachers' lack of content knowledge can also affect the style and the form of instruction. In teaching material these teachers are uncertain of, teachers perhaps select to give lecture rather than soliciting student questions, which could guide them to unknown kingdom. In teaching grammar, for instance, one teacher raced through a review of the home work, avoiding eye contact with student the teacher might ask baffle questions. Instead of growing interest in teacher cognition [6] in the English Language Teaching literature, there has been small number of attempts to explore relationship between the teachers monitoring of their knowledge of grammar and their instructional decision. The study of relationship between teachers' metalinguistic knowledge and grammatical expounds, for instance, was not grounded in the explanations teacher gave during real classroom interaction. In terms of novelty, some researchers like [3] and [4] reported that novice teacher avoid teaching grammar because they felt their own knowledge of grammar was indeed inadequate. But, these beliefs were never ever analyzed regarding to particular classroom sequences. Therefore, although the relationship between teachers' knowledge and classroom trial is accepted for now, our perception of how teachers' understanding of their knowledge about grammar impacts instructional decision in English Language Teaching classroom is not still strongly developed. In the rest of the paper, I attempt to present and discuss data which clarifies correspondent issue and post on further implications of the obtained data both for the teacher education program and developmental work of science.

## 2. Method

### Experiment

The data collected to discuss here have come from a larger study of teacher's practices and cognition in second language grammar teaching. During this study, teachers were initially observed teaching real reasons and subsequently interviewed about their approach to grammar work. The goal of the interviews was to get insight into features which affected teachers' instructional decision on teaching grammar through a discussion of classroom's trials.

*Mohammad*

Mohammad is a non – native speaker of English who had been involved in TEFL for 10 years. His approach to teach grammar was strongly unplanned. He rarely walks into classroom with pre determined grammar notions and lessons, favoring to catch on language subjects or issues which raised during the course activities, and to use a repertoire of techniques to help students think about these issues. For instance, following fluent work he would usually write down students' errors and then feed them back to class for having more discussion and self – correction, providing outlines, explanations, and trials as needed. When students asked Mohammad questions about grammar, his personal response was to give these questions back to the class with a “what is your recommendation? “ Or “could you help him? “. However, there were definite classroom sequences where he did not reflect students' questions back to the class in this manner. In the example below, the students had completed a “find the object” activity, and the teacher was reviewing the types of questions they had just asked. The teacher called them for repeating the questions they had asked him for while they were trying to guess the concealed object. As the students ask questions the teacher write the down on the board, leaving blank spaces where incorrect suggestions by student are given:

Is it used to read .....

Where is it used to?

Is it consisted of pictures?

What is it consisted.....?

The teacher asks students for the missing words in the first and the last questions. The students have no difficulties providing them and the teacher writes ‘out’ in the first question and ‘of’ in the last. Why is ‘consisted’ in the last sentence in the past?, a student asks. The teacher seems a little surprised facing such a question, and unsure about to answer the question. ‘Uhh... because it is a passive voice, I guess...’, he says and moves directly on with the lessons, without any further discussions or explanations of this point. Mohammad’s behavior was neutral of his typical conduct in two ways. Firstly, he was visibly uneasy. Secondly, he provided direct and immediate answer to the question asked by students and moved over it without further explanations. The posts of Mohammad on this sequence are as follow:

“ The reason for my uneasiness was that I did not know what the answer was, so I did not have correct response,’ Because when I know the answer, my response is ‘what is your recommendation?’, so what happened there was ‘ why is it in the past?’ I did not know that, and then I felt I had to produce answer. “

The relation between self – monitoring knowledge about grammar and Mohammad performance is clear here. He reflects students' question back to the class only when felt quite confident he knew the correspondent answer. But, whenever he was less confident, he over changed his characteristic behavior, in this study, by answering the question himself, not engaging with further discussion. The relation between perceived knowledge about grammar and instructional material or decision in Mohammad’s work is additionally accessible. For example, when a student is asked to make clear distinction between ‘let in ‘and ‘let off ‘, Mohammad responded that he needed more time to collect some tangible examples, and that he would discuss it later in a lesson. Again here, based on monitored available knowledge of the subject matter, he made a decision not to respond in his characteristic manner.

“I became aware with that one that I had had difficulty with that one before, and I have never produced anything satisfactorily for students, when he produced it, I knew through experience

I needed to produce, take close look in the co - build and produce some fair examples, instead of having ineffectual time to follow."

An ultimate example of the relationship between Mohammad's monitoring knowledge about grammar and his classroom decision making extracts from a sequence in which he was helping the other students with word order of direct (e.g. 'what do you mean?') and indirect questions (e.g. 'Tell me what you mean?'). During this lesson, the instructor or teacher extracted a rule for such a sentences or phrases.

**RULE ONE** → IF A SENTENCE STARTS WITH A QUESTION WORD, USE A QUESTION FORM, IF NOT, USE AN AFFIRMATIVE FORM.

He told the students that this is 'not 100 percent, but it is 90 percent'. I asked him for his post here: "Not enough confident to say it is the rule without exception. Therefore, I was concealing myself if they produce an example which that did not apply to, so it can be considered as a help or outline rather than a strict rule..." Consequently, one more time Mohammad's behavior was actually influenced by informative confidence he was giving the students. These data indicate Mohammad self - monitoring of his knowledge about grammar both in the form of general and particular where it refers to specific points raised during lesson sequence affects on behavioral instruction. His total confidence in his knowledge about grammar contributed to his intention to conduct regular, unplanned grammar work. It additionally stimulates him to utilize students' questions about grammar as an initiation for discussion, particular approach or strategy he avoided when he was less confident for himself. Lack of confidence also affects on his decision to protect himself with terms as qualifiers such as '90 percent' when he was talking about grammar knowledge.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Based on the experiment, obtained data definitely clarifies that the teacher's self - monitoring of knowledge about grammar have direct impact on his performance embedded in general and specific grammar points. Mohammad was in confident - approach mode to grammar where it was necessary, he strived to vary treatment contextually. English Language Teaching Teachers' knowledge about grammar may give effect on circles of grammar. These circles involve: the extent to which teachers teach grammar, the extent to which they intend to engage in grammatical work, the way they choose to respond to students' questions, the extent to which they progress grammatical discussion in class, the manner they reflect where their expounds are asked, and the origin or nature of the grammar they prepare for students.

Here the point is the extent to which the teacher's self-monitoring and self-response or performances have effect on his work i.e. the connection between particular behavior and level of confidence. For example the data here perhaps leads to conclude that the teachers who have more knowledge about grammar teach more grammar or teacher may bounce student's question back to the class, not because they feel confident, but they feel disable to answer those questions and need think of more to answer. The ways teachers monitor their perception clearly affect what they perform in class, although this may vary from teachers to teachers. Finally, the relationship between pedagogical content knowledge and teacher 'self monitoring of subject matter is also interestingly questionable. Mohammad's confidence was accompanied by a well - developed kinds of instructional strategies for grammar work, which he applied skillfully and he had not been hindered by pedagogical content knowledge. It is also noticeable that not only knowledge about grammar but also knowledge about language (i.e. vocabulary, morphology, phonology, etc) would emerge insights on which it means it possibly impacts on student-centered approach classroom activities on language system. A clear implication for teacher education and development, which is that work aimed at developing teacher's knowledge about language provides consistent chances to maintain realistic awareness of that knowledge,

an understanding of how that awareness affect on his work. Therefore, during and after training session the teacher, in addition to enabling to develop knowledge about language, could address a) providing regular chances for ELT teachers to access current knowledge about grammar and find continuing problems while training, b) equipping ELT teachers with assessing their knowledge about grammar within their curriculum objectives and careers, c) helping ELT teachers to develop positive attitudes towards their knowledge about grammar while they are fixed, and d) making teachers well-aware that in this way self-monitoring about knowledge about grammar will impact on instructional decision. Noticing to these matters lets ELT teachers develop extended conceptualization of knowledge about grammar and its role in their performances or works. It also helps them to perceive the effect of their knowledge about grammar have on their classrooms practices.

## 5. Conclusion

There are two inclusions presented in the study: 1) teachers' self-monitoring of knowledge about grammar and what effects this have on their performances or works, and 2) developing strategies which enable ELT teachers to become well-aware of their knowledge about grammar , and understanding how this awareness affects their teaching, must be a prominent aim for those involved in their education.

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## COMPARING THE STRATEGIES APPLIED IN THE TRANSLATION OF CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEMS

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### ABSTRACT

The translation of culture specific item is one of the most difficult tasks for translators. In order to translate csis from source language with one culture to target language with another culture, the translator must be familiar with both cultures. The present study aimed to determine the most frequently used strategies in translatio of culture specific items in English translations of holy defense literature by one Iranian translator compared to one foreign translator. In addition the other aim of the atudy was to realize to what extent the strategies of translating culture-specific-items applied by Iranian and foreign translators differ from each other in terms of frequency. In this study, the csis of two prominent holy defense works including davud ghaffarzaghan's *fortune told in blood* (fale khoun) translated by m.r. ghanoonparvar and ahmad dehghan's *journey to heading 270 degrees* (safar be geraie 270 daraje) translated by paul sprachman were compared with each other according to aixela' model (1996). The findings indicated that the most frequently used strategy by sprachman was intra-textual gloss and the least frequently used strategy was deletion. In addition, the findings revealed that the most frequently used strategy by ghanoonparvar was naturalization and the least frequently used strategy was limited universalization.

**Keywords:** culture-specific items, holy defense, holy defense literature, translation strategies.

### 1. Introduction

It is believed that a good translator has to be familiar with the culture, social settings and customs of both target and source language (Akbari, 2013). Moreover, familiarity with styles, registers, and social norms of these two languages are important. All these data can improve the quality of translation. Moreover, Hatim and Mason (1990) consider the social context of translation more important that the genre of translation. It is so because translation does not happen in vacuum, but it happens in social and cultural contexts.

The translation of holly defense literature like other genres of translation is concerned with translation of cultural specific items. In translation of cultural specific items, the role of translator's mother tongue is effective. It is possible that the translators of holly defense works with Persian mother tongue use different strategies in compare with others translators.



The present study aimed to compare the strategies applied by Iranian and foreign translators in the translation of culture specific items in Holy Defense Literature (Iran-Iraq War).

## 2. Culture

The word "culture" was originated from the Latin word *cultura*. This word was used for cultivation of land and care of plants. The word "culture" was then spread from classical Latin to other European languages. However, the word underwent different semantic changes. The new semantic form of *culture* was in relation to the concept of *civilization*. This new interpretation of word *culture* has a culture-historical basis.

Davies (2003) defines culture as a set of values, attitudes and behavior shared by a group of people that can be passed on by learning. However, Larson (1984) considers culture as set of beliefs, attitudes, and values among different groups of people. Furthermore, Schmit (1999) states that culture is everything that people should know and feel and do in order to succeed in behaving and acting in an environment like people who are in that environment.

## 3. Culture and Translation

Halliday (1985) states that the theory of context was before the theory of text. It means that text follows context. Context means context of situation and culture (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Context is important for sufficient understanding of the text, which becomes the first requirement for translating. Therefore, translating without understanding text is without sense, and understanding text without understanding its culture is impossible (Hariyanto, 2012).

Durdureanu (2011) considers translation as an important human action and translator is a moderator between cultures. It means translator is the person who mediates two cultures by changing the form of two languages. On the other hand, translator is transfers ideas from one culture to another culture by transforming linguistic elements from one language to another language.

Bassnet (2012) has declared that to do translation entails considering the body that encloses the translation. It means that the translator should regard the text alongside with the culture accompanying it (cited in Yan and Huang 2014).

House (2009) states that not only is translation a linguistic performance, but it is a performance of communication within culture. Since language and culture cannot be separated, translation includes both of them, language and culture. She also adds that in the process of translation not only the two languages but also two cultures come into connection. It means that translating is a type of intercultural communication.

However, some theorists and scholars of translation studies do not involve and consider the concept of culture in their definition of translation. For example Catford (1965) defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. The most important thing in his definition is equivalent textual material. He did not consider culture in his culture. Savory' (1969) definition of translation is the same as that of Catford's. Savory (1969) claims that translation is become possible by an equivalent of thought that sits behind its different verbal expressions.

According to Snell-Hornby (1988), however, this exception of cultural aspect from the discussion of translation theory is because of the view of the traditional approach in linguistics. This view draws a sharp dividing-line between language and extra linguistic reality like culture, context and situation. According to Snell-Hornby, the new approach considers language as an integral part of culture (Hymes, 1964; Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

#### 4. Culture Specific Items

Words and phrases that are created by different cultures are named Cultural-Specific Items. Different terminologies have been used by different scholars to name cultural items. For example, Baker (1992) defines cultural terms as *culture-specific concepts*, but Newmark (2010) names these items *cultural words*. Furthermore, Nord (1997) uses the term *cultureme* to define these terms. Gambier (2007) considers them as *culture-specific REFERENCES*. Moreover, Robinson (1997) defines them *realia* and *culture-bound phenomena*. But *culture-specific items* (CSIs) are the most widely accepted and used term (Davies 2003: 68).

Accompanied with all these suggested terminologies, different scholars have proposed different definitions for CSIs. Nord (1997, P. 34), as an example, defines CSI as "a cultural phenomenon that is present in culture X but not present (in the same way) in culture Y".

Moreover, Gonzalez Davies and Scott-Tennent (2005, p.166) defines CSIs as following:

Any kind of expression (textual, verbal, non-verbal or audiovisual) denoting any material, ecological, social, religious, linguistic or emotional manifestation that can be attributed to a particular community (geographic, socio-economic, professional,

linguistic, religious, bilingual, etc.) and would be admitted as a trait of that community by those who consider themselves to be members of it. Such an expression may, on occasions, create a comprehension or a translation problem.

According to Brasiené (2013), words and phrases conditioned by the cultural variety are named culture-specific items (CSIs). Brasiené (2013) brings together different views about variety of CSIs. For example, Lewis (2006) claims it is accepted that cultural variety is extensive and difficult. O'Neil (2006) believes there are so many different cultures in the world that it is impossible to state the exact number of them. O'Neil (2006) states that the difficulties in finding the number of cultures is because social entities are not distinguished enough to be considered as separate groups.

Newmark (1988) termed cultural specific items as "cultural words". He relates the existence of cultural words to differences between the SL and the TL. He also adds that translation problems will be caused where there is an emphasis on culture by the cultural difference or interval between the SL and TL. He classified them as following: ecology- material culture- social culture- organizations, customs, activities, procedures- and gestures and habits.

According to Baker (1992), a source-language word may utter a notion which is totally unknown in the target culture. This notion may be ABSTRACT or concrete. Also it may be a social custom, religious belief, or even a type of food. She believes that CSIs are the notions that occur in language and denote to any cultural entity which is usually unfamiliar to the members of the other culture. Baker (1992) expresses it without relation to the context. Baker (1992) claims about the usual non-equivalents to which a translator encounter while translating from SL into TL, while both languages have their recognized specific cultures. She uses the term "culture-specific concept" which it can be ABSTRACT or concrete. Baker (1992) believes that CSIs can be related to a social custom, a religious belief, or even a type of food(cited in Braçaj, 2015).

Aixela (1997) proposes a different definition for CSIs. He believes that a CSI is the result of conflict caused by linguistic reference in the source language when there is no equivalent in the target language and this nonexistence leads to a translation problem. He also suggests that this phenomenon assigns different values to the item in the target language. Aixela (1996) utilized the term "culture-specific items" because there is a potential translation problem in a real

situation between two languages and two texts. Aixela stated CSIs related to those textually realized items whose connotations and functions in a source text comprise a translation problem in their transference to a target text.

### 5. Aixela's Model in Translating CSIs

The researchers adopted Aixelás (1996) comprehensive taxonomy of CSIs in order to identify the strategies used by the two translators in rendering the CSIs of *Fortune Told in Blood* (Fale Khoon) and *Heading 270 Degrees* (safar be geraie 270 daraje).

Aixelá (1996) suggests eleven strategies for translating CSIs. These strategies are ranked along a scale from a lesser to a greater degree of intercultural manipulation and are divided into two major groups separated by their conservative or substitution nature.

#### 5.1 Conservative Strategies:

*Repetition*: translator preserves the original reference as much as possible. In many cases this strategy includes a rise in the exotic or archaic character of the CSI. Therefore the target reader feels to be more alien because of the linguistic form and cultural distance. There is not any sample of this strategy in this corpus. According to Salehi (2013) the Persian alphabetic system is different from English one therefore there is not any sample of this strategy in this corpus.

*Orthographic adaptation*: this strategy is in the form of transcription or transliteration. They are used when the original reference is stated in a different alphabet from that target readers use of it.

According to Salehi (2013) For example: "Nishapur" instead of "Neishabour (نیشابور)"

"Two *krans* and one *abbasi*" instead of "Do geran va yek abbasi (دو قران و یک عباسی)"

*Linguistic (non-cultural) translation*: translator selects a denotatively very close reference to the original text. Also, he /she increase its comprehensibility by offering a TL version which still belongs to the cultural system of the ST.

According to Salehi (2013) for example: Like two halves of the one apple instead of

"Mesle sibi ke az vasat nesf kardeh bashand (مثل سیب که از وسط نصف کرده باشند)"

Or Thick-necked instead of "Garden koloft (گردن کلفت)"

*Extra textual gloss*: translator uses footnote, endnote, glossary, commentary, translation in brackets, in italics, etc. to offer some extra explanation about a culture-specific item meaning.

According to Salehi (2013) for example: "Thirteenth day of Nouruz (note: the national festival of Iran. It begins on 21 March and last for thirteen days. It is the custom to spend the last day of Nouruz picnicking in the country" instead of "Sizdah Noruz (سیزده نوروز)".

*Intra textual gloss*: this strategy is the same as previous strategy; but in this strategy the translator offers some extra explanation about a culture-specific item meaning within the text in order not to disturb the readers' attention. But translator provides gloss within the text in order not to disturb the readers' attention.

For example according to Akef and Vakili (2010): "the prayer that is said during the solar and lunar eclipses or earthquakes" instead of "Namaz-e Ayat (نماز آیات)"

#### 5.2 Substitutive Strategies:

*Synonymy*: in this strategy, the culture-specific item is not used and it is substituted with "a similar reference" in the target text.

For example according to Akef and Vakili (2010): "clerical garb" instead of "Lebase Rohaniyat (لباس روحانیت)".

*Limited universalization*: translator uses another reference that it belongs to the source language culture but closer to the target culture readers.

For example according to Salehi (2013): "Water of Karbala" instead of "Abe torbat (آب تربت)"

*Absolute universalization*: in this strategy the translator decides to eliminate the "foreign connotations" and replace them with "a neutral reference".

For example according to Salehi (2013): "Repose was utterly denied me" instead of "Aramesh be man haram shodeh boud (آرامش به من حرام شده بود)"

*Naturalization*: (adaptation) the translator decides to make the CSI into the intertextual corpus known as specific by the target language culture. This strategy adapts the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the TL.

For example according to Akef and Vakili (2010) "homemade bread is as sweet as rose petals" instead of "nane Khanegy Tonok (نان خانگی تنک)"

*Deletion*: in this strategy the culture-specific item is omitted in the target text for various reasons. For example the translator believes that the CSIs unacceptable on ideological or stylistic grounds, or he/ she thinks that it is not related enough for the effort of comprehension required of their readers.

For example according to Salehi (2013): " Sarketab baz mikonad (سر کتاب باز می کرد)" is not translated.

*Autonomous creation*: in this strategy the translator adds some non-existent cultural reference in the source text. This is a very little-used strategy.

For example "What's wrong with you" instead of "chete(چته)" or " storm cloudy" instead of "abrhaye siyah va akhmo (ابرهای سیاه و اخمو)"

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1. Corpus of the Study

The corpus of this study is two prominent holy defense works include Davud Ghaffarzagdegan's *Fortune Told in Blood* (Fale Khoon) translated by M.R. Ghanoonparvar and Ahmad Dehghqan's *Journey to Heading 270 Degrees* (safar be geraie 270 daraje) translated by Paul Sparchman.

### 6.2. Procedure

This descriptive study will be completed through several steps described in detail in this section. The first step of the study was extracting the CSIs in both stories. About 664 CSIs were extracted from *Journey to Heading 270 Degrees* and 420 CSIs were extracted from *Fortune Told in Blood*. Next, the English equivalents of these CSIs were determined and extracted from both English translated versions of the original novels and were placed alongside the Farsi equivalences in two separate tables. As the next step, the strategies that were applied by both translators in the process of translating the CSIs of the original novels were identified based on

the strategies suggested by Aixela (1996). At the end, the frequencies of applications of different strategies used by each translator were calculated and then the percentages were estimated too.

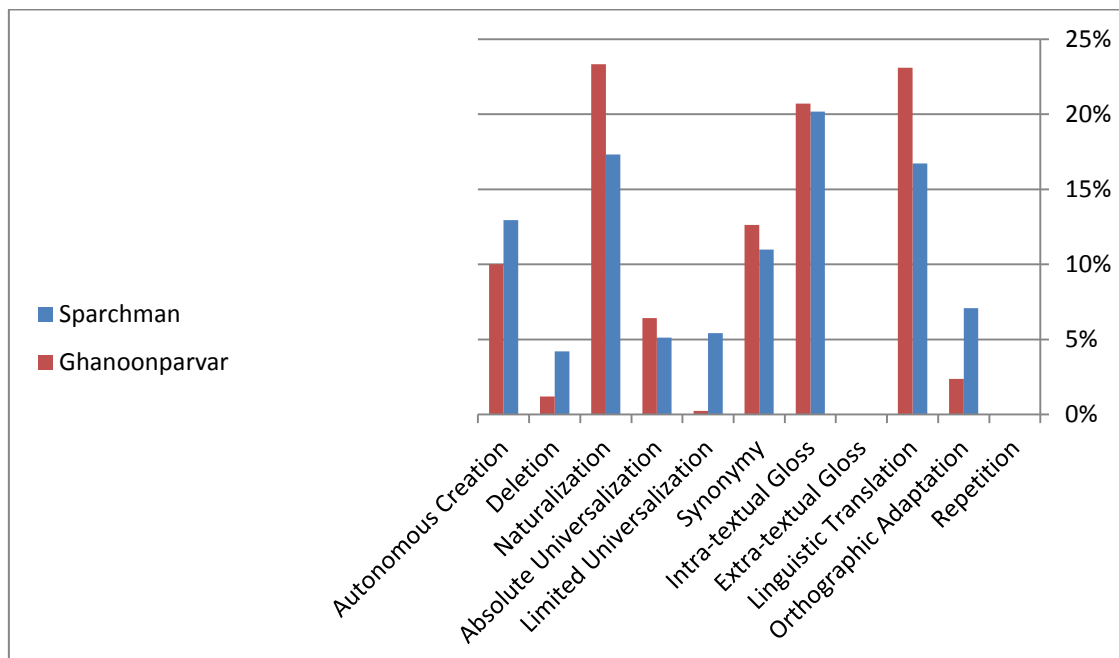
### 7. Results and Discussions

Table.1 represents frequencies and percentages of strategies used by the two translators Paul Sparchman, non-native Persian-speaking translator and M.R Ghanoonparvar the native Persian- speaking translator in rendering the CSIs of *Journey to Heading 270 Degrees* and *Fortune Told in Blood*.

**Table 1: Frequencies and percentages of strategies used by the two translators in rendering the CSIs**

Sparchman			Ghanoonparvar		
Type of strategy	Frequency	Percentage	Type of strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Repetition	-	-	Repetition	-	-
Orthographic Adaptation	47	7.078	Orthographic Adaptation	10	2.380
Linguistic Translation	111	16.716	Linguistic Translation	97	23.095
Extra-textual Gloss	-	-	Extra-textual Gloss	-	-
Intra-textual Gloss	134	20.180	Intra-textual Gloss	87	20.714
Synonymy	73	10.993	Synonymy	53	12.619
Limited Universalization	36	5.421	Limited Universalization	1	0.238
Absolute Universalization	34	5.120	Absolute Universalization	27	6.428
Naturalization	115	17.319	Naturalization	98	23.333
Deletion	28	4.216	Deletion	5	1.190
Autonomous Creation	86	12.951	Autonomous Creation	42	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure1: Comparing strategies applied by Sparchman & Ghanoonparvar



According to the table.1, nine strategies of Aixelás (1996) translating strategies have been used by Paul Sparchman, non-native Persian-speaking translator, the translator of *Journey to Heading 270 Degrees* (safar be geraie 270 daraje) and M.R Ghanoonparvar ,the Persian- speaking translator, the translator of *Fortune Told in Blood* (Fale Khoon) . These strategies are Orthographic Adaptation, Linguistic Translation, Intra-textual Gloss, Synonymy, Limited Universalization, Absolute Universalization, Naturalization, Deletion, and Autonomous Creation. Repetition and Extra-textual Gloss strategies were not used by two translators.

Table.1 also shows that the most frequently used strategy by Paul Sparchman is Intra-textual Gloss and the least frequently used strategy is Deletion. In addition, it represents that the most frequently used strategy by Ghanoonparvar is Naturalization, and the least frequently used strategy is Limited Universalization.

## 7. Conclusions

In this study about 420 CSIs from *Fortune Told in Blood* and 664 CSIs from *Journey to Heading 270* were compared with each other based on the model suggested by Aixela (1996). According to the findings, nine strategies of Aixelás (1996) translating strategies have been used by foreign translator and the Iranian translator. These nine strategies included Orthographic Adaptation, Linguistic Translation, Intra-textual Gloss, Synonymy, Limited Universalization, Absolute Universalization, Naturalization, Deletion, and Autonomous Creation. Repetition and Extra-textual Gloss strategies were not used by two translators. The findings also indicated that the most frequently used strategy by foreign translator was Intra-textual Gloss and the least frequently used strategy was Deletion. In addition they represented that the most frequently used strategy by Iranian translator was Naturalization, and the least frequently used strategy was Limited Universalization.

Since the foreign translator had full mastery to target language it had not been necessary for him to use of Deletion strategy. So the least used strategy by him was Deletion Strategy. But the Iranian translator who had less mastery to the target language that was his second language, in more cases was obliged use this strategy. The most frequent strategy used by foreign translator was Intra-textual gloss strategy because he wanted to make clear CSIs that he thought were not comprehensible and understandable for his audience and need additional explanations.

The most frequent strategy applied by the Iranian translator was Naturalization strategy. By using this strategy, Iranian translator tried to find cultural equivalents for CSIs in the target language in order to localize cultural items and also to help his audiences to avoid confusion. In addition, the least frequent strategy used by Iranian translator was Limited Universalization Strategy. This indicates that he might have less mastery on cultural details in target language and because of this he couldn't use more of cultural details.

By comparing the translations of Iranian translator and foreign translator, it is concluded that since the foreign translator had a full mastery to target language and target culture items, he realized that culture items are different in two languages. Therefore, he recognized for transferring source culture items, it was better to explain and interpret all these items. However, Iranian translator for rendering cultural items had in mind that his audiences need to communicate with cultural items. So he tried to select localized equivalent for cultural items in order to better understanding of these items by his audiences.

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## LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY: THROUGH THE “CHANGING WINDS AND SHIFTING SANDS”

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### ABSTRACT

Studying the historical development of foreign language teaching is fruitful for language teachers because the awareness of historical development of language teaching helps teachers not only to understand the philosophy behind each methodology but also to think critically about different methodologies, and consequently to be able to make their own specific and classroom-oriented methodologies which is the main purpose of reflective teaching. Moreover, teachers should enable students to transfer beyond the borders of the classroom whatever they have learned in the classroom, what is the defining feature of beyond post-method era.

**Key words:** history of language teaching, reflective teaching, beyond post-method era.

### Introduction

This paper casts a glance at historical development in foreign language teaching since the fifteenth century to the present time. The history of language teaching has undergone many changes which is often described as “changing winds and shifting sands”. In fact, there are three stages in the history of language teaching: “Ancient” (the fifteenth & the sixteenth centuries), “Classic” (the seventeenth, the eighteenth & the nineteenth centuries), and “Modern” (from the twentieth century to the present time).

It is critical for the teachers to understand the historical perspectives behind each methodology by means of which they can understand the evolving process of some insights which have been embodied in different methodologies (Brown, 1994). There are different reasons why different methodologies emerge in different eras, i.e., change of theories about language and language teaching; different purposes for learning languages (for reading religious books or for being able to communicate in a foreign language, etc.); the effect of the development of new theories in other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, etc. (such as the effect of behavioral psychology on methodology which leads to the emergence of ALM); the political reasons (French, Italian, and English became widespread due to political changes in Europe). And lastly, the “practical realities” of the classroom and sometimes the mixture of some of the above-

mentioned reasons themselves have given rise to some methodological changes (Richards & Rodgers, 1999).

### Review of Related Literature

There are three stages in the history of language teaching: Ancient (the fifteenth & the sixteenth centuries), classic (the seventeenth, the eighteenth & the nineteenth centuries), and modern (from the twentieth century to the present time). In the fifteenth century, Latin was the cardinal language of different aspects of life such as government, commerce, education, etc. (Richards & Rodgers, 1999). In the sixteenth century, political changes happened in Europe which led to the popularity of French, Italian, and English, and Latin was no longer used as language of communication. Accordingly, Latin was just taught as a subject at schools (Brown, 1994; Richards and Rodgers, 1999). Therefore, grammatical aspects of Classical Latin were emphasized and more advanced students also studied rhetoric (Richards and Rodgers, 1999).

The purpose for foreign language learning was to increase speakers' intellectuality (Brown, 1994; Richards & Rodgers, 1999). In fact, since the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, foreign language studies followed the way classical Latin was studied (Richards & Rodgers, 1999). In the eighteenth century, the study of modern languages was included in the curriculum of European schools. By the nineteenth century, teaching foreign languages in the same way Latin was taught became the model for teaching languages in schools and GTM emerged (Brown, 1994; Richards & Rodgers, 1999). In fact, GTM was the paramount method of language teaching from 1840s to 1940s (Richards & Rodgers, 1999; Brown, 1994; Chastain, 1988).

Actually, a real movement in the foreign language teaching commenced in the nineteenth century, what continued in the twentieth century even more rapid than before (Chastain, 1988). As early as the mid-nineteenth century, criticism against GTM principles began (Richards & Rodgers, 1999). At the same time, people's needs for language learning gradually changed and people wanted to learn foreign languages to be able to speak. Furthermore, reformers expressed new ideas about the nature of language and nature of language learning. Through different studies, the reformers whose names were Marcel, Prendergast and Gouin inferred that the principles of natural language learning in children can be helpful in assisting adults to learn language (Brown, 1994 Richards & Rodgers, 1999; Howatt, 1984). Marcel stressed the role of meaningful contextualization (Howatt, 1984; Richards and Rodgers, 1999). Prendergast introduced the first structural syllabus and Gouin presented his "Series Method" through which he taught language learners a series of connected and contextualized sentences which were easy to perceive (Howatt, 1984; Richards and Rodgers, 1999). The ideas of the above-mentioned reformers had some effects for a short time but they disappeared in no time (ibid).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some reformers such as Sweet, Viëtor, and Passy proposed that language teaching should be carried out on the basis of scientific knowledge about language, which means that speaking should be the primary aim of language teaching and other skills come later; phonetics should be taught; meaningful contextualization is essential in teaching items; and translation should be forbidden and inductive approach should be applied to grammar teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 1999). This time, the ideas of these reformers became widespread and unified in DM (Howatt, 1984; Richards & Rodgers, 1999). Since Berlitz through opening his schools had a dominant role in spreading DM in America and Europe, it was also known as "Berlitz Method" (Howatt, 1984).

DM was also criticized due to the fact that it needs native teachers and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to find native teachers in some contexts; therefore, this method depends more on teachers' capabilities rather than the textbooks (Richards & Rodgers, 1999). In addition, this

method was just suitable for a small number of students, not for public schools involving a large number of students (Brown, 1994; Richards & Rodgers, 1999). Moreover, for some students, the conversational skills were not the primary goal of language learning and even if it had been, they could not master conversational skills because of time limitations (Richards & Rodgers, 1999). Besides, some critics claimed that the similarity between natural language learning and foreign language learning had been overemphasized while they are greatly different in many respects.

By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, the tendency toward "Reading approach" promoted. In early to mid-twentieth century, the structural linguistics and behavioral psychology influenced language teaching methodology (Brown, 1994; Chastain, 1988; Richards & Rogers, 1999). Furthermore, in the 1950s, World War II began and the need for learning various languages promoted. This formed a foundation for emerging Army Method or ALM in which the oral skill was highly emphasized. In the 1960s, SLT or Oral Approach which is an English version of ALM emerged (Richards and Rodgers, 1999).

In the mid-1960s, Chomsky criticized the behaviorist model of language learning claiming that it cannot explain the "creative potency" of language and he introduced "Transformational Generative Grammar". Chomsky believed that ALM has emphasized surface forms while forgetting "deep structure". Rivers (1964) also challenged ALM by claiming that it cannot make learners that successful in communicative abilities. Moreover, Howatt (1984) claimed that the functional and communicative aspects of language would not be considered well in Situational Language Teaching. On the other hand, Krashen's theories of second language acquisition also affected language teaching i.e., trying to teach foreign languages to adults in the way that children learn their first language (Brown, 1994). Considering the affective and interpersonal nature of language learning, Stevick's (1976) ideas also affected language teaching and accordingly, in the 1970s, Designer methods such as CLL & SW (1972), TPR & NA (1977), and Suggestopedia (1979) emerged which took humanistic approach to language learning and teaching (Brown, 1994; Chastain, 1988).

Gibbon(1985) proposed that "Silent Period" in some "Designer Methods" cannot be helpful in the sense that teachers' encouragement for students to talk would be essential in early stages. Brown (1994) maintains that the name of "Designer Methods" was coined by Nunan (1989) because these methods were "innovative" and "revolutionary" in comparison with GTM and ALM.

The functional view of language in 1970s also gave rise to the development of notional-functional syllabuses and the emergence of ESP (ibid). But, Widdowson (1978) criticized Notional-functional syllabuses by claiming that notional-functional syllabuses would not necessarily develop learners' communicative competence. According to Berns (1984) as noted in Brown (1994, p.248): "The notional syllabus deals with the components of discourse but may not deal with discourse itself." Brown (1994, p. 248) maintains: " We have not arrived at a final solution with the notional-functional syllabus, but we have rather begun an avenue of exploration that we should continue with the full awareness that communication in a foreign language is something so complex that it will probably never be reduced to a simple formula or a neatly packaged syllabus." In the 1980s, because of the interactive view of language, CLT appeared which emphasized developing communicative competence as well as linguistic competence (Johnson & Morrow, 1981).

Tracing the history of language teaching indicates that there has begun a "method-based era" from the mid-1880s to mid- 1980s, because one method has substituted for another due to the fact that the previous one had been associated with some drawbacks and hence the new method has been preferred over the preceding one (Brown, 1994). In the 1990s, content-based instruction, competency-based instruction, task-based language teaching emerged which had

the same principles of CLT but differed in instructional practices. They centered on the outcomes of learning rather than the method itself. Moreover, in education, some approaches such as whole language approach, cooperative learning and multiple- intelligence developed which were as well applied in language teaching (Larsen- Freeman, D., 2000).

From 1990 onward, the notion of “method” itself was criticized and many experts expressed their discontent with the notion of “method” and claimed that language teachers and practitioners should free themselves of the notion of “method” as methods appear, then fade and again the same ideas are expressed in the form of a new method (Kumaravadivelu, 1993). Furthermore, they believed that methods would impose on teachers “what to teach” and “how to teach” and there would be no value for the teachers’ expertise. Teachers are “passive recipients” that should follow methods step by step with no innovation. This dissatisfaction with the notion of “method” provided foundation for the emergence of “post-method” era (ibid). As mentioned by Kumaravadivelu (1993, p. 32-33): Experts are in “a search for an alternative to method rather than an alternative method”. Then, the era of more “democratic” approaches to language teaching methodology began (Akbari, 2005) and the teachers’ “autonomy” was the central feature of this era (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Akbari, 2005).

After that practitioners introduced “eclecticism” because they believed that teachers should combine some aspects of different methods which seem to be appropriate for a specific context (Brown, 1994, Widdowson, 1990). But critics also challenged “eclecticism” because it was also limited by the concept of “method”. After challenging “eclecticism”, it was *reflective teaching* which emerged (Akbari, 2007, Kumaravadivelu, 2003). As Widdowson (1990, p.22) mentions: “it is teachers who have to act as mediators between theory and practice, between the domain of disciplinary research and pedagogy.” In fact, each teacher should develop his own classroom-oriented method which is situation-based and context-specific but within the frameworks imposed by curriculum (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

After that, critical pedagogists proposed that the purpose of pedagogy should not be just promoting learning in the classroom. Students should also be able to use outside what they have learned in the classroom. Therefore, Students should learn to think critically and be able to apply outside whatever they have learned in the classroom (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Accordingly, Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 14) explains: “As transformative intellectuals, teachers are engaged in a dual task: they strive not only for educational advancement but also for personal transformation....The dual role, thus, requires teachers to view pedagogy not merely as a mechanism for maximizing learning opportunities in the classroom but also as a means for transforming life in and outside the classroom.”

### **Conclusion**

The review of the history of foreign language teaching from the fifteenth century to the present time is one of instability and flux, what indicates that this profession had been subject to many changes due to the influence of various sources. Teachers should be aware of language teaching history not only to understand the reasons for the emergence of each methodology but also how “method-based” era with its focus on “methods” has changed into “beyond post-method” era. It also helps them to think more critically than before and hence to improve their own unique and context-based methods i.e., what is the major focus of “reflective teaching”. In addition, teachers should help and provide the ground for the learners to take charge of their “personal transformation” in “beyond post-method” era. In fine, by looking at the history of language teaching, we see that the concept of “teacher” has also been developed in different eras. In “method-based” era, teachers are just “passive technicians”; in “post-method” era, teachers are considered as “reflective practitioners” and finally in “beyond post-method” era, teachers would be “transformative intellectuals”. Of course, the role of teacher in future would be unknown, because it may evolve in the passage of time as language teaching changes its focus.

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## AN INVESTIGATION INTO FOUR TYPES OF TEACHER-WRITTEN FEEDBACK: REVISION WITHIN SOCIOCULTURAL FRAMEWORK

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### ABSTRACT

Writing teachers use different commentary types to make the process of improving their students' final written products more effective (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). The present study aims at investigating possible differences among four groups of students receiving four types of feedback- questions, statements, imperative sentences, and indirect statements or suggestions- on their writings regarding local and global errors. The participants were 140 university students majoring in English literature and translation, both males and females. The data were accumulated in four phases of writing the first draft, receiving teacher-written feedback, revising the first draft on the basis of teacher feedback, and an interview session. Although quantitative data analysis did not illustrate any significant difference among the four groups, content analysis revealed students' preferences for feedback. The present study can imply the efficiency of qualitative analysis in the field of SLA to shed light on the issues looking dark, neutral, or ambiguous when quantitatively analyzed.

**Key words:** teacher-written feedback, revision, local errors, global errors, writing

### 1. Introduction

Revision has a long history in the field of composition and has been understood and measured in various ways (Fitzgerald, 1987). It is generally viewed as a process broader than, though including, editing for errors. Several researchers have observed that revision occurs during several stages of writing and planning process (even before a text has been composed) and can operate as a catalyst for writers modifying intentions and plans for writing (Fitzgerald, 1987).

Written feedback enables teachers to complement and individualize classroom instruction and helps students make effective revisions to improve their final written products (Zamel, 1985). Few experts on L2 writing argue against the propositions that written accuracy is important to students in many contexts and that students themselves want and expect feedback on their

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errors from their teachers (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Truscott, 1996).

Nonetheless, issues surrounding how, and even whether, to give L2 students feedback on their errors continue to be a source of interest and debate among researchers, instructors, and students (Ferris, 1999; Truscott, 1996, 1999). Only a few available studies have explicitly examined differences in accuracy and writing quality between students who have received error feedback and those who have not, and these have reported conflicting results (Kepner, 1991; Polio, Fleck, & Leder, 1998; Semke, 1984).

## 2. Literature Review

The importance of revision in writing is universally recognized. Experts see the need for student writers to learn how to revise more effectively (Leki, 1992, cited in Sengupta, 2000). Murray (1991, cited in Cameron Horn, 2009) describing the relationship between writing and revision asserts "writing *is* revising, and the writer's craft is largely a matter of knowing how to discover what you have to say, develop, and clarify it, each requiring the craft of revision" (p. 2).

The main objective of revision is to improve the quality of a text's communication, as well as to clarify a writer's thoughts (McCutchen, Francis, & Kerr, 1997). Revision has been described as an examination, or review, of text that has already been written, followed by modifications in order to align with the writer's original intentions for the writing piece (Temple, et al., 1982, cited in Cameron Horn, 2009).

Revisions can be classified in terms of whether they are oriented towards conceptual, linguistic, or typographic aspects of a text. The major difference between content and language revisions is that content revisions affect meaning significantly, whereas language revisions do not. Content revisions affect the informational content of the text, whereas language revisions involve manipulation of the surface features of the text (Stevenson et al., 2006).

Revisions can also be classified in terms of action, that is, the kind of mechanical operation that the writer carries out in order to make revision. A writer may, for example, make additions or deletions to the text, substitute words or sentences, change the order of words or clauses, or recombine clauses into different syntactic structures (Faigley & Witte, 1981). Revisions can also be classified in terms of domain. For example, a revision can be made to letters within a word, to a word, to a clause, to a paragraph, or even to larger stretches of a text.

The most widely-used method for quantitative measurement of revision was devised by Faigley and Witte (1981) for writers composing in their first language. This complex and detailed method distinguishes between meaning-preserving and meaning-changing revisions. The latter category is further subdivided into micro- and macro-changes, the second making a change to the gist or to a summary of the text. Within these categories, changes are classified as additions, deletions, permutations, substitutions, consolidations, and distributions. Although the authors report success with this system, few researchers in L2 writing have adopted the full array of categories. This may in part be because of the difficulty in reaching acceptable inter-rater reliabilities (Polio & Knibloe, 1999, cited in Williams, 2004).

Nevertheless, some parts of the system have been adapted by many L2 writing researchers (e.g., Berg, 1999; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Hall, 1990). For example, Van Gelderen (1997, cited in Williams, 2004) used micro-, meso-, and macro- levels, where micro- relating to sentence and word level issues, meso- corresponding to relations among sentential elements, and macro-referring to "problems at a global level" (p. 368).

In an analysis of L1 and L2 revision, Hall (1990) used Faigley and Witte's method, but added the category of purpose of revision and substituted levels of revision (word, phrase, clause, etc.) for the micro/macro classification. Connor and Asenavage (1994) distinguished between small-scale and large-scale revisions, as well as between meaning-preserving and meaning-changing changes. However, Ashwell (2000) and Berg (1999) simply focused on the scale of the changes that learners made (large vs. small).

Writing teachers use different commentary types to make the revision process more effective by using various written comments, such as statements, imperatives, questions, praise, criticism, and hedges (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Some experimental studies have extended the investigation of various types of corrective feedback and their impact on learners' uptake, production and learning (e.g., Nassaji, 2013; Shegar, Zhang, & Low, 2013; Rassaei, 2013). Moreover, Nurmukhamedov and Hyon Kim's (2009) study examined which comment type (statement, imperative, question, and hedging) would encourage ESL writing students to make substantive, as well as effective changes. In addition, the research investigated ESL writing students' perceptions of each comment type. While hedging comments were associated with substantive and effective revisions, stimulated recall interviews revealed that ESL writers found it challenging to interpreting hedging comments appropriately because of the difficulty in understanding their pragmatic function.

In order for teachers' written comments to make the greatest impact on student revisions, teachers not only should carefully select what to comment on but should also consider which commentary type would be most effective to convey the comment. Teacher comments at times fail to help students make effective revisions because they are difficult for students to interpret (Nurmukhamedov & Hyon Kim, 2009). This could be attributed to the sometime vague and contradictory nature of teachers' comments on content (Zamel, 1985) but could also be because the types of comments teachers give to address certain errors may be ineffective. For example, Ferris (1997) states whereas many teachers provide written commentary in the form of questions to stimulate students' thinking processes, ESL students frequently find questions intangible and confusing.

Ferris (1997) looked at marginal and summary comments in ESL students' papers in order to identify the features of teacher commentary that led to substantive and effective changes in students' papers. Results showed that question comments led to mixed effects, while imperative comments resulted in positive changes in students' drafts. It was also found that the use of hedging in the written comments had little effect on the degree of changes students made in their subsequent drafts. A similar study was conducted in an EFL setting by Sugita (2006). Sugita examined the influence of teacher comments-- statements, imperatives, and questions-- on students' revisions. An analysis of the teacher's written comments and students' revisions revealed that imperative comments encouraged the students to make more substantial changes than did question or statement comments.

We also need to consider our students abilities to effectively use our commentary. Studies that examine what individual students actually do with teacher commentary and, in particular, studies that examine the relationship between teacher commentary and student revision on macro-level issues such as audience, purpose, logic, content, organization, and development, have found that students vary in how they use the commentary they receive from their teachers (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Goldstein, 2004; Hyland, 1998, 2000). While some studies show that students find teachers' written commentary helpful (Cohen, 1991; Hyland, 1998), there is ample evidence that there is variation among students in terms of how helpful they find teacher's written feedback and how well they understand their teachers' commentaries (Goldstein, 2004).

Other researchers have utilized other feedback classifications. Ferris et al. (1997), for example, cataloged the length, purpose, syntactic form, use of hedging, and text-specificity of comments,



while Ziv (1982, 1984, cited in Conrad & Goldstein, 1999) concentrated primarily on the explicitness of teacher feedback--comparing explicit cues, implicit cues, and overt corrections. Both approaches revealed important patterns that deserve further study to see whether, in different ESL contexts, similar relationships exist between comments and the success of student revisions. Ferris (1997) stated that ESL students revise most successfully after comments that request specific information or give grammatical comments, and in response to requests made in teacher feedback, regardless of their syntactic form as question, statement, or imperative. However, according to Ferris, students' revisions tend to be less successful when they are in response to comments given in question form, and when the teacher's comment asks students to deal with problems in logic or argument. Ferris went on to state that ESL students are even less successful in revising when the comment makes statements of information or asks questions for further information.

A good number of studies have distinguished between direct and indirect feedback strategies and investigated the extent to which they facilitate accuracy (Ferris, 1995a, 1995b; Lalande, 1982; Robb et al., 1986). Direct, or explicit, feedback occurs when the teacher identifies an error and provides the correct form, while indirect strategies refer to situations when the teacher indicates that an error has been made but does not provide correction; it is the student's responsibility to diagnose and repair the error.

Another area of research concentrated on feedback on local errors (LEs) and global errors (GEs). Should L2 writing teachers focus on LEs? The answer to this question has been heavily debated (e.g., Ferris, 2004; Goldstein, 2004; Truscott, 2004). A number of models have been suggested for classifying teacher comments, such as "content" vs. "form" (Searle & Dillon, 1980, cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2001), "local vs. global" issues (Zamel, 1985), and "high order vs. low order" concerns (Keh, 1990). Research examining actual teacher feedback has shown that some teachers focus more on LEs, such as grammar and mechanics, than on GEs, such as content and organization (Zamel, 1985). Such a focus may misrepresent both the importance of these issues and the importance teachers place on them. For example, Chapin and Terdal (1990, cited in Montgomery & Baker, 2007) found that 64% of teachers' comments were on LEs. When teachers focused on LEs, students also focused on LEs in their revisions. Less is known about whether teachers are aware that they are focusing more on local than on global issues.

Several studies have shown that providing feedback on LEs does not help learners make fewer local errors than does providing no feedback on such issues (Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992; Truscott, 1996). Some studies have even suggested that correcting LEs leads learners to make more errors on subsequent drafts (Truscott, 1996). In this regard, Truscott explains that such feedback may not be helpful because students need much longer time to automatize grammatical rules than would happen from one draft to another. Moreover, Truscott argues that correcting LEs takes time away from focusing on aspects of writing which students have a greater likelihood of improving over the course of one writing class.

Other researchers, however, have shown that providing students with LEs does indeed improve learners' ability to recognize and fix their own local errors (Chandler, 2003), even on future compositions (Ashwell, 2000). Moreover, providing feedback on both local and global issues throughout the writing process has been advocated (e.g., Ashwell, 2000).

How teachers should correct second language students' writing is a topic that has attracted enormous interest from researchers and teachers alike. However, a recent review of feedback on L2 students' writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a) makes clear that there are still no clear answer to the question. In this regard, Hyland and Hyland state "while feedback is a central aspect of L2 writing programs across the world, the research literature has not been unequivocally positive about its role in L2 development, and teachers often have a sense they are not making use of its full potential" (p. 83).

An essential feature of feedback is how students respond to the corrections provided (Ellis, 2009). The student's response frequently takes the form of revision of the initial draft--an important stage in process writing. Much of the research that has investigated written feedback (for example, Ferris & Roberts, 2001) has centered on whether students are able to make use of the feedback they receive when they revise.

Studies examining students' use of feedback have demonstrated that, unlike several scholars who have argued against feedback (Radecki & Swales, 1988), students believe that teacher commentaries are effective; students use them to improve not only their L2 writing but L2 grammar as well (Ferris, 1995a; Hyland, 1998). Students also report using teacher written feedback without understanding the reasons behind it (Hyland, 1998, 2000) and that even when they do understand a comment, research shows that students may have difficulty figuring out a strategy for revision (Cohen, 1991; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999) or that they vary in terms of how successfully they are able to use teacher's feedback to revise (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997).

Student writers also report using a variety of strategies for working with their teachers' feedback (Cohen, 1991; Ferris, 1995a; Radecki & Swales, 1988) and a variety of reasons for difficulties using feedback or for not using the feedback at all (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1995a; Radecki & Swales, 1988). However, teachers do provide feedback since research on student attitudes towards feedback has found that many students do want errors in their writing corrected and may be frustrated if this does not happen (Radecki & Swales, 1988). ESL students place a particularly high value on form-focused feedback in academic contexts (Ferris, 1995a; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994) and see having error-free work as highly desirable (Cumming, 1995, cited in Hyland, 2003).

One problem with making direct comparisons between the findings of the studies discussed earlier is that the research settings and the subjects varied greatly. Experienced teachers often tailor their feedback to suit each student, considering contextual factors including the task and the audience (Ferris et al., 1997, cited in Hyland, 1998). They may also consider individual writer's needs, ability, personality, and culture (Hyland, 1998); what is effective feedback for one student in one setting may not be so in another.

Unfortunately, the results of a large body of research on feedback are mixed (Strijbos et al., 2010). Moreover, since many studies have investigated feedback without considering its different types and many others have not categorized students' errors into local and global ones, it seems essential to study the very topic in depth and detail and use a more analytic approach to reach a more precise and clearer conclusion. Hence, this study aims at investigating what kind of teacher-written feedback--questions, statements, imperative sentences, or indirect statements-- about the LEs, GEs, and TEs will lead the students to correct errors.

### **3. Method**

#### **Participants**

The study involved 140 university students majoring in English (literature and translation), both males and females, from four classes at Islamic Azad University, Parand Branch. The participants attended essay writing classes as a required course of their university program.

#### **Instrumentation**

A Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered to the participants a few weeks prior to the commencement of the treatment in order to establish participants' general language proficiency level. The total test scores were calculated and entered into one-way ANOVAs with the alpha set at .05. Based on the obtained results of the ANOVAs, the extreme cases were excluded from

the analysis (Hatch & Farhady, 1981). In this study, five participants were excluded from the population due to their heterogeneous scores.

In addition to PET, a topic was assigned to all the participants to write a five-paragraph essay. In order to establish inter-rater and intra-rater reliabilities, the researchers collected 40 papers randomly from the pool of data to be rated by two raters; one rater was the second author of this paper, and the other one was one of her colleagues who had three-year experience of teaching essay writing at the B.A. level. The acquired data were used to calculate the inter-reliability between the raters. The obtained inter-rater reliability between the raters was .81. The researcher writer rated the papers twice, and intra-rater reliability of two ratings was calculated accordingly. The intra-reliability was .93.

Table 1

Reliability estimate of two raters

Inter-rater reliability	Intra-rater reliability
.81	.93

#### Procedure

At the beginning of the semester, the researcher writer explained the format of a five-paragraph expository essay to all the participants. She also emphasized the important parts of a good essay regarding wording, coherence, cohesion, mechanics, idea development, etc.

The participants were then asked to write a five-paragraph expository essay on a topic and hand in their drafts two weeks later. After two weeks, the drafts were collected and rated according to Bailey and Brown (1984, cited in Farhady et al., 1994) composition grading scale. The raters provided each group of the participants with four different kinds of feedbacks, both on Les and GEs, to revise their drafts. This provision was done randomly for each group. For the first group (GA), the raters wrote a statement regarding the revision needed. The second group (GB) was provided with a question regarding the revision needed. The third group (GC) received an imperative statement regarding the revision needed, and the last group (GD) was given an indirect statement or a suggestion regarding the revision needed. The participants had two weeks time to revise their first drafts and then submit them. The raters read the second drafts and spotted the revisions incorporated in the submitted drafts for data analysis. Later, 35 students were selected randomly and invited to a semi-structured interview session. The interview was done in Persian and audio taped. The purpose of this interview was to elicit the students' writing experience regarding the incorporation of the teacher's feedback in their final draft revision, their pREFERENCES, and their justification, if any.

#### 4. Results

This study includes two sets of data. The first set of data consisted of 280 writings-- 140 students' first drafts and 140 revised drafts submitted after two weeks. The second set of data was the students' responses in the interview session. The data analysis was performed quantitatively and qualitatively.

##### Quantitative data analysis

In this study, the data were analyzed by using ANOVA in three stages to check if there is any difference between various kinds of teacher-written feedback and students' LEs, students' GEs,

and students' TEs. In all stages, there was one common independent variable, teacher-written feedback at four levels. The dependent variable was different at each stage, i.e. LEs, GEs, and TEs. For the first research question, the dependent variable is LE. The first research question investigated whether there is any difference between various kinds of teacher feedback and students' LEs (see Appendix B: Table 2).

As Table 2 demonstrates, the observed F value (1.302) is below the critical F value (2.68) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference among different kinds of teacher feedback and students' revision of LEs.

The second research question also consisted of one dependent variable, i.e., revision of GEs and the same independent variable with four levels. The statistical procedure to answer these questions was ANOVA to check if there was any difference between various kinds of teacher feedback and students' revision of GEs. Table 3 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 3 (see Appendix B) illustrates the observed F value (.989) is below the critical F value (2.68) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference among different kinds of teacher feedback and student's revision of GEs.

Table 4 (see Appendix B) illustrates the observed F value (1.224) is below the critical F value (2.68) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference among different kinds of teacher feedback and student's total number of revisions.

#### Qualitative data analysis

As Conrad and Goldstein (1999) state, when perspectives on providing feedback and making revision are put together, it seems that an understanding of the relationship between teacher comments and student revisions requires a dual approach. On the one hand, the characteristics of feedback itself may show important associations with students' success in subsequent revisions. On the other hand, it should be recognized, according to Conrad and Goldstein, that comments and texts do not exist independently of wider course contexts, interpersonal interactions, and personal backgrounds and that more complex situational and individual factors also need to be considered. In second language (L2) writing classes, providing corrective feedback is an essential but challenging task, which depends on complicated elements (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b). In the study presented here, we take this dual approach through utilizing a semi-structure interview, considering the success of student revision in light of both the characteristics of the written feedback and other contextual and individual factors.

The interview consisted of 7 questions eliciting some information about students' perceptions of different types of teacher feedback, their understanding or misunderstanding of teacher comments, and their ideas regarding the effectiveness of teacher-written feedback (for interview questions, see Appendix). In the semi-structured interview session, 35 participants took part and talked about their revision experience.

Content analysis uncovers that all 35 students had a pREFERENCES for teacher-written comments to error identification, and they found comments helpful. This finding is in line with Elwood and Bode's (2014) study in Japan. The participants of the present study justified their opinions by stating that the comments led them to identify the type of their errors so that they could revise and look for the correct form much more easily. One of the students told the interviewer that "without a comment, the underlined part was confusing." This finding confirms the results of some recent studies that have shown a new trend of some teachers to shift away from a decontextualized approach in order to build an interpersonal relationship with students through written commentary (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Goldstein, 2004; Hyland, 1998; Hyland & Hyland, 2001). It is recommended that teachers give clear, concrete, and text-specific comments (Goldstein, 2004; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Lee, 2008; Zamel, 1985).

Contrary to studies which claim that both students and teachers have a preference for direct, explicit feedback rather than indirect feedback (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Rennie, 2000, cited in Bitchener et al., 2005), several surveys report that indirect feedback brings about either greater or similar levels of accuracy (Frantzen, 1995; Lalande, 1982; Lee, 1997; Robb et al., 1986).

The finding of the present study is in line with the results of several studies of error correction (Lalande, 1982; Sheppard, 1992), however, which have pointed out that indirect feedback is more effective than direct feedback in helping learners improve the accuracy of their writing. The majority of the participants (92%) in the interview session had a preference for revising their errors based on indirect feedback. This finding is in accordance with Lalande's (1982) study of American college learners of German as a second language, Ferris and Roberts' (2001) research, Leki's (1991) studies of ESL students' pREFERENCES, and Chandler's (2003) study. The participants justified their preference by stating that indirect feedback helps them learn better because it made them look for the correct form to find out their errors. Besides, they can extend this learning to their future writings.

Moreover, although it has been previously suggested that because idiosyncratic errors are not rule-governed, and students may be helped more by direct feedback in these cases (Hendrickson, 1980), the participants of the present study had a contradictory view. This finding is similar to what Ferris and Roberts (2001) came up with. This can be an important result because it suggests that indirect feedback can even help students to self-edit such idiosyncratic errors as word choice and sentence structure.

The students also expressed their ideas regarding the very four types of feedback applied. All the participants, except one, declared that they did not find any difference between imperatives, questions, and statements. Only one of the students preferred questions to imperatives. She reasoned that "a question motivates me to look for an answer, and I like it because I can use it in other cases in the future."

Although quantitative analysis did not show any difference between four types of teacher feedback, content analysis contradicts the quantitative results. Questions, statements, and imperatives were interpreted differently from suggestions or indirect statements by 90% of the interviewees. Their justifications regarding suggestions or indirect statements can be categorized into two classes:

1. uncertainty and doubt about the necessity of a change
2. possibility of having an option regarding the change

The indirect statements or suggestions were difficult for the students to find out the real intention of the teacher comment. They doubted whether to change the item or not. Some participants confronted a dilemma whether the comment is showing an option or an obligation. In spite of their uncertainty, all the students changed the erroneous element. When they were asked about the reason, they expressed their high trust in their teacher's knowledge. One of the students said "though it was unclear to me whether to change the error or not, I did it because I believe my teacher knows better, and another option may improve my writing."

## **V. Discussion and conclusion**

In the present study, all the students taking part in the interview session preferred commentary feedback to error identification. This finding is in contrast with the quantitative analysis of Ferris and Roberts (2001) who examined the effects of three different feedback treatments--errors marked with codes, errors underlined but not otherwise marked or labeled, and no error feedback--and found that both error feedback groups significantly outperformed the no feedback control group; however, it is in line with Robb et al. (1986) and Ferris and Roberts'

(2001) studies indicating there were no significant differences between the group given coded feedback and the group not given coded feedback.

The quantitative analysis of the present study does not show any significant difference among the very four types of teacher-written feedback and revision of LEs. Quantitatively speaking, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of these types of teacher-written feedback is equal. In other words, it can be stated that these four types of feedback lead the students to revise their LEs equally.

Some studies have researched the effectiveness of focusing on fluency, as well as accuracy, (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Lizotte, 2001, cited in Chandler, 2003; Robb et al., 1986). However, none of these researches have studied the effectiveness of various types of teacher-written feedback and revision of GEs. Like the revision of LEs, the quantitative analysis of the present study does not show any significant difference between the very four types of teacher-written feedback and revision of GEs. This conclusion can be drawn that these four types of feedback have equal effectiveness regarding the students' revision of GEs.

We expected that specific types of comments would lead to more successful revisions than other types of comments based on the findings of previous studies (Ferris, 1997; Ziv, 1982, cited in Conrad & Goldstein, 1999). Ferris (1997) found that ESL students consistently revise in response to requests made in teacher feedback, regardless of their syntactic form as question, statement, or imperative. However, according to Ferris (1997), students' revisions tend to be less successful when they are in response to comments given in a question form. Contrary to our expectation, the quantitative analysis of the present study illustrated no significant difference between the very four types of teacher-written feedback and revision of TEs. This result is opposite to Ferris' (1997) study, but in line with Conrad and Goldstein's (1999) finding. Conrad and Goldstein (1999) concluded that the formal characteristics of comments did not consistently affect the quality of subsequent revisions. In addition, they found no evidence that questions themselves were more difficult for students to handle (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999).

How teachers and students can best work together should be considered by communicating their intents, needs, difficulties, and successes. This can be viable through building in ways of communicating that allow us to understand what students are hoping to accomplish with a text and therefore avoiding appropriation (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Goldstein, 2004; Reid, 1994). Communication needs to move not only from the teacher to the student but also from the student to the teacher. In order for teachers to comment as effectively as possible and for students to be open to using commentary, it is essential to understand and acknowledge student reactions and pREFERENCES for feedback (Ferris, 1999, cited in Goldstein, 2004).

Parallel to some studies stating that students have expressed definite pREFERENCES for and attitudes towards feedback in terms of the types of feedback they receive and the types of problems on which the feedback is focused (Cohen, 1991; Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995a; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Radecki & Swales, 1988), qualitative analysis is used to look at the issue from another perspective. Quantitative analyses can show the product of the revision process; however, revision has another face, i.e. its process. Quantitative analysis lacks the information regarding the participants' perception and experience of revision process. In order to compensate for this shortcoming, qualitative analysis and the information obtained during the interview session can be beneficial to clarify the issue.

In the present study, the students found the teacher written feedback helpful. This finding is in line with some studies reporting student belief that teacher feedback is helpful, and they use the feedback to improve not only their L2 writing but L2 grammar (Ferris, 1995a; Hyland, 1998). The present study made use of teacher feedback at both local and global levels. This finding is in contrast with Cohen's (1987, cited in Montgomery & Baker, 2007) study indicating that

students felt that teachers do and should focus their feedback on LEs more than on GEs, but in line with Cohen (1991), Hyland (1998), and Saito's (1994) studies indicating that students find teachers' written commentary helpful.

One hundred and thirty-nine students out of 140 found no difference between imperative and question feedbacks. This finding is contrary to what Straub (1996) reported. He mentioned that students found comments questioning contents difficult to use. Students' different reactions observed in the very study confirm the findings reported in two studies of ESL students' responses to comments (Enginarlar, 1993; Radecki & Swales, 1988). Those studies emphasize differences in students' individual reactions to feedback; that is, the same sort of feedback may elicit different responses from different students. Hence, different preferences or interpretations on the part of the students can be investigated and justified on the basis of individual differences. These important findings, ambiguous and negligible while quantitatively analyzed, are prominently observable in the qualitative data analysis.

The last point drawn from qualitative data analysis was the fact that all the students did their best to revise the errors, and their justification was the trust that they had in their teacher's knowledge. In the students' opinion, the teacher is a good source for further reference and sometimes the only and the most reliable guide. They stated their teacher "knew better, and she was a help and guide to write better." This issue was taken into consideration within sociocultural framework from two aspects: social interaction and culture. Vygotsky (1978) viewed learning as a sociocultural process in which the learner acquires new knowledge and skills by interacting with a more expert person and comes to be able to perform a task under guidance that could not be achieved alone (Lantolf, 2000). In Vygotsky's view, knowledge is not transmitted from an expert to a novice or constructed by individuals on their own. Rather, it is socially constructed among individuals facilitated by the learner's reciprocal contributions to the process. In sum, the recent research from a social view of writing and revision has highlighted the importance of the reciprocal relationship between teacher and student in students' writing and revising processes.

As for the connection between trust and the revision process, Lee and Schallert's (2008) data pointed to a complex and reciprocal interaction. The student's response to the teacher's comments was very much guided by an attitude built from several encounters with her in person. Revision of the draft itself was influenced by not only all the factors that influence writing but also by the degree to which the student trusted the teacher's feedback. Similar to Lee and Schallert's (2008) study, the present study showed that connection between trust, on the one hand, and improvement in writing through a cycle of feedback and revision, on the other, was anything but simple. Rather, it was built out of a complex interplay of reactions and responses mediated by the students' beliefs regarding teacher's role, student's role, and learning process.

In accordance with what Lantolf (2000) stated, the students acquired new knowledge and skills (i.e., how to correct their errors) by interacting with a more knowledgeable person (i.e., their teacher) and performed a task (i.e., revision) under guidance. In this study, both the teacher and students contributed their part to building varying degrees of trust through the feedback and revision process. The obtained data in the interview session revealed that the participants in this study have established a high level of trust in their teacher's knowledge and accepted her as a reliable guide.

Considering culture as the second aspect of the revision process, it can be noted that the term culture has been used to refer to the socially inherited body of past human behavioral patterns and systems of artifacts that serves as the resources for the current life of a social group ordinarily thought of as the inhabitants of a country or a region (D'Andrade, 1996, cited in Lucasy et al., 2008). In trying to specify more carefully the notion of culture as a social

inheritance, anthropologists have historically tended to interpret culture either as “something out there” (e.g., man-made part of the environment) or as “something inside the head” (e.g., knowledge, beliefs). Sociocultural theory transcends this ideal-material dichotomy with respect to culture by conceptualizing culture as both material and ideal. It is a medium in which human beings live—an environment composed of and transformed by the artifacts of prior generations extending back to the beginning of the species (Lucasy et al., 2008). The basic function of these artifacts is to coordinate human beings with the physical world and each other; in other words, culture is then seen as the medium of human development, as, so to speak, “history in the present.” This framework approaches the problem of cognition from the outside in, bringing us to reevaluate the importance of culture in our theories of cognition (Hutchins, 2001, cited in Lucasy et al., 2008).

Hence, in this study, it is apparent that the students bring their outside world inside their writing world in their minds and define their relationship with their teacher within their historical and cultural framework. These participants, like Lee and Schallert’s (2008) Korean students, look at the world from an eastern view. They form their new social interaction in the classroom atmosphere reciprocally, keeping in their minds that the interactors are not at the same level; the teacher is in a much higher position.

The findings of the present study can be helpful for educators, language teachers, and practitioners. Based on the cultural context a language is taught, teachers can take the advantage of their students’ beliefs regarding their status and mutual trust and help them revise their errors to a great extent. Moreover, since we as language teachers intend to instruct our students to be capable of using the language in future authentic situations, the results of the present study implies that applying indirect feedback can facilitate the extension of the present instruction to future contexts.

This research, like any other study, had its own limitations. In this study, the participants were asked to revise the erroneous part of their writings. On the one hand, some of the students changed errors not to correct an item but to make another error. On the other hand, some of the errors were ignored. Although the wrong changes should be treated differently from the ignored ones, they were ignored in the quantitative phase of data analysis. Our ongoing study will investigate correct, wrong, ignored, and delayed incorporation of revisions for further insight.

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## THE EFFECT OF SIMULTANEOUS DISPLAY OF MULTIMEDIA GLOSSES ON IRANIAN VISUAL VS. AUDITORY EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effect of simultaneous display of multimedia glosses on Iranian visual vs. auditory EFL learners' vocabulary learning. To this end, Nelson homogeneity test was administered to 225 Iranian EFL learners studying at Kanoon Zaban language institute in Tehran. Considering +/-1 SD the mean score, about 150 language learners were chosen as intermediate subjects for this study. Next, Nelson vocabulary test was administered to the subjects to homogenize them based on their vocabulary knowledge and to be used as the pretest. Having Chosen 100 EFL learners, Reid's (1987) learning style questionnaire was administered to the participants to categorize them based on their learning pREFERENCES into 4 main groups. The participants in the experimental groups went through 10 sessions of vocabulary learning through reading 'Steps for Understanding' book. Multimedia glosses were added to the readings to make them compatible to the purpose of the study. In the control group, the same reading texts containing no glosses were taught in the class. The findings of this study proved that although exposure to simultaneous display of multimedia glosses can affect vocabulary learning of visual learners, the effect of simultaneous multimedia glosses on vocabulary learning of auditory Iranian intermediate learners is not significant.

Keywords: simultaneous display of multimedia glosses, vocabulary learning, impulsive learners, reflective learners

1. Introduction

Acquiring vocabulary of the second language plays a significant role in the achievement of language learners and the quality of their communicative skills. Folse (2008) posits that the amount of vocabulary EFL learners acquire in the process of learning a language can directly affect the comprehension of language by them. In addition, Nation (2001) believes that the greatest obstacle EFL learners encounter when communicating in the target language is deficiency of vocabulary knowledge. Hence, one of the queries in the field has been finding more effective approaches to teach new words. Laufer and Girsai (2008) believe that this query consists of two parts: a) causing comprehension of new vocabulary items, and b) retaining what is learnt by language learners. To this end, in the last 30 years, a great number of publications have dealt with vocabulary teaching and learning (Wei, 2007).

On the other hand, investigations have been conducted to understand whether or not using marginal notes, often referred to as glosses, can affect learning of EFL learners (e.g., Bowles, 2004; Jones, 2004; Jones & Plass, 2002). Not only have these empirical studies proved that glosses can have significant effect on understanding the new words of the target language, but also theoretical frameworks support their use as supplementary materials for second language acquisition (SLA) (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001; Mayer, 2005). Yanguas (2009) contends that multimedia glosses are textual, pictorial, and a combination of textual and pictorial glosses. He also believes that glosses can be used the same way dictionaries are used. Glosses, however, do not interrupt the learning process as much, since the definition is easily available in the text. Bowles (2004) also posits that using glosses is a suitable way to enhance EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning.

In addition, as stated by Wang (2008), the preferred way of learning by learners, often referred to as learning style, has been of interest to many scholars. He, more specifically defines learning style as "an individuals' characteristics and preferred way of gathering, interpreting, organizing and thinking about information" (p. 30). Different scholars have categorized learning styles differently (e.g., Celcia-Murcia, 2001; MacKeracher, 2004). However, The type of learning style which will be used as a moderator variable in this study are visual and auditory learning styles as categorized by Celcia-Murcia (2001) who finds these two types of learning styles as two most significant types of sensory learning styles.

Of interest in this research has been the effect of interactive simultaneous display of multimedia glosses in Iran, in which EFL learners cannot choose the type of gloss they prefer for learning, on vocabulary learning.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Vocabulary learning is very important to language learners. Yet, it seems that EFL learners in the context of Iran have difficulty learning the new vocabulary. Not only are new vocabulary items easily forgotten by language learners, but also it is difficult for them to bear the pronunciation of the new words in mind. Using pictorial or audio glosses seems to be a solution to this problem. However, to the researchers' best knowledge, previous research has not dealt with the effect of such glosses on vocabulary learning if the glosses were displayed simultaneously.

In addition, although a great deal of research has focused on the issue of learning styles, a small portion of these studies have had their focus on visual and auditory learning styles (e.g., Riazi & Riasati, 2007, Kassaian, 2007). Since the second half of the twentieth century has been the era of cognitive psychology, most studies have had their focus on cognitive learning styles including impulsivity, reflectivity, field dependence and field independence (Kassaian, 2007). On the other hand, among the studies that have dealt with visual and auditory learning styles, no prior

study had considered vocabulary learning through learning glosses as its pinnacle. Contrary to the fact that theoretical backgrounds support the possible effect of using glosses on vocabulary learning of EFL learners with visual or auditory learning styles (Kassaian, 2007).

Another significant issue is that in the context of Iran, the issue of classes with matched and mismatched learning styles has not been taken into account. Almost all language classes at the institutional level are conducted without homogenizing learners based on their learning styles. In fact, the only factors to discriminate language learners into different classes seem to be the proficiency level, gender and age.

Moreover, language classes in Iran lack materials which make specific use of glosses. Language institutes usually follow what is dictated by books and add no supplementary material to the content of the language books. Hence, this study aims at finding out if simultaneous display of multimedia glosses as supplementary material could help EFL learners' vocabulary learning.

### 1.2 Research Questions

The answer to the following research questions will be sought in the study:

Q1: Does exposure to simultaneous display of multimedia glosses have any effect on vocabulary learning of visual Iranian EFL learners?

Q2: Does exposure to simultaneous display of multimedia glosses have any effect on vocabulary learning of auditory Iranian EFL learners?

Q3: If the answers to research questions 2 and 3 are 'yes', which of the visual or auditory Iranian EFL learners benefits more from simultaneous display of multimedia glosses?

### 1.3 Research Hypotheses

Hand in hand with the research questions, the following research hypotheses are formulated for the study:

H01: Exposure to simultaneous display of multimedia glosses does not have any effect on vocabulary learning of visual Iranian EFL learners.

H02: Exposure to simultaneous display of multimedia glosses does not have any effect on vocabulary learning of auditory Iranian EFL learners.

H3: Visual Iranian EFL learners benefit more than auditory EFL learners from simultaneous display of multimedia .

### 1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at understanding whether or not simultaneous display of multimedia glosses can have any effect on learning vocabulary items by visual vs. auditory Iranian EFL learners.

The secondary purpose of the study was to create a shift in attention from cognitive learning styles to visual and auditory learning styles, as understanding possible differences in vocabulary learning of EFL learners with different sensory learning styles could prove that more attention ought to be paid to these learning styles.

The study also aimed at perpetuating the importance of supplementary material prepared by language teachers and material developers. In fact, most reading texts in academic books do not include glosses. Hence, this study wished to find out if adding such glosses interactively could have any effect on reading comprehension of EFL learners. Doing this, material developers

would understand the significance of the type of materials they produce and existence of such materials along with commercial text books which are used in EFL/ESL classes.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The prime significance of the study is its novelty in findings out the effect of simultaneous display of multimedia glosses on language learning outcome of EFL learners in terms of vocabulary. In fact, the issue of multimedia glosses, per se, is a new topic. Most of the studies dealing with this issue have been carried out recently and suggest more studies for grasping the effect of glosses on learning the second language.

In general, the findings of this study could help not only the EFL teachers, but also material developers in selecting the effective type of supplementary materials to be used in language classes. Material developers would understand whether or not display of multimedia glosses could have any effect on reading comprehension of EFL learners, so they could decide if glosses should be included in the reading texts while preparing the texts. EFL teachers, on the other hand, will find out if glosses can have more positive effect on reading comprehension of EFL learners so that they can select reading texts which contain glosses instead of those with lack glosses.

## **2. Review of the related Literature**

This part gives a brief review of the works already done related to the main variables of this research work. To this end, this part is divided into 2 mains sections; a) theoretical Overview and b) empirical background.

### **2.1 Theoretical Overview**

Lomicka (1998) states that the issue of glosses is not a novel one. In fact, the concept of glossing could be traced back to the Middle Ages and traditionally was referred only to a short text to facilitate reading comprehension. However, the modern form and function of glosses is different. Glosses can be used as a strategy for learning vocabulary, and many researchers have agreed that glossing is a practical approach for enhancing vocabulary learning and bringing about comprehension of the reading texts (Farvardin & Biria, 2012; Hong, 2010; Lomicka, 1998).

The history of glosses in education reveals that glosses were basically learner-generated (Roby, 1999) e.g. learners used to write marginal notes around a text to be able to better understand it. Finding out about the usefulness of the technique, teachers also used glosses as a teaching technique to better convey concepts (Roby, 1999). The form, position and language of the glosses caused this novel issue to be categorized into different taxonomies (Zarei & Hasani, 2011). Textual, pictorial, visual or combination of such glosses were created and used in language classes and researchers began to investigate their effect on different areas of the language. Thus, the focus of more recent research has been on finding the most effect type (Yoshii, 2006).

#### **2.1.1 Taxonomy of glosses.**

Glosses are usually studied in the following ways: a) single versus multiple-choice glosses, b) meaning inferred glosses versus meaning given ones (Roby, 1999). However, Roby (1999) believes that more sophisticated taxonomy of glosses dependent on the gloss authorship, gloss presentations, gloss function, gloss focus, gloss language and gloss form. In terms of authorship glosses are divided into those written by learners and those written by professionals. Gloss presentation is the act of prioritizing glosses. 3. Gloss functions are of two types (e.g. procedural and declarative). Procedural function includes metacognitive, highlighting and clarifying, and declarative function includes encyclopedic and linguistic functions. The linguistic subset of

declarative functions is divided into lexical function (signification and value) and syntactical function. Next, gloss focus which has to do with textual or extra textual materials. Gloss language includes L1, L2, and L3. And finally, gloss form which includes verbal, visual (image, icon, video with or without sound) and audio form.

### 2.2 Empirical Background

There are many empirical studies that show the different effects of different glosses. For example, Farvardin and Biria (2012) found that MCG (multiple choice glosses) makes lexical retention easier than other gloss types (single gloss in first language and single gloss in second language). Yoshii (2006) claims that there is no difference between first language glosses and second language glosses in terms of vocabulary learning and both of them have a positive role in vocabulary learning and reading comprehension. "Glosses are many kinds of attempts to supply what is perceived to be deficient in a reader's procedural or declarative knowledge" (Roby, 1999, p.96).

There are a number of studies about the effect of glossing on reading comprehension. Glossing, as a type of input modification, facilitates vocabulary learning and reading comprehension (Ko, 2012). Glossing makes L2 reading more effective (Chen & Good, 2009). It assists reading comprehension by providing additional information, such as definition and synonyms (Ko, 2012). Lomicka (1998) investigated the effect of glosses under three conditions: full glossing, limited glossing, or no glossing. She confirms that full glossing may promote a deeper level of text comprehension. Ko (2005) also investigated the effect of different kinds of glosses on reading comprehension. He found that L2 glosses were more influential than L1 glosses. Glosses act as a mediator between text and the learner by providing additional information about hard words and making both reading comprehension and vocabulary learning easier (Ko, 2005). There are many advantages for glosses in learning a new language, according to Hong (2010):

The presence of gloss can reduce students' burden of dictionary consultation, avoid the interruption of reading process and prevent learners from making wrong inference for the unknown words in the particular context. Thus, gloss can not only ensure learners' exact understanding of the text but also help learners know the meaning of the new words (p.68).

Nagata (1999) points to four advantages of marginal glosses: a) Using marginal glosses, compared to books such as dictionaries, is more convenient, b) They motivate learners to notice and attend to target words based on the notion of consciousness-raising and input enhancement c) clear association between form and meaning, d) They trigger learners to do lexical processing by frequent referring to target word and glosses, and this helps the retention of words. Likewise, Ko (2005) enumerates four advantages for glossing: First, glosses can help readers know new words better by preventing wrong guessing. Second, glossing may lessen interruption during the process of reading. Third, glosses can help readers to create a relationship between prior knowledge and new information in the text. Fourth, glosses allow readers to become more autonomous with less dependence on their teacher. In addition, they do not interrupt the reading process since the definition is easily available in the text (Yanguas, 2009).

Furthermore, Koren (1999) vows that glossing is the easiest way to learn the meanings of words when they are in context, but he refers to some disadvantages of using glossary as follows: 1. Glossary has to be prepared by the teacher, or written for each text, or found in specific text books, contrary to the use of dictionary that can be done independently by the students.

Effects of interactive versus simultaneous display of multimedia glosses on L2 incidental vocabulary learning through reading texts was a query for Turke and Ercetin (2012). The



participants of their study were 82 students randomly selected. They read a glossed text and their reading comprehension was checked through a recall protocol and a multiple-choice test. Unannounced vocabulary tests were used to measure incidental vocabulary learning. The results of the study showed that the participants had a better performance on reading and vocabulary tests when glosses were simultaneously displayed.

In another study the effect of multimedia glosses on L2 reading comprehension and vocabulary production was investigated by Zarei and Hassani (2011). The participants were 65 female students of a high school in Qazvin, Iran. The participants were divided into 4 groups, three multimedia gloss groups and one control group. After analyzing the data gathered from the participants it was indicated that multimedia glosses led to better performance of the participants in vocabulary production.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Participants**

The participants for this study were randomly chosen among 225 Iranian EFL learners studying at Kanoon Zaban language institute in Tehran. Nelson proficiency test was administered to the participants to homogenize them based on their proficiency level. Considering +/-1 SD the mean score, about 150 language learners were chosen as intermediate subjects for this study. The reason for selecting this number of participants was that the researchers considered the groups required for the study and then selected 150 language learners. Next, Nelson vocabulary test was administered to the subjects to homogenize them based on their vocabulary knowledge and to be used as the pretest. Again, considering 1 standard deviation above and below the mean score 100 learners were chosen as the participants for the study. After that, Reid's (1987) learning style questionnaire was administered to the participants to categorize them based on their learning pREFERENCES into 4 main groups, namely; experimental visual group, control visual group, experimental auditory group and the control auditory group. Age and gender were not considered as factors in this study, though the participants will all be adults EFL learners.

#### **3.2 Instruments**

##### **Nelson Proficiency Test (NELSON)**

Nelson Proficiency Test including 50 test items will be utilized to assess knowledge of the participants and to see if they are homogeneous based on their English proficiency level. The validity and reliability of the Nelson test has been estimated several times before by other researchers and it is considered as highly valid and reliable test of English proficiency (Shahivand & Pazhakh, 2012, p. 18).

##### **3.3 Nelson Vocabulary Proficiency Test**

A Nelson Vocabulary Proficiency Test including 30 multiple-choice items was utilized to assess the vocabulary knowledge of the participants and to see if they were homogeneous. Not only was it used as the homogeneity test but also as pretest. Therefore, as a pretest, it was used to: a) collect data about the participants' initial vocabulary knowledge of the words; b) be compared with the posttest. The validity and reliability of the Nelson test have been estimated several times before by other researchers and it is considered as highly valid and reliable test of English proficiency (Shahivand & Pazhakh, 2012, p. 18).

##### **Reid's Learning Style Questionnaire**

It is a likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 30 items which will be used to categorize learners into visual, auditory and tactile learners. Reid (1987) states that, "Some people learn primarily with their eyes or with their ears. Some people prefer to learn by experience and /or by "hands-on" tasks...This questionnaire has been designed to help you identify the way(s) you learn best " (p.1)

In this study the questionnaire will be used to categorize learners into visual and auditory learners.

### **Posttest of Vocabulary (Researcher-Made)**

A researcher make posttest of vocabulary consisting of 30 vocabulary items taken from the vocabulary taught during the course was used as the posttest for the study. Item analysis was run to investigate item discrimination (ID) and item facility (IF) of the items by piloting the posttest with language learners in one level higher than the participants in this study.

### **3.4 Procedure**

The participants in the experimental groups went through 10 sessions of vocabulary learning through reading 'Steps for Understanding' book. Multimedia glosses were added to the readings to make them compatible to the purpose of the study. The participants did not maintain the right to choose the type of gloss they preferred. In the control group, the same reading texts containing no glosses were taught in the class. It means that, for 10 sessions of learning vocabulary in the control group, no changes were implemented in the book. For the posttest, a researcher-made vocabulary test was given to the participants. The validity and reliability of the test was confirmed by administering the test to a different group of students studying one level higher that the participants. Item analysis was also run to determine indices of item facility (IF) and item discrimination (ID).

## **4. Data Analysis**

### **4.1 Homogeneity Test**

Nelson Proficiency test was administered to two hundred twenty five (n=225) EFL learners to homogenize them based on their proficiency level. Ratios of skewness and kurtosis were checked to make sure the scores had normal distribution.

Table 1

*Normal Distribution of the Homogeneity Test Scores*

N	Valid	225
Skewness		.611
Std. Error of Skewness		.321
Kurtosis		.506
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.348

As stated by Strevens (2009) normal distribution of the scores could be proved if ratios of skewness and kurtosis are within the range of +/-1.96. As can be seen in Table 1, ratios of

skewness and kurtosis were within the range of  $\pm 1.96$ ; meaning that the scores had normal distribution.

#### 4.1.1 Reliability and Validity of the Homogeneity Test

The reliability of the homogeneity test scores was gauged using Cronbach alpha index.

Table 2

*Reliability of the Homogeneity Test*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.822	225

As can be seen the Cronbach alpha index ( $\alpha=.822$ ) proved that the test scores were reliable. The researcher calculated the construct validity of the test items using factor analysis. Each item of the tests was considered as a factor and the test results were used to see if there is adequate correlation between the scores. SPSS extracted the factors for the subjects. Factor analysis results for Nelson homogeneity test items was between 0.72 and 0.91; indicating that the factors considered in the analysis showed enough correlation and that the tests validity hypothesis was supported.

#### 4.2 Pretest

Having selected one hundred fifty ( $n=150$ ) EFL learners through Nelson Proficiency Test, Nelson vocabulary Test was administered as the pretest. Ratios of Skewness and kurtosis were checked to make sure the scores had normal distribution.

Table 3

*Normal Distribution of the Pretest Scores*

N	Valid	225
Skewness		.567
Std. Error of Skewness		.432
Kurtosis		.711
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.558

As can be understood from Table 3, ratios of skewness and kurtosis were within the range of  $\pm 1.96$ , thus the scores had normal distribution.

#### Reliability and Validity of the Pretest

The reliability of the pretest scores was gauged using Cronbach alpha index as well.

Table 4

*Reliability of the Pretest Scores*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.731	150

As can be seen the Cronbach alpha index ( $\alpha=.731$ ) proved that the test scores were reliable. The researcher calculated the construct validity of the test items using factor analysis. Each item of the tests was considered as a factor and the test results were used to see if there is adequate correlation between the scores. SPSS extracted the factors for the subjects. Factor analysis results for Nelson Vocabulary test items was between 0.69 and 0.87; indicating that the factors considered in the analysis showed enough correlation and that the tests validity hypothesis was supported.

### 4.3 Main Study

#### Research question1.

Does exposure to simultaneous display of multimedia glosses have any effect on vocabulary learning of visual Iranian EFL learners?

In order to answer research Question1, independent samples t-test was run to compare visual experimental group and visual control group. Firstly, independent samples t-test was run to make sure there is no meaningful difference between the visual experimental group and the visual control group.

Based on the results displayed in Table 6, it can be claimed that the experimental group ( $M = 25.617, SD = 2.81$ ) had a slightly higher mean than the control group ( $M = 25.608, SD = 2.75$ ).

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics*

#### Group Statistics

	VAR00002	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Mean					
General	1.00	25	25.6170	2.81729	.41094
	2.00	25	25.6087	2.75910	.57531

The results of the independent t-test ( $t(68) = 0.12, p = .991, r = .712$  representing a weak effect size) (Table 6) indicate that the difference between the mean scores of the control group and experimental group is not meaningful.

Table 6.

*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	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
		Std. Error						Lower Upper
General	Equal variances assumed	.036	.850	.012	68	.991	.00833	.71216 -1.41276
	1.42941							
	Equal variances not assumed			.012	44.621	.991	.00833	.70701 -1.41599
	1.43264							

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = 0.36$ ,  $p = .850$ ). That is why the first row of Table 6, i.e., "Equal variances assumed" was reported.

Next, experimental visual group's posttest scores were compared to control visual group's posttest scores using independent samples t-test. Based on the results displayed in Table 7, it can be claimed that the experimental group ( $M = 29.68$ ,  $SD = 2.71$ ) had a higher mean than the control group ( $M = 27$ ,  $SD = 2.67$ ).

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics*

**Group Statistics**

	VAR00003	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Mean					
general_posttest	1.00	25	29.6809	2.71955	.39669
	2.00	25	27.0000	2.67989	.55880

The results of the independent t-test ( $t(68) = 3.89$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $r = .688$  representing a large effect size) (Table 8) and indicate that the difference between the mean scores of the control group and experimental group is meaningful. Thus, the first null hypothesis was **rejected**.

Table 8

*Independent Samples Test*

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test					t-test for Equality of Means			
		for Equality of Variances								
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig.	Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	Upper
		Std. Error					Difference			
					(2-tailed)					
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	4.05532	.041	.841	3.892	68	.000	2.68085	68879	1.30638
	Equal variances not assumed	4.06162			3.912	44.37	.000	2.68085	.68528	1.30008

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = 0.41$ ,  $p = .841$ ). That is why the first row of Table 8, i.e., "Equal variances assumed" was reported.

**Research Question 2.**

Does exposure to simultaneous display of multimedia glosses have any effect on vocabulary learning of auditory Iranian EFL learners?

In order to probe the answer to research Question 2, independent samples t-test was run to make sure the difference between the experimental auditory participants and control auditory participants on the pretest is not meaningful. As can be seen in Table 9, the experimental group ( $M=25.91$ ,  $SD= 2.84$ ) had a slightly higher mean than the control group ( $M=25.62$ ,  $SD= 2.93$ ).

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics*

	VAR00004	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Mean					

Male_female_pretest	1.00	24	25.9167	2.84248	.58022
	2.00	24	25.6250	2.93128	.59834

The results of the independent t-test ( $t(46) = .350, p = .728, r = .833$  representing a weak effect size) (Table 10) and indicate that the difference between the mean scores of the control group and experimental group is not meaningful.

Table 10

*Independent Samples Test*

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Male_female_pretest	Equal variances assumed	.207	.651	.350	46	.728	.2916	.8334	-1.38602 1.96935
	Equal variances not assumed			.350	45.957	.728	.2916	.8334	-1.38606 1.96940

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = 0.207$ ,  $p = .651$ ). That is why the first row of Table 10, i.e., "Equal variances assumed" was reported. Next, an independent samples t-test was run to see if the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the posttest were statistically and meaningfully different. As can be seen in Table 11, the experimental group's mean score ( $M = 29.87$ ,  $SD = 2.786$ ) is slightly higher than the control group ( $M = 29.75$ ,  $SD = 2.952$ ).

Table 11  
*Descriptive Statistics*

**Group Statistics**

	VAR00005	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Mean					
male_female_posttest	1.00	24	29.8750	2.78681	.56886
	2.00	24	29.7500	2.95252	.60268

An independent samples t-test was run to find out if the difference between the experimental group and the control group was significant. As displayed in Table 12. ( $t(46) = .151$ ,  $p = .881$ ,  $r = .828$ ) indicating that there is a weak effect size and that the difference between the groups was not meaningful. Thus, the second null hypothesis was **supported**.

Table 12  
*Independent Samples Test*

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Std. Difference
		Error					Lower Upper
male_female_posttest	Equal variances assumed	.164	.688	.151	46	.881	.12500 .8287 -1.5431
	Unequal variances						



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Equa

1 variances

not assumed .151 45.847 .881 .12500 .82875 -1.5433  
1.79333

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It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met (Leven's  $F=.164$ ,  $P=.688$ ).

### Research Question 3

If the answers to research questions 2 and 3 are 'yes', which of the visual or auditory Iranian EFL learners benefits more from simultaneous display of multimedia glosses?

Since the second null hypothesis was supported the answer to the third research question was not sought.

### 5. Discussion/Conclusion

The findings of this study proved that although exposure to simultaneous display of multimedia glosses can affect vocabulary learning of visual learners, the effect of simultaneous multimedia glosses on vocabulary learning of auditory Iranian intermediate learners is not significant.

Ariew and Ercetin (2004) claimed that there is no relationship between the use of glosses and vocabulary learning in the second language. In a partial agreement with their research results, the findings of this study also proved that not all learners can benefit from simultaneous display of multimedia glosses. The main difference between this study and the one carried out by Ariew and Ercetin (2004) is that they did not consider EFL learners learning styles, i.e.

Sakar and Ercetin (2005) also concluded EFL learners at intermediate level and advanced level do not benefit from the use of glosses in language classes in terms of vocabulary learning. Contrary to the research findings of Sakar and Ercetin (2005), the findings of the study proved that simultaneous display of multimedia glosses can have effect on vocabulary learning of visual Iranian EFL learners. However, the current study did not deal with language learners at advanced level.

Zarei and Hassani (2011) in a study conducted in Qazvin, Iran, concluded that the use of multimedia glosses can have positive effect on EFL learners' vocabulary learning. In line with the study carried out by Zarei and Hassani (2011), the findings of this study proved that simultaneous display of multimedia glosses can have a significant positive effect on vocabulary learning of visual Iranian EFL learners. Indeed, the current study replicated a research already carried out by Zarei and Hassani (2011). The innovation in the current study, however, was considering visual and auditory learning styles as the moderator variables.

#### 5.1 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study could be beneficial to material developers in the first place. They can add glosses to reading text in order to increase language learners' comprehension. Policy makers, who decide whether classes should be matched in terms of learning styles can also benefit from the findings of the study, as they can match language learners with visual learners and expose material containing simultaneous glosses to them in order to increase their

understanding. Finally, language teachers should know that glosses can affect visual language learners understanding, thus; it would be better to provide them with glosses.

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## SOLITARY VS. COLLABORATIVE OUTPUT IMPACTS ON VOCABULARY LEARNING AND RETENTION

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### ABSTRACT

Vocabulary learning is considered as one of the building blocks of language learning. This study investigates the impact of interaction (collaborative vs. Solitary) on immediate vocabulary learning and delayed retention at production and recognition levels. To this end, 157 Iranian EFL learners were assigned to two experimental groups and one control group: no interaction no output (n=26), solitary output (n=69), and collaborative output (n=62). The study was done in an 8-week period. All the groups read passages with target words highlighted. In the Nino group, the participants were exposed to input-only (reading comprehension passages). They served as the control group. The Copt group reconstructed the reading passage in oral and written modalities individually. The Copt group was exposed to the input but was required to reconstruct the passage in both modes in dyads. The interaction effect was measured via four one-way ANOVAs to determine the differences, if any, among the groups in four conditions: immediate recognition test (irgt), and delayed recognition test (drgt), immediate production test (ipt), and delayed production test (drt). The irgt and ipt were an index of learning and drgt and dpt measured retention. The results show that the collaborative output group outperformed the other groups in all posttests. In irgt, the differences were significant for all three groups suggesting that interaction while producing output is effective as far as recognition of vocabulary is concerned. In ipt, significant differences were found among the groups showing that the interaction results in a better performance, as far as the production was concerned. In dpt and drgt, no significant differences were observed among the groups, although the Copt (collaborative) group outperformed the other groups. The groups' performance did not change in the long run suggesting that retention of words requires factors other than interaction in dyads among the groups.

**Keywords:** interaction; delayed recognition and production; immediate recognition and production; vocabulary learning and retention; collaborative vs. Solitary output

### 1. Introduction and review of literature

Dismayed by long years of dominance of traditional teacher-fronted methods of language teaching, the researchers and teachers espoused the use of collaborative tasks (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010). This important decision came about on theoretical and pedagogical grounds. The first support came from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Based on this theory, learning 'social in nature' takes place as the result of interaction between a child (novice) and an expert adult. Another line of support came from Michael Long's "interaction hypothesis". Not satisfied with Krashen's input hypothesis, Long (1985) claims that the learning process is facilitated if negotiation for meaning and confirmation checks are coupled with input. The interaction process, in fact, enriches the input and makes it comprehensible. Another green light was given to researchers by Swain (1985). Her "output hypothesis" states that language produced via interaction provides the learners with conditions in which they notice the gaps and holes in their interlanguage.

Vocabulary is one of the essential components of second language pedagogy. Teachers have always been interested in how learners go about learning vocabulary. One of the main difficulties facing L2 learners is the vast number of words they need to learn in order to become fluent in their L2. Teachers might well understand this but might not know how best to support their students in these conditions. Therefore, from a pedagogical point of view, there is clearly a need for research that helps to identify the type of learning tasks that provide optimal opportunities for L2 vocabulary learning and retention.

The research on lexical learning and retention came about as a result of interest in the role of output in L2 acquisition. Studies by Laufer (1995) and Lee (2003) provide empirical evidence that L2 learners' productive vocabulary knowledge does not develop in the same way as recognition vocabulary knowledge does; when recognition vocabulary knowledge increases, a very small part of this vocabulary becomes productive without instruction on productive vocabulary use. The research studies by Ellis and He (1999), Hulstijn and Laufer (2001), and de la Fuente (2002) provide evidence that productive vocabulary acquisition necessitates a different learning condition from that of receptive vocabulary acquisition.

Several Studies (Day, 1991; Day & Swan, 1998) have shown that learning vocabulary incidentally through reading is effective. They emphasized that input-only condition was beneficial for vocabulary learning and retention. However, in a review of L2 vocabulary learning, Schmitt (2008) notes that incidental vocabulary learning during reading has a low pick-up rate. Horst et al. (1998), for example, found that in incidental learning, only about one word out of every 12 was accurately identified. Therefore, incidental vocabulary learning via reading alone may not be sufficient.

Much research has focused on how to enhance the effectiveness of incidental vocabulary learning in reading as the input-only condition by using stimulus techniques such as output tasks, textual glosses, and think-aloud activities (Hill & Laufer, 2003; Kim, 2008; Lee, 1995; Rott, 2004). Among these studies, two types of stimulus techniques—output tasks and textual glosses—have been widely used to enhance L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition. Some studies (Hill & Laufer, 2003; Kim, 2008; Min, 2008; Rott, 2004) employed tasks that required learners to produce output alongside their reading. Rott, Williams, and Cameron (2002) claimed that greater emphasis on new vocabulary can lead to a greater likelihood that vocabulary will be acquired and retained. Learning and retention are improved when learners use, reformulate, or elaborate on this new information, because these processes induce connections between existing and new knowledge (Crailk & Tulving, 1975). Compared to input, output requires more mental effort on the part of learners. Learners can pretend to comprehend while reading, but they cannot do so while speaking or writing. The process of vocabulary growth may "reach a plateau unless learners are given the opportunity to develop skills in its use" (Nation, 2001).

The question of which factors affect the retention of L2 vocabulary is of great interest to researchers. The general consensus from the field of cognitive psychology is that retention of new information depends on the amount and the quality of attention that individuals pay to various aspects of words. Arguably, the output condition induces more of the elaboration process from learners than the input condition does, due to the linguistic complexity involved in producing output. Additionally, the operation of the elaboration process leads to better retention of vocabulary, which is supported by empirical research conducted by Hulstijn & Laufer (2001). These researchers collected data from EFL learners in the Netherlands and Israel to examine the effects of three different tasks on retention of vocabulary. The different tasks consisted of a reading comprehension task with marginal glosses, a reading comprehension plus fill-in-the-blank task, and a composition task using the target words. The results of the posttest showed that retention of ten unfamiliar target words was highest for the composition task, lower in the reading plus fill-in-the-blank task and lowest in the reading task. Due to these findings, Hulstijn and Laufer argue that the superior performance on the composition task may provide support for the output hypothesis, given that the production (composition) task required the learners to stretch their linguistic resources. Additionally, a number of studies have also added evidence that output positively affected the retention of L2 vocabulary. Studies by Nobuyasi & Ellis (1993), Joe (1995, 1998), Hulstijn & Trompeter (1998), and Ellis & He (1999), have indicated that vocabulary used in production tasks was recalled better than words practiced in nonproduction tasks. In explaining the superiority of output tasks over others for vocabulary recall, these authors suggest that output tasks may require a deeper level of processing of new words than other kinds of tasks.

In spite of the above studies supporting the role of output in vocabulary retention, a number of studies have questioned the effect of output on vocabulary retention. For instance, Dekeyser and Sokalski (1996) investigated L2 learners' acquisition of Spanish object-clitic pronouns, and argued that while the effects of output practice tended to fade over time, those of input practice were more durable. Horibe (2003) has also argued that they did not find evidence to support the output condition having promoted long-term retention of specific linguistic features better than the input condition. Although these studies did not focus on vocabulary acquisition, the results from these studies require further validation of output's effect on L2 retention.

Inspired by 'Output Hypothesis' and 'Interaction Hypothesis', several studies investigated the role of collaborative output tasks. In the recent years, an unprecedented attention was given to pair work and small group activities on the ground that they would help learners in learning and assessment contexts. They are claimed to help the learners use their receptive and productive language skills in both pedagogy and testing.

Several studies have empirically examined the role of collaborative output tasks in L2 learning (e.g. Kowal & Swain, 1994; Nabei, 1996; Storch, 1998,1999, 2005, 2007; García Mayo, 2002a, 2002b; Kim, 2008; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Leaser, 2004). García Mayo (2002a) compared the dictogloss with a text reconstruction task. Kowal and Swain (1994) investigated dictogloss as a particular type of collaborative output task. Kim (2008) compared the effect of pair and individual task on the acquisition of vocabulary items included in a dictogloss task. Those working in pairs performed significantly better on both an immediate and a delayed vocabulary posttest. Storch (1999) analyzed the impact of interaction on grammatical accuracy across three different tasks: a cloze exercise, a text reconstruction task, and a composition task. The students who worked in pairs and had an opportunity to discuss their grammatical choices took longer to complete the tasks, but produced more accurate written texts than those working alone. Storch (2005) compared dyadic and individual performance on a short composition task based on a graphic prompt. The analysis of the oral interactions between the dyads confirmed that pair work provided the learners with an "opportunity to collaborate on the writing process, pool their ideas and knowledge, and provide each other with immediate feedback on language" (p. 154). In a similar but larger scale study, Storch and Wigglesworth (2007) compared the

performance of 24 pairs and 24 individual learners on two writing tasks, a report and an argumentative essay. More recently, Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) compared 24 pairs and 48 individual learners writing an argumentative essay. In both studies pairs were assigned more time to complete the task than individual learners. The two studies obtained similar results: No differences were found in terms of fluency and complexity, but the texts written in pairs were significantly more accurate than those written individually.

In a series of studies, Storch (2001a; 2001b; 2002a; 2002b) investigated the nature of pair interaction in an adult ESL classroom. Based on her pair talk data, she identified four patterns of interaction amongst pairs. In the collaborative pattern, both learners work together throughout the task completion process and assist each other. Dominant/dominant pairs, on the other hand, show an unwillingness or incapability to engage with each other's contribution. Dominant/passive pairs involve a dominant participant who takes control of the task with an authoritarian stance, and a passive peer who maintains a subservient role. Finally, in expert/novice pairs, the more knowledgeable learner (expert) actively encourages the less knowledgeable learner (novice) to engage in the task.

One conclusion that may be drawn from the above studies is that collaborative pair work may facilitate learners' interaction and attention to the target forms, but it may not necessarily lead to superior learning in comparison to individual work.

These studies show that collaborative tasks may create more language learning opportunities, and in particular more vocabulary learning opportunities, than individual tasks. However, Nassaji and Tian (2010) failed to obtain clear evidence of the benefits of collaborative tasks over individual ones for L2 vocabulary learning. In this study, 26 English L2 learners completed two cloze tasks and two text-editing tasks focused on the use of English phrasal verbs. One of the two versions of each task was performed in pairs and the other one individually. All learners increased their knowledge of English phrasal verbs, as measured by a vocabulary pretest and posttest. In fact, learners working collaboratively improved more than those working individually, but the differences observed were not statistically significant.

## **2. The Present Study**

The conclusion to be drawn from the abovementioned studies is that interaction and collaboration through pair work and small group is beneficial theoretically and pedagogically. The studies done on the issue were mostly conducted in ESL contexts leading us to infer that the research in EFL milieu is scant. Most of the studies compared different types of tasks completed individually or collaboratively. The research on the effect of pair work (collaborative) vs. individual (solitary) on vocabulary and retention of Iranian EFL learners, to the best of our knowledge, is scant. This study can be considered as a bridge connecting input, interaction, and output. To put it another way, the present study investigates input, output, and collaborative output at the same time. To control for proficiency level effect, the researchers tried to select the intact classes in which learners were educationally homogeneous. The same task (reconstruction) was used to control for the task type effect. Therefore this study seeks to answer the following research question:

1. Does collaborative output significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning as shown in the immediate vocabulary production test compared to input- only and solitary output conditions?
2. Does collaborative output significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning as shown in the immediate vocabulary recognition test compared to input- only and solitary output conditions?

3. Does collaborative output significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary retention as shown in the delayed vocabulary production test compared to input- only and solitary output conditions ?

4. Does collaborative output significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary retention as shown in the delayed vocabulary recognition test compared to input- only and solitary output conditions?

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Participants**

The participants in this study were 157 university students studying in Kermanshah Islamic Azad University. They were divided into three groups. The first group were those students with no interaction and no output. They were the students with input- only materials (-interaction, -output). The second group consisted of participants pushed to produce output individually with no interaction. The Solitary

Output was expected to produce output either in written or oral modalities without the teachers and the peers help (-interaction, +output). The third group were participants working in dyads to produce output (+interaction, +output). The Collaborative Output group was expected to reconstruct a text in written or oral modalities in pairs. The samples were taken from three intact general English classes. The first group (n=26) was called No Interaction No Output (NINO). The second group (n=62) is classified as Solitary Output (SOPT). The third group (n=69) is called Collaborative Output (COPT). Even though the EFL learners taking part in this research project were selected based on the university entrance examinations, in order to check the homogeneity of the participants, the researcher administered a proficiency test. For all groups, the PET test was administered. Then, the students whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean score were selected as the main participants of this study.

#### **3.2. Instruments and materials**

The following instruments and materials were used in the present study.

##### **3.2.1. Reading input passage.**

The first instrument used in this study was the students' textbook. The groups' main textbook was ACTIVE Skills for Reading: Book 2 (Anderson, 2007). Three passages were selected from the book as input passages. The passages were piloted by peers of the participants to confirm the comprehensibility. The readability index of passages were calculated by Flesch Reading Ease Formula to check the match between students' level and the passages difficulty level. The passages readability index was between 60 and 65 showing that the passages were standard. The peer groups were also asked to circle unknown words for the purpose of selecting target words and distractors. Almost 36 words were selected as cued words for reconstruction. All the words were glossed with Persian meanings for the participants.

##### **3.2.2. Vocabulary pretest and posttests.**

A vocabulary knowledge self- report was administered to determine the participants' baseline knowledge of target words. The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) developed by Wesche and Paribakht (1996) was adapted to the vocabulary level of the participants. Based on the participants answer to the VKS, those answering Item V correctly can be removed from the study because they use the word productively indicating that the word is familiar to the students. Item I was the most ideal one. It meant that they are completely unfamiliar with that specific word. Items I and II test the recognition and items III and IV test the production level



of vocabulary knowledge. The Immediate Production Test (IPT) and Delayed Production Test (DPT) were made based on the format of Productive Vocabulary Levels Test (PVLVT). The PVLVT is a diagnostic test developed by Laufer and Nation (1995). The PVLVT format was chosen because it is a breadth test that is easy to administer and score. In addition, it requires students to produce the

words rather than to simply recognize them. A correct answer thus shows a stronger command of the word. The Immediate recognition Test (IRGT) and Delayed Recognition Test (DRGT) consisted of three sections. The first section of the test was a multiple choice test with three choices. In order to control for the effect of reading comprehension, we provided Persian equivalent of the words in the stem, if necessary. This format was selected based on a suggestion in Milton (2009). The second section was a matching or association item. It was made based on Nation's widely used Levels Test (Nation, 1990, revised Schmitt et al., 2001). An example of this type of recognition test where learners are provided with test words in the foreign language and a selection of explanations which must be matched up is provided in the appendix. This test was adapted to the level of students. So, some target words, were tested by matching them with their Persian translation.

### 3.3. Data Collection Procedure

The three tasks were carried out in three stages. Each stage was allotted the same time length. To facilitate recall, the cued words were provided on a sheet of paper. In the first stage, all the groups were supposed to read the input passages in nearly 10 minutes. In NINO group (interaction -Output), the students answered the reading comprehension questions. The Solitary Output group (SOPT) did the same thing in written and oral mode. The Collaborative Output (COPT) were required to reconstruct the passage in collaboration with one of the peers. In the third stage, all the groups consulted the passages again and checked the correctness or falsehood of their answers.

157 university students majoring in Engineering and Humanities were selected. In week 1, all three groups (NINO, SOPT, and COPT) completed the vocabulary pretest within 10 minutes. The participants were paired according to the closeness of their scores on the PET test. Following Niu and Park (2013), in each output group, one member served as Reporter and the other as Reporter's helper, and in every written output group, one member serves as Writer and the other member serves as Writer's helper. In week 2, all three groups performed their tasks. The week following the VKS administration (Week2), the first passage was taught to the three groups by the researcher. The NINO group (input-only) did the reading and were asked to answer multiple choice items based on the passage. The SOPT (Solitary Output) group was required to reconstruct the passage in written or oral modes individually. The COPT (Collaborative Output) group was expected to reconstruct the passage in written or oral modes and in collaboration with one partner. To check if the output groups focused on the target words, they were asked to reconstruct the passage using the highlighted target words. The second passage was provided in week3. The treatment procedure was repeated like the first passage covered in Week2. The groups were asked to do the same on the passage NO.2. In week4, the groups were given passage No3. In the next week (week5), Immediate posttest1: Immediate Recognition Test (IRGT) was administered to all the groups. This posttest measured the recognition and production of 36 target words by the groups. In Week 6, all groups were administered the immediate posttest2: Immediate Production.

This posttest measured the production of all 36 target words by groups' participants. The delayed posttest: Delayed Recognition Test (DRGT) and Delayed Production Test (DPT) were administered 1 month later. In week7, the Delayed Recognition Test was administered. In week8 (last session of study) the Delayed Production Test was administered. These post-tests

measured the Retention of target words selected from the three passages. The distractors were selected from the same passage or passages covered in the same textbook.

### 3.4. Scoring procedure

According to Paribakht and Wesche (1996), the VKS scoring accepts self-reported answers of categories I and II for scores of 1 and 2, respectively. Wrong responses in categories III, IV or V are scored 2. A score of 3 indicates that an appropriate meaning was provided for categories III or IV. A score of 4 is given if the word is used in a sentence demonstrating the learners' knowledge of its meaning in that context but with a wrong grammatical category. A score of 5 is awarded if the target word is used semantically and grammatically correctly in a sentence context.

In this study, the scoring procedure for the pretest is changed due to the research methodology. The score range for the pretest or self-report is 0-4. This study considers the first level as the most optimal condition for inclusion into the study. The purpose is to select the target words completely unknown to the participants. So, the answer to the first scale is awarded 0. Level 2 is still optimal for the study because the participants don't meet the requirement for the knowing that particular word. The answer to this level, was awarded the score of 1. The level 3 is scored 2 if the provided meaning by the participants is correct. If the answer is incorrect, the score of level 2 namely 1 is awarded. The answer to the level 4 means that they know the word at the production level. The score for this item is 3 if a correct or partially correct answer is given. If the answer is not correct, the score for item 3 is awarded, namely 2. The least optimal condition for inclusion into the study is level 5 which means that the participants know the word at the production level. The participants who answer this item correctly are awarded 4. This means that they should be removed from the sample or the target word should be removed from the study.

### 3.5. Design

This study is a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. The independent variable is collaborative output. To measure this variable, NINO and Solitary (SOPT) and collaborative (COPT) groups were compared. The dependent variable is vocabulary learning with two levels: immediate vocabulary learning and delayed retention. Lexical learning is operationally defined here as the participants' scores on the immediate productive and recognition posttests. Lexical retention is defined as the participants' scores on the Delayed recognition and productive posttest. To test the impact of output modality on participant's gains in lexical learning and retention, the output groups' results in immediate recognition and production and delayed recognition and production were compared. The probable gains in the immediate posttests were considered lexical learning. The gains in Delayed posttests is an indication of lexical retention.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

Based on VKS results, a number of target words were incorporated into data analysis. In this study, the impact of collaborative output task, as Independent variable, on Lexical learning and retention was investigated. The impact of collaborative output task is calculated using four one-way ANOVAs. The NINO group serves as control group. The Scheffe post hoc analysis was applied to locate the differences among the means.

### 3.7. Results

The descriptive statistics of all groups in posttest conditions are shown in Table 1. The control and experimental groups are compared to determine the effect of interaction on learners'

performance in immediate and delayed posttests. The experimental groups were Solitary Output (SOPT) and Collaborative Output (COPT).

Table 1.

*Descriptive statistics of groups in posttest conditions*

	<u>NINO (n = 26)</u>		<u>SOPT (n = 69)</u>		<u>COPT (n = 62)</u>	
	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Immediate Production	7.11	3.31	11.12	3.77	12.77	4.38
Immediate recognition	10.42	1.50	17.94	3.08	22.06	4.23
Delayed Production	2.88	1.47	4.22	1.72	4.31	2.01
Delayed Recognition	6.26	2.42	7.22	2.22	7.49	2.57

Table 1 shows that the collaborative output group outperformed the other groups indicating that pair work practice in collaborative output task was conducive to vocabulary learning and retention.

### 3.7.1. Addressing the first research question

The first research question investigated the probable significant effect of collaborative output task on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary production knowledge in the short run. The three groups were compared to measure the immediate learning of the target words at the production level. Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for control and experimental groups.

For answering this research question, the researcher ran a one way ANOVA. The results of ANOVA test are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

*ANOVA for immediate production test*

<b>Sources of change</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b><math>\eta^2</math></b>
Between Groups	583.08	2	291.54	18.58	.00	.19
Within Groups	2415.28	155	15.68			
Total	2998.36	157				

The ANOVA results show that there is a significant difference among the groups in Immediate production posttest:  $F(2, 155) = 18.58, p < .05$  indicating that when the learners performed the tasks collaboratively, they produced more accurate instances of the target words than when they performed the tasks individually. The effect size is .19 which is a medium effect. Post-hoc Scheffe analysis was run to specify the location of differences. The mean difference between NINO and Solitary Output (SOPT) groups is significant, showing that the presence of output resulted in a gain in three groups ( $\text{sig } 0.00 < 0.05$ ) compared to input- only condition. The results also show that there is a significant difference between Collaborative Output (COPT) and Solitary output (SOPT). This can be interpreted as the impact of interaction on immediate vocabulary learning at production level.

### 3.7.2. Addressing the second research question

The second research question addresses the impact of collaborative output task on immediate vocabulary learning at the recognition level. The descriptive statistics on immediate recognition test is shown on Table 1. To investigate the impact of interaction on three groups, the performance of No Interaction No Output (NINO) as control group and Solitary Output (SOPT) and Collaborative Output (COPT) as experimental groups is compared through a one way ANOVA. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3.

*ANOVA for immediate recognition test (IRT)*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Between Groups	2487.07	2	1243.53	107.11	.00	.58
Within Groups	1787.85	155	11.60			
Total	4274.93	157				

The ANOVA results indicate that the mean difference among groups is statistically significant for the groups on immediate recognition test: ( $F(2, 155) = 107.11, p < .05$ ). Although the estimated significance level is smaller than the predefined significance level, this cannot be translated into the similar difference among all the groups. The effect size is 0.58 showing that interaction effect on immediate vocabulary learning at the recognition level is significant. The Scheffe test results show that the difference among all groups is significant in this level of vocabulary knowledge. This effect is not similar in all the groups. The control group (NINO) had the least mean score indicating that the vocabulary learning via input is not sufficient. This is an indication that the experimental groups outperformed the control group. The Collaborative Output (COPT) performed better than Solitary Output (SOPT) group. This leads us to infer that the null hypothesis should be rejected as far as vocabulary learning at recognition level is concerned.

### 3.7.3. Addressing the third research question

The third research question sheds light on the impact of collaborative output task on delayed retention of vocabulary at the production level. To this end, the performance of three groups is compared. The descriptive statistics for NINO as control group and SOPT and COPT as experimental groups are shown in Table 1.

To understand if the mean differences is significant, a one way ANOVA was conducted. The results are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4.

*ANOVA for delayed production test (DPT)*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Between Groups	41.69	2	20.84	6.36	.002	0.07
Within Groups	504.07	155	3.27			
Total	545.77	157				

Again, the ANOVA results indicate that the mean differences are significant as far as the delayed production of vocabulary is concerned ( $F(2, 155) = 6.36, p = .002$ ). The estimated significance value is smaller than the preset significance level sig ( $0.002 < 0.05$ ). We can be sure that the mean differences are significant. This, however, should not be considered as an indication of similar differences among the means. The effect size was not large (eta squared = .07). The post-hoc results show that the difference between Solitary Output (SOPT) and Collaborative Output (COPT) group is not significant at sig  $0.96 > 0.05$ . This result clarifies that the null hypothesis should be confirmed at delayed production vocabulary knowledge. As expected by the researchers, the experimental groups outperformed the control group. The comparison of means shows that the SOPT and COPT had surprisingly similar results. Contrary to our expectations, the interaction (individual vs. pair work) did not lead to better results.

#### 3.7.4. Addressing the fourth research question

To understand the impact of pair work (collaborative) on the delayed retention of recognition vocabulary, the fourth research question was posed. The three groups including the NINO group and SOPT and COPT were compared. The descriptive statistics is displayed in Table 1. The results show that the collaborative group outperformed the other groups. The least mean belongs to control group showing that pair work results in a better performance.

To determine the significance of mean differences, a one way ANOVA was conducted. Table 5 shows the result of this statistical test.

Table 5.

*ANOVA for delayed recognition test (DRT)*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Between Groups	27.65	2	13.82	2.40	.001	.07
Within Groups	886.70	155	5.75			
Total	914.35	157				

According to ANOVA results, the mean differences are significant in the delayed recognition test: ( $F(2, 155) = 2.401, p < .05$ ). The Collaborative Output group outperformed the other groups showing that interaction leads to a better performance compared to input-only (NINO) and solitary groups (SOPT). This effect however, is not high (eta squared = .07). The results do not determine the exact size of differences. To locate the differences precisely, a post-hoc Scheffe test was run. The difference among the mean scores of all groups was insignificant indicating that, at the long run, neither output nor collaboration was effective for retaining the target words.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the possible impact of collaborative output on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention compared to the input-only and solitary output. The results showed that COPT group outperformed the other two groups in four post-tests: IPT, IRGT, DPT, and DRGT. The ANOVA results indicated that the difference among the control and experimental groups was significant in all post-tests. In delayed posttests, although the COPT group outperformed the SOPT, the comparison among the groups showed that the differences did not reach the significance level. The results of the study show that input-only condition is not optimal for vocabulary learning and retention since the NINO or control group had the least mean score. This indicates that incidental vocabulary learning via input alone

(reading passage, here) is not sufficient. So, there is a need to use complementary tasks such as collaborative output tasks to get better results in vocabulary learning and retention.

The results of this study regarding the impact of output was consistent with Swain's Output hypothesis. The presence of output significantly improved the performance of the participants in all posttest conditions. So, solitary and collaborative groups outperformed the control group. The collaborative group in all conditions outperformed the other two groups indicating that the impact of output task is dependent on the collaborative nature of the tasks.

The general finding regarding the outperformance of collaborative group in all conditions is in line with Dobao, 2012, 2014; Tajeddin & Jabbarpoor (2013); Kim (2008); Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Shehadeh, 2011; Storch, 1999, 2005, 2008; Storch & Wigglesworth (2007). The present study showed that collaborative output is effective in the short term in both production and recognition of vocabulary.

The inconsistent results could be attributed to the reasons such as, task type effect (cognitive demanding nature of text reconstruction), proficiency level of participants, the confounding effect of the inclusion of both recognition and production levels, the participants' individual differences (unwillingness to get help from the peers), the passiveness of some participants, uncontrolled variables.

In conclusion, the findings of this study reemphasized the effect of output practice in vocabulary learning and retention. It also supports the using of the collaborative tasks in language courses on vocabulary learning and retention. It, however, makes us to be cautious in this regard. As far as vocabulary learning is concerned, the tasks should be used as early as we expose the learners to the target vocabulary. To get more generalizable results, further research should be conducted using more standard vocabulary tests.

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### Appendix A Target words

Evil	Drain	Basin	Stripe	Tissue	Digest
Solid	Mature	Invader	Particle	Injury	Transfusion
Gland	Extend	Digestive	Excess	Regulate	Primary
Substance	Intestine	Barren	Scarce	Permanent	Abundant
Humid	Annual	Sufficient	Moisture	Stimulate	Adjust
Adobe	Insulation	Dweller	Robe	Scorching	Irrigation

### APPENDIX B: Immediate Production Test (IPT)

\*Complete the sentences with complete form of words.

1. The liver is the largest gl..... in the body.
2. We need ex..... food for the guests.
3. The poi..... gas made him sick.
4. The water is sca..... in the Africa.
5. Fish are abu..... in the sea.
6. The ev..... spirit was considered the cause of illness.
7. The blood cl..... was on the shirt.
8. The team's shirt was str..... green.
9. The bas..... was a sign of barbershop.
10. The sick go to the doctor office for tre.....
11. The mat..... red blood cells contain hemoglobin.
12. Blood tran.....saves many people.
13. The inv..... entered the house by force.
14. Water is liquid. The ice is so.....
15. Blood is one of the important tis..... in the body.
16. Large inte..... is part of the body.
17. The hormones reg..... the level of blood sugar.
18. The plants don't grow in ba..... lands.
19. The iri..... systems change the deserts.
20. The sco..... sun in the summer is harmful.
21. The poor family lives in the ad.....
22. The insu..... system is very useful.
23. We should adj..... the car speed to stop accidents.
24. The meet once a year or ann.....
25. The workers like to have a perm..... job.

### APPENDIX C: Immediate Recognition Test (IRT)

\* Select the best choice.

1. There was a **mature** fruit on the tree.
 

a) delicious	b) full grown	c) beautiful
--------------	---------------	--------------
2. The man poured the water into the **round bowl**.
 

a) cell	b) gift	c) basin
---------	---------	----------
3. The sick man needed blood .....
 

a) transfusion	b) production	c) function
----------------	---------------	-------------
4. He wears his ..... shirt.
 

a) wasted	b) extended	c) stripped
-----------	-------------	-------------
5. The blood ..... in the brain was the cause of death.
 

a) clot	b) pole	c) moisture
---------	---------	-------------



6. The ice is .....  
a) not liquid                      b) cold                      c) shiny
7. They walked all day in the ..... heat.  
a) conditioning                      b) scorching                      c) digesting
8. The food was **sufficient** for the party.  
a) delicious                      b) oily                      c) enough
9. We went to the ..... meeting.  
a) annual                      b) humid                      c) simple
10. The tree doesn't grow in a/an ..... desert.  
b) barren                      b) average                      c) comfortable
11. There are different ..... in the body.  
a) soils                      b) glands                      c) climates
12. The drink was **poisonous**.  
a) very good                      b) caused sickness                      c) very cool
13. I need a ..... job not for a short time.  
a) permanent                      b) normal                      c) primary

\* Match the words with their meanings.

- | A             |       | B                      |  |
|---------------|-------|------------------------|--|
| 14) tissue    | ..... | a) always              |  |
| 15) evil      | ..... | b) cure                |  |
| 16) treatment | ..... | c) collection of cells |  |
| 17) abundant  | ..... | d) join together       |  |
| 18) adobe     | ..... | e) make dry and empty  |  |
| 19) intestine | ..... | f) harmful and bad     |  |
| 20) combine   | ..... | g) part of body        |  |
| 21) drain     | ..... | h) very much           |  |
| 22) permanent | ..... | i) mud house           |  |

\* Match the words with Farsi translations.

- | A              |       | B                    |  |
|----------------|-------|----------------------|--|
| 23) insulation | ..... | a) تنظیم کردن        |  |
| 24) stimulate  | ..... | b) کمیاب و نادر      |  |
| 25) dweller    | ..... | c) آبیاری و لوله کشی |  |
| 26) sufficient | ..... | d) عایق بندی         |  |
| 27) adjust     | ..... | e) ساکنین            |  |
| 28) irrigation | ..... | f) تحریک کردن        |  |
| 29) scarce     | ..... | g) اضافی و مازاد     |  |
| 30) excess     | ..... | h) کافی              |  |

APPENDIX D: Delayed Production Test (DPT)

Fill in the blanks with missing part of the words.

1. Irr..... means providing water to an area.
2. This money is suff..... for your trip.
3. Happening or done once every year is ann.....
4. The car brake (ترمز) should be adj.....
5. A long clothing is called a ro.....
6. This valve (دریچه) reg..... the flow (جریان) of water.
7. The foreign inv..... entered Iraq and toppled (سرنگون) Saddam Hossein.
8. It is not liquid or gas. It is so.....
9. All the water in the street was **empty**. It means it was dra.....
10. The Kermanshah municipality (شهرداری) ex..... the Moddares street.
11. We can see a sco..... heat in Ahvaz in the summer.
12. A mud (گلی) house is also called ad.....

Appendix E: Delayed Recognition Test (DRT)

Choose the correct answer.

1. Someone who is fully grown is .....  
a) digest                      b) barber                      c) mature                      d) stripe
2. If a person is **evil**, it means he is .....  
a) rich                      b) bad                      c) angry                      d) happy
3. A collection of cells (سلول) in the body is called .....  
a) basin                      b) tissue                      c) dweller                      d) intestine
4. All words are related (مرتبط) to the body but ..... is not.  
a) gland                      b) intestine                      c) transfusion                      d) adobe
5. The rainy cities are **humid**. They have much .....  
a) moisture                      b) insulation                      c) transport                      d) regulate
6. Forests (جنگل) are ..... in Gilan and Mazandaran.  
a) clot                      b) annual                      c) abundant                      d) extend

**Match the underlined words with their synonym in the right column.**

7. The **primary** aim of this course (درس) is to improve reading ..... a) permanent
8. Food is **not enough** in Africa. .... b) excess
9. This land is **not good for growing**. .... c) main
10. The **additional** (اضافی) is stored in the body as fat (چربی) .... d) barren
11. I like to have a **lifetime** (همیشگی) job. .... e) scorching  
f) scarce

**Choose the best translation for the Persian words.**

12. زخمی و آسیب دیده  
a) solid                      b) drain                      c) injury                      d) stripe
13. ذره  
a) barren                      b) particle                      c) gland                      d) scarce
14. تحریک کردن  
a) stimulate                      b) regulate                      c) irrigate                      d) insulate
15. راه راه  
a) mature                      b) basin                      c) stripe                      d) substance

## A COMPARISON BETWEEN IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS AND LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE TEACHING OBJECTIVES

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at finding out the discrepancies and mismatches between the Iranian efl learners' and teachers' perception of language teaching objectives. To this end, a 4-point likert\_scale questionnaire called "objectives of foreign language education" questionnaire based on sercue et al.'s (2005) 'intercultural competence' questionnaire was developed, piloted with 22 participants (i.e. 11 learners and 11 teachers), validated, and administered to 100 iranian efl teachers and 100 iranian efl learners through mail and in person. Teachers' and learners' perceptions of language teaching objectives were compared using mean scores and standard deviations.in order to determine whether there was any statistically significant difference between teachers' and learners' perceptions, an independent samples t--test was carried out. The result indicated that there are no statistically significant differences between learners and teachers' perceptions for the whole scale. Based on the findings of this study, it is proposed that teachers try to "minimize the perceptual mismatches" (kumaravadivelu, 2006) between the learners and themselves as much as possible.

**Key words:** teachers' perception, learner's perception, concept, perceptual mismatches, cognition

### 1. Introduction

Language teachers are eager to teach the learners, and they expect from learners to get properly what they try to teach, but this goal is not always easy to reach. Different elements can cause mismatches between teachers and learners' conceptions of what has been taught and what has been learned. To avoid these mismatches the goals of language teaching should be clear and teachers should try to prevent any mismatches in different fields of study because any types of mismatches can cause the learning process become inefficient. Accordingly, in the literature on perceptual mismatches, we encounter a lot of warnings (e.g., Horowitz, 1990) that the discrepancies between teachers' and learners' views can have negative effects on instructional outcomes. In his 'macrostrategic framework', Kumaravadivelu (2006) warns teachers, curriculum developers, and policy makers about perceptual mismatches between teachers and learners. In one of the macrostrategies of his framework, he wants teachers and the other people in educational settings to "*Minimize perceptual mismatches*". However the question is which

objectives of language teaching should receive priority? Is it a decision to be taken by the teachers or policy makers alone? According to Nunan (1999), the choices of what and how to teach should be made with reference to learners, to get learners actively involved in the learning process. In an attempt to let learners' voices be heard, this study compares learners' and teachers' perceptions of different objectives of language teaching.

## 2. Review of the related Literature

### 2.1. Objectives of Language Teaching

To be able to understand the goals of language teaching, it is better to take a look at Cook's view about goals and objectives of language teaching. Goals of language teaching and learning can be divided into two main groups: external and internal (Cook, 1983; 2002). External goals relate to the students' use of language outside the classroom, internal goals relate to the students' mental development as individuals. For the purpose of language teaching objectives, Chomsky (1986) set the goals of linguistics as accounting for knowledge of language, not knowledge of languages. Both language teachers and students have seen their goal as getting close to native speakers. To people who treat L2 users as deviating from native speaker norms, the important questions are the cognitive problems of bilingualism, not the cognitive deficits of monolingualism, and why L2 students can't speak like natives, rather than why monolinguals can't speak two languages.

### 2.2. Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence is the system of linguistic knowledge possessed by native speakers of a language. Linguistic competence is in contrast to the concept of linguistic performance, the way the language system is used in communication. Chomsky (1965) believed that the generativist tradition competence is the only level of language that is studied, because this level gives insights into the Universal Grammar those generativists see as underlying all human language systems. Chomsky's perspective of language learning basically revolves around the idea that all humans have an internal capacity to acquire language. In other words, it implies that this ability to learn and analyze linguistic information is universal and innate, and Chomsky likened it to a language acquisition device, being a result of human evolution.

### 2.2. Perceptual mismatches

Peacock (1998) claimed that certain learner perceptions may be determined to language learning. Using the term 'Perception' includes beliefs and students' subjective evaluations of their teachers' behaviors. Accordingly, 'perception' is operationalized to mean participants' psychologically held, subjective beliefs on ideal teaching practices, their observations of the frequency of specific teaching practices, and their assessments of those practices. , 'perceptions' refers to students' and teachers' personal, subjective. As a second language teacher, one might try to find a way to reduce the aforementioned mismatches. And this is only possible to be familiar with the learners' needs and objectives at the first step. Based on the findings of this study, It is proposed that teachers try to "minimize the perceptual mismatches" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) between the learners and themselves as much as possible. It is also proposed that teachers consider giving learners a true voice in educational settings. According to Nunan (1999), the choices of what and how to teach should be made with reference to learners, to get learners actively involved in the learning process.

Although the results of this study did not show a considerable mismatch between learners' and teachers' perceptions, in the literature on this topic, we encounter a lot of warnings (e.g., Horowitz, 1990) that mismatches between teachers' and learners' views can have negative effects on instructional outcomes. In his 'macrostrategic framework', Kumaravadivelu (2006) also warns teachers, curriculum developers, and policy makers about perceptual mismatches

between teachers and learners. In one of the macrostrategies of his framework, he wants teachers and the other people in educational settings to "*Minimize perceptual mismatches*". Kumaravadivelu (1991) further mentions ten potential sources of perceptual mismatches among which 'pedagogic' can be highlighted. In Kumaravadivelu's words, this source is "a source that refers to teacher/learner recognition of stated or unstated, short-and/or long-term objective(s) of classroom activities". Kumaravadivelu (2006) proposes that it is essential for us (teachers) to be sensitive to and aware of these mismatches as it can help us effectively intervene whenever we notice or whenever learners indicate problems in carrying out a specified classroom activity.

### **3. Method of research**

#### **3.1. The Design of the study**

This study was centered on one research question i.e., "Are there any significant mismatches between Iranian EFL learners and teachers' perceptions of different objectives of foreign language teaching?" To answer this question and to test the hypothesis, a descriptive method of research was used. To gain this goal, a 4-point Likert-scale questionnaire called 'Objectives of Foreign Language Education' Questionnaire based on Sercu et al.'s (2005) Intercultural Competence Questionnaire was used.

#### **3.2. Participants**

The main phase of this study was conducted with two groups. The first group consisted of 100 male and female Iranian EFL learners and the second group consisted of 100 male and female Iranian English teachers. The first group of 100 EFL learners was chosen from Islamic Azad University of Rasht. All of them had enough familiarity with English as a second language. Their age range was between 20 and 35. The second group of participants who participated in this study included 100 English teachers from different language institutes such as Iran Language Institute and Safir institute in Rasht. Their age range was between 25 and 55. As a large sample was required for this study, the method of selection used was non-random convenience sampling of learner and teacher participants who were available for the study.

#### **3.3. Materials and Procedures**

The only data gathering instrument used in this study was a 4-point Likert-scale questionnaire called 'Objectives of Foreign Language Education' Questionnaire based on Sercu et al.'s (2005) Intercultural Competence Questionnaire. The data collection procedure was done in Islamic Azad University of Rasht, Iran Language Institute and some other language institutes in Rasht. The permit for conducting the research at Islamic Azad University of Rasht was obtained from the dear instructor of the class. The other group of data was gathered with the help of my kind and helpful colleagues at ILI and some other friends at different institutes such as Safir. This study required great collaboration on the part of participants for being patient in completing the questionnaire.

Based on Sercu et al.'s (2005) Intercultural Competence Questionnaire, a 4-point Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 3 sub-components (i.e. culture learning objectives, Language learning objectives, and general skill/language skills learning objectives) was developed, piloted with 22 participants (i.e. 11 learners and 11 teachers), and administered to 100 Iranian EFL learners and 100 Iranian EFL teachers through mail and in person. They were asked to complete the questionnaires carefully. Because of the vast number of participants the process of data collection took almost three months. Learners' and teachers' responses to 8 items of the scale used in this study were coded by assigning each response option a number for scoring purposes. After all 8 items had been coded; the two groups' (teacher and learner) average score for the whole questionnaire was calculated. These average scores also fell within a range

between 4 and 1. Teachers' and learners' perceptions of different objectives of foreign language education, then, were compared.

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1. Data analysis and findings

The research question of the study examined whether Iranian EFL learners and teachers hold the same perceptions of language teaching objectives or not. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the learner and teacher participants for the whole scale.

The results of the reliability analysis of the "Objectives of Foreign Language Education" questionnaire are presented in Table 4.2.

The value of Cronbach's Alpha for the objectives of foreign language education questionnaire was ( $\alpha = .735$ ). This index was higher than the least minimum required (.70) and according to standards suggested by Barker, Pistrang, and Elliott (1994), it was considered acceptable reliability index.

The research question of this study aimed to find out whether there are any significant differences between EFL teachers and learners with regard to their perceptions of foreign language education. To this end, an independent samples T-test was run to the results of the questionnaire used in this study. It was run to make a comparison between the two groups in terms of their perceptions. The results revealed no considerable disagreement between the two groups ( $t = 1.88, sig = .062 \geq .05$ ).

Table 4.5 depicted the values of means and standard deviation along with standard error of the mean for the two groups on this study's questionnaire. The mean score of the EFL teachers (mean<sub>EFL teachers</sub> = 3.39) was 0.087 points higher than that of the EFL learners (mean<sub>EFL learners</sub> = 3.30).

**Table 4.2:**

*Reliability Statistics for the Questionnaire*

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Attitude questionnaire	.735	8

**Table 4.5:**

*Group statistics for EFL teachers and learners' perceptions of foreign language education purposes*

Group Statistics					
	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Attitude</b>	EFL teachers	100	3.3963	.31485	.03149
	EFL learners	100	3.3088	.34288	.03429

In general, EFL teachers were more consistent ( $SD_{EFL\ teachers} = .314$ ) in their ratings of the items of the questionnaire than EFL learners ( $SD_{EFL\ learners} = .342$ ). To see if this difference was statistically significant, an independent sample t- test was run to the findings of the questionnaires the results of which are presented in the following table:

**Table 4.6:**

*Independent Samples Test for EFL Teachers and Learners' Perceptions of Foreign Language Education Purposes*

		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
Attitude questionnaire	Equal variances assumed	.11	.73	1.88	198	.062	.087	.046	-.004	.179
	Equal variances not assumed			1.88	196.5	.062	.087	.046	-.004	.179

The independent sample T-test procedure offered two tests of the contrast between the two groups. The assumption for the first row was that the variances of the two groups were equal. The Levene's statistic examined the fairness of the variances. The significance index of the statistic was (.73). Since this value was greater than (.05), it could be assumed that the groups had equal variances and thus the second test was overlooked and the findings of the first test (first row) were documented.

Based on Table 4.6, there was not statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in terms of their attitude towards objectives of language education ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). This supports the null hypothesis and implies that there are not any significant mismatches between the Iranian EFL learners' and teachers' perceptions of different objectives of foreign language education.

#### 4.2. Result of the study

After collecting the data and codifying the items of the questionnaires, they were fed into the computer. For the data analysis, SPSS statistical software was employed. For the first step, the reliability of the 8- item questionnaire used in this study was estimated.

For the second step, and in order to test the research hypothesis, an Independent samples t-test was run with the alpha level set at .05. It should be mentioned that before conducting the t-test, the normality assumption of the parametric test (independent samples T- test and paired samples T-tests) was established through running Skewness analyses and Levene's test. The descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, range, Skewness and kurtosis) along with inferential statistics to provide answer for the research question are presented in chapter four.

## 5. Conclusion

Though the findings of this study did not prove any mismatches between teachers' and learners' perceptions of foreign language education objectives, one of the considerations that teachers should not neglect in educational settings is to minimize the mismatches between learners' perceptions and attitudes and those of themselves. For this purpose, they should treat learners as active and autonomous participants in pedagogic decision makings. It is proposed that teachers and policy makers take learners pREFERENCES for the various classroom activities and objectives into consideration whenever they want to make decisions on different objectives of language teaching. It is also proposed that teachers consider giving learners more voice and autonomy in choosing foreign language education objective.

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# CRITICAL THINKING, MINDFULNESS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the correlation between critical thinking, mindfulness and academic achievement among intermediate Iranian (EFL) learners. A 34 multiple-choice item questionnaire on the basis of critical thinking, a 15-item likert-scale questionnaire based on mindfulness and a 31 multiple-choice reading comprehension test were employed in this study. To fulfill the purpose of the study, 220 participants from among 250 university students majoring in English translation and TEFL were selected through administering a standardized Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Having applied the proficiency test, first the California Critical Thinking Questionnaire was administered, then the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale questionnaire was administered and finally the reading comprehension test selected from actual TOEFL test (2004) was carried out among the participants. The results showed that there was no correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension; neither was any correlation between mindfulness and critical thinking. The correlation between mindfulness and reading comprehension was positive. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made some recommendations for teaching, teacher training, materials development, and syllabus design.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, mindfulness, academic achievement, EFL learners

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, English has been the language of "globalization" and it was accepted as an international language for communication between people with different mother tongues over a wide area. Therefore, learning and teaching English have become so important in second and foreign contexts. Consequently, to develop the main goals of education, the students' learning and the quality of teaching, efficient and effective methods and approaches of teaching English should be taken into consideration. Teachers, through managing students' behaviors in the classroom and creating a positive learning environment, might be able to teach more efficiently and provide more help to learners with their academic achievement (Wentzel, 2002). Individuals must ask questions, create new ways of solving problems, connect new knowledge to the information they already have and apply their knowledge in new situations to be able to live and have competition in the era of information. Individuals must improve their critical thinking skills which have been recently logically from this information, and come to reliable and trustworthy conclusions located among the most important goals in information, efficiently and creatively classify through this information, reason education. A person who thinks critically is able to ask appropriate questions, collect relevant about the world that enable him/her to live and act successfully in it (Center for Critical Thinking, 1996a).

Over the past 15 years, an interest as grown rapidly in the benefits of mindfulness practice. From its initial applications in medicine, mindfulness training has spread into the fields of psychology, healthcare, neuroscience, business, the military, and education. There are noticeable data that, in adults, mindfulness increases health and well-being via reducing stress, anxiety, and depression; enhancing neuroendocrine and immune system function; improving adherence to medical treatments; lessening necessity for medication; changing perception of pain; increasing motivation to make lifestyle changes; and encouraging social connection and refined interpersonal relations (Ludwig & Kabat-Zinn 2008).

### **A. Statement of the Problem**

Mindfulness and critical thinking are two relatively new constructs, so there are gaps in the literature and little has been conducted regarding this domain of study. First, the relationship between the two constructs should be understood before they can be used by administrators. The purpose of this study is to determine whether mindfulness and critical thinking will lead to academic achievement or not. It also looks at the relationship between mindfulness, critical thinking and academic achievement. The benefit of this study is that it will add useful information to the bank of knowledge already in existence in relation to mindfulness and critical thinking and academic achievement. Thus, it will be a tool for administrators to use as they create sound methods of advancing learner achievement.

### **B. Significance of the Study**

The researcher of this study believes that nowadays highly technical society that changes and develops rapidly and with the very curious and eager to get new information students who live and study in this informative era, we need teachers who can realize students' needs. The researcher thinks that the time of manual teachers, those teachers who just follow the teaching instruction, is over. The educational system needs teachers who are researchers and use new methods and technics that help reciprocal teaching. These teachers think critically and encourage critical thinking and social negotiation and always look for new teaching techniques to be effective teachers. They know how to treat their students and share feelings and thoughts with them but not dominate them. In other words, they know how to be critical thinkers and mindfulness teachers and help their learners.

### **C. Research Questions & Hypotheses**

1. Is there any significant relationship between critical thinking and academic achievement?
2. Is there any significant relationship between mindfulness and academic achievement?
3. Is there any significant relationship between critical thinking and mindfulness?

Regarding the research questions, the present researcher has proposed the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no relationship between critical thinking and academic achievement.
2. There is no relationship between mindfulness and academic achievement.
3. There is no relationship between critical thinking and mindfulness.

## **2. REVIEW LITERATURE**

### **A. Critical Thinking**

A review of literature in the field of critical thinking revealed a general lack of consensus on how critical thinking is best defined, on what critical thinking skills can and should be taught, and on determining the most appropriate framework for this teaching. As a whole, educational reformers have not even agreed on terminology. While some scholars use "critical thinking" and "higher order thinking" interchangeably (Halpern, 1993), others make a sharp distinction (Facione, 1990).

The relationships among “critical thinking”, “higher order thinking”, “thinking skills” and other terms such as “informal logic”, “informal reasoning”, “problem solving”, “argumentation”, “critical reflection”, “reflective judgment” and “metacognition” have further complicated the issue. Other areas of disagreement and concern include (a) the extent to which critical thinking is subject specific, (b) differences between expert and novice thinking in a discipline and the extent to which novices can learn to think more like experts, (c) difficulties in separating higher order and lower order thinking skills for instructional purposes, and (d) whether critical thinking should be considered a process or a set of skills (Beyer, 1985; Facione, 1984; Johnson, 1996; Perkins, Farady, & Bushey, 1991; Resnick, 1987). While a number of scholars have attempted to impose order on this “conceptual swamp” (Cuban, 1984:686), no one has yet come up with a definition or a theory that is accepted as definitive (for examples see Beyer, 1985; Ennis, 1987; Facione, 1990; Lewis & Smith, 1993; Marzano *et al.*, 1988; Quellmalz, 1987). One of the major stumbling blocks to consensus has rested in the grounding of various theories and models in two distinct disciplines relevant to this study: philosophy and psychology. Philosophers have tended to focus on the nature and quality of the products of critical thinking, for example analysis of arguments. Psychologists, on the other hand, have concentrated on the process of cognition, the components and operations used to address academic and practical problems. Further, cognitive and developmental psychology have been based in empirical research, while philosophy has relied on logical reasoning to reach conclusions. While most theorists have continued to base their theories and definitions of critical thinking or higher order reasoning on one discipline or the other, some educators have noted the importance of drawing on both philosophy and psychology to develop a rigorous and encompassing theory of critical thinking and how to teach for it (Kuhn, 1992; Kurfiss, 1988; Marzano *et al.*, 1988; Quellmalz, 1987; Weinstein, 1995). Sternberg (1986) has noted a third critical thinking strand within the field of education. Benjamin Bloom and his associates are included in this category. Their taxonomy for information processing skills (1956) is one of the most widely cited sources for educational practitioners when it comes to teaching and assessing higher-order thinking skills. Bloom’s taxonomy is hierarchical, with “comprehension” at the bottom and “evaluation” at the top. The three highest levels (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) are frequently said to represent critical thinking (Kennedy *et al.*, 1991). The benefit of the educational approach is that it is based on years of classroom experience and observations of student learning, unlike both the philosophical and the psychological traditions (Sternberg, 1986). However, some have noted that the educational approach is limited in its vagueness. Concepts within the taxonomy lack the clarity necessary to guide instruction and assessment in a useful way (Ennis, 1985; Sternberg, 1986). Furthermore, the frameworks developed in education have not been tested as vigorously as those developed within either philosophy or psychology (Sternberg, 1986).

### **B. Mindfulness**

Eastern and western traditions are considered to provide a foundation for the definition of mindfulness. Mindfulness is a contemplative practice that traces its origins back to eastern Philosophy particularly Buddhism and the Noble Eightfold Path (Snelling, 1991; Kornfeld, 2009). The online Oxford English Dictionary defines mindfulness or being mindful as: “taking heed; being conscious or aware”. Mindfulness has been defined in various ways in the literature. Brown and Ryan (2003), for example, define it as receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience. According to Bishop *et al.* (2004), mindfulness refers to both the self-regulation of attention to one's current experience and a particular orientation towards this experience, characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance. For Kabat-Zinn (2003), mindfulness involves intentionally paying sustained attention to one's ongoing sensory, cognitive, and emotional experience, without elaborating upon or judging any part of this experience. The concept of mindfulness has been developed and expounded primarily by the psychologist, Ellen Langer, although it also has roots in Eastern philosophy. Mindfulness is not

an easy concept to define but it can be best understood as the process of drawing novel distinctions. It does not matter whether what is noticed is important or trivial as long as it is new to the viewer. Actively drawing these distinctions keeps us situated in the present. It also makes us more aware of the context and perspective of our actions than if we rely upon distinctions and categories drawn in the past. Under this latter situation, rules and routines are more likely to govern our behavior, irrespective of the current circumstances, and this can be constructed as mindless behavior. Langer & Moldoveanu, (2000:1-2).

### **C. Achievement from the Point of View of Construct Representation**

In the Standards for test construction (APA, 1999) achievement is viewed basically as the competence a person has in an area of content. This competence is the result of many intellectual and nonintellectual variables. The scientific study of achievement encompasses data coming from experiments with word lists as well as data from the acquisition of complex domains, like computer programming, mathematics, or the way in which people solve physics problems. At the experimental level, achievement is referred to as acquisition, learning, or knowledge representation, sometimes definition and measurement in achievement depending on theoretical biases. Achievement is the word preferred in the educational or psychometrics fields, being sometimes characterized by the degree of inference required on the part of the student to give a response, and by the type of reference to a cognitive process made explicit in the measurement tool. Cognitive psychology produced a shift from the study of behavior to its unobservable psychological antecedents. The cognitive analysis of achievement means to get into the experimental study of memory storage and retrieval. From the cognitive point of view, achievement must be a construct that should refer to the different stages of knowledge acquisition. The end product; that is, the knowledge that characterizes the expert, is a highly structured set of mental models built after long sessions of practice. The consequences are that the expert can bring into play sophisticated strategies and take into account large bodies of knowledge without the usual working memory limitations. The studies and most accepted model on short term memory (Baddeley, 1986; Baddeley and Hitch, 1974) and data on memory span changes (Chase and Ericsson, 1981) clearly indicate that this system plays a crucial role in knowledge acquisition and reasoning. The amount of information processed by the system is always limited to a reduced number at least they are chunked. When a subject is faced with a reasoning task he has to integrate background and external knowledge, consuming limited resources. When the information is completely new and 46 S. Algarabel and C. Dasí of a very ABSTRACT nature, then the limitations of the system are at its maximum. Work on experts, in such diverse fields as Physics or chess (Anzai, 1991; Charness, 1991; Ericsson, 1996; Ericsson and Smith, 1991), show that the expert is characterized by a well-organized ABSTRACT body of knowledge based on general principles as well as specific knowledge related to the field of expertise. The amount of practice required to become an expert leads to very structured and compact schemas that will allow bypassing the working memory limitations. As part of this knowledge, the expert also has a set of general and specific metacognitive strategies for dealing with particular problems to be solved. These strategies can take into account more and more information, given the highly structured nature of the long-term memory. Educationally, achievement may be defined (Niemi, 1999) as the mastering of major concepts and principles, important facts and propositions, skills, strategic knowledge and integration of knowledge. More systematically, achievement is sometimes fractionated into knowledge components (Ruiz-Primo, 1998), like declarative, procedural and strategic. The declarative knowledge is composed of domain specific content whereas the procedural and strategic refer to specific production systems (Anderson and Lebiere, 1998) and specific heuristics (Schoenfeld, 1992). The cognitive system has also the ability to monitor the process and use nonspecific strategies that are also a part of our proficiency in achievement. These different components of achievement develop conjointly and cannot be treated separately. In summary, achievement is the competence of a person in relation to a domain of knowledge. What we can externally

observe is performance. The current view states that to reach a specific level of performance it may be necessary to bring into play complex cognitive tools like strategies, heuristics or skills. No doubt that the end result and the type of means to reach it must be correlated (e. g. Willson, 1989), a fact often overlooked. A difficult problem can only be solved after a well-organized body of knowledge is consulted and the appropriate metacognitive skills are used to reach a solution. The question then is: what can be gained or lost, when taking into account the whole process, as when an open response is assessed, or just the final solution, as in multiple choice? From the point of view of measurement instrument, one can argue that if there is no compromise in reliability; that is, if the evaluation of the whole open response is carried out with a high level of precision, the measurement of the open response will increase validity. However, a more critical point has to do with the consequences of focusing, from an educational perspective, on the cognitive processes supposedly involved in the final performance. If definition and measurement *in achievement* the cognitive processes that lead to expert performance must be taken into account, the definition of achievement from a complex cognitive view has long reaching consequences, because by emphasizing these aspects we are promoting a level of expertise not reachable by other means. This is the position of most proponents of the new educational movements which try to reform the testing procedure. As we know academic achievement is a general term. I consider reading comprehension at this research. As we know academic achievement is the general term and because of the limitations at this research we considered reading comprehension.

#### **D. Critical thinking and reading comprehension**

Reviewing the literature, we will understand that the relationship between CT and reading comprehension is well established. Beck (1989) stated that "there is no reading without reasoning" (p. 677). Also, Waters (2006) contended that critical thinking activities can equip learners with instruments which help them "stay with" or "go beyond" the information presented in a text. Bala subramaian (1991) defines deep comprehension as the ability to recognize, organize, and articulate the central idea of text without conflating them with peripheral details. Kurland (2000) claims that comprehension requires higher-order thinking. He states that reading actually a problem solving process requires cognition. According to Kurland (2002), "We do not simply read the words; we read ideas, thoughts that spring from the relationships of various assertions". (p.2). To understand text deeply, it is necessary to construct meaning through connection and interpretation of the author's ideas. Byrnes (2001) believes that good readers can recognize words automatically which enables the individual to focus on higher order thinking by utilizing sentence integration and making semantic connections. Secondly, good readers quickly recognize words. Speed is important because readers need to operate on information in working memory before it dissipates (Byrnes, 2001). The third characteristic of good reader is their ability to record words in to phonological representations. The phonological skills help the individual to create a code and stable pathway of working memory to effectively access word meanings. Nowadays critical thinking is one of the major concepts under consideration in education and it has also received a significant position in second and foreign language learning (Atkinson, 1997). Several researches have been conducted to investigate the effects of critical thinking on different aspects of second and foreign language learning. Some of them related to this study have been mentioned here. In the area of critical thinking and language proficiency, Rashid and Hashim (2008) aimed to investigate the relationship between critical thinking and language proficiency. They administered the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT) and English language proficiency test to 280 undergraduate students of University Utara Malaysia (UUM). The results indicated that there was a significant correlation between critical thinking ability of Malaysian students and their English language proficiency. Concerning the effects of critical thinking on reading comprehension, Fahim et al. (2010) conducted a study to find if there is any significant relationship between test takers' critical thinking ability and their performance on the reading

section of TOEFL. 83 female advanced EFL learners studying English at a private institute in Iran took part in this study. For the purpose of the study, the reading section of PBT (paper-based TOEFL) and the critical thinking appraisal were administered to the participants. The results of the critical thinking appraisal were correlated with the scores on the reading section of Paper-Based TOEFL. The findings indicated a statistically significant advantage for those with greater critical thinking skills. The researchers concluded that critical thinking is very important for answering reading comprehension questions, especially those related to main ideas. Another study, similar to this area of investigation, was conducted by Kamali and Fahim (2011) to investigate the relationship between critical thinking ability, resilience, and reading comprehension of texts containing unknown vocabulary items. 63 male and female EFL intermediate students were administered a critical thinking questionnaire, a resilience scale, a vocabulary checklist and a validated battery of four reading tests. Results showed that a) the levels of critical thinking had significant effect on the scores of the subjects on resilience scale,

b) the levels of critical thinking had significant effect on the subjects' reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items, and c) the levels of resilience had significant effect on the subjects' reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items. The findings indicating that levels of critical thinking had significant effect on the learners' reading ability are consistent with the findings of the previous study (Fahim et al., 2010) that indicated a significant relationship between critical thinking levels of learners and their scores on the reading section of Paper-Based TOEFL. Fahim and Komijani (2010) attempted to identify any significant relationship between critical thinking ability, L2 vocabulary knowledge, and L2 vocabulary learning strategies of Iranian EFL learners. The data, collected through a productive vocabulary levels test and a critical thinking questionnaire that were administered to 70 intermediate EFL students, were analyzed and the results revealed that Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge was significantly related to their critical thinking ability. In addition the participants' critical thinking

ability was correlated positively with determination, memorization, cognitive, and meta-cognitive strategies of L2 vocabulary learning but not with social ones. Moreover, Nikoopour et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between critical thinking and the use of direct and indirect language learning strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. They selected 100 college students majoring in English Translation, and then, two survey instruments, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), and a Questionnaire of Critical Thinking, were administered among them. A statistically significant relationship was found between critical thinking and the use of specific direct and indirect language learning strategies, such as cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social, but not with memory, compensation, and affective strategies.

In the light of the above literature, it can be implied that critical thinking has an effective role on the processes of foreign language learning and learners who are more critical are more successful in language learning.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. Participants**

In this study, a total number of 220 English major male and female students whose ages ranged between 20-25 participated. These students who major in translation and TEFL were chosen on the basis of their OPT scores from all the available students at University of Babolsar and Payame-Noor University of Amol. The rationale behind choosing these English major students was their background knowledge, their exposure to English as well as their availability. The reason was that they were required to carry out reading comprehension and it was believed

that English major students would better perform these activities. Moreover, they were able to interact with the instructor (one of the researchers).

### **B. Instruments**

In order to examine the research hypotheses of this study, the researcher used three sets of instruments. Initially, an OPT test was utilized as a general language proficiency measurement in order to homogenize the participants. The rationale behind using such a language proficiency test was to minimize the possible effects of non-homogenized groups of the learners on the study. The OPT consisted of 60 multiple-choice items in three sections: structure (20 items), vocabulary (20 items) and reading comprehension (20 items).

The first instrument in this study was the California Critical Thinking Test. As form B of CCTT is suitable to test critical thinking at levels above high school and adults (Facion & Facion 1994), the researcher has selected this questionnaire. These 34 items measure five categories of critical thinking ability namely, analysis (9 items), evaluation (14 items), inference (11 items), deductive reasoning (16 items), and inductive reasoning (14 items). Each is a multiple choice item designed to be scored dichotomously, with one correct answer and three or four distracters. The reliability of this test using KR20 has been reported to be 0.78 to 0.80 (Facion, 1990).

The second instrument, Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) which is one of the most popular measures of mindfulness is a 15-item scale. Participants respond to each item on a 6-point Likert scale from "almost always" to "almost never". According to Brown and Ryan (2003), this scale is designed to assess a core characteristic of awareness and attention to what is taking place in the present. This questionnaire covers two subscales which contain attention (10 items) and awareness (5 items). Cronbach's alpha was generally range from .0.80 to .0.90.

The third instrument, the reading comprehension test selected from Actual TOEFL Test (2004) was carried out among participants. The students read the text and then answered the questions. The test is a standard test and its reliability and validity is approved.

### *C. Procedures*

In order to investigate the correlation of critical thinking, mindfulness and academic achievement among intermediate Iranian EFL learners, at first the OPT as a proficiency test was implemented. The total number of participants was 250 only 220 subjects were selected based on the OPT test. The study was undertaken in three phases. In the first phase, all subjects answered 34 multiple choice questions of the California critical thinking questionnaire at 45 minutes. In the second phase, these students answered 15 Likers-scale items on mindfulness attention awareness scale at 17 minutes. In the third phase the students answered 31 multiple choice items on a reading comprehension test at 45 minutes. After collecting data, the scores for all participants were tabulated and analyzed to provide answers to the research questions formulated earlier in chapter one. The third instrument was an argumentative text with multiple choice questions. The students read the text and then answered the questions. According to the obtained results the researcher compared the scores of the participants and computed the amount of correlation of the scores of the participants.

### **D. Data analysis**

To analyze the data, in the first step, descriptive statistics were employed. To determine the relationship between students' critical thinking and reading comprehension, mindfulness and reading comprehension, and critical thinking and mindfulness, Pearson Product-Moment

correlations was used. In order to analyze the relevant data in this experiment, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Inc., 2009), version 18, was employed.

#### 4. RESULTS

A Descriptive Statistics was run to investigate the correlation of critical thinking, mindfulness and academic achievement of the learners. In order to probe the possible aforementioned correlation, as mentioned earlier in introduction, three hypotheses were formulated as follow:

1. There is no relationship between critical thinking and academic achievement.
2. There is no relationship between mindfulness and academic achievement.
3. There is no relationship between critical thinking and mindfulness.

The level of significance was set at 0.05. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the instruments employed in the study.

**Table1: Descriptive Statistics of Critical Thinking, Mindfulness and Reading Comprehension Tests**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	220	1.00	20.00	9.0648	4.29445
<b>Mindfulness</b>	220	2.00	6.00	3.7685	.75460
<b>Reading</b>	220	2.00	26.00	12.2685	4.40213

#### Investigation of the First Null Hypothesis

1. There is no relationship between critical thinking and academic achievement.

**Table 2: The Results of Correlation between Students' Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension**

	Reading Comprehension	Sig.
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	-.138*	.043
<b>Analysis</b>	-.013	.851
<b>Evaluation</b>	.048	.493
<b>Inference</b>	-.068	.331
<b>Inductive Reasoning</b>	-.100	.331
<b>Deductive Reasoning</b>	-.108	.140

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



To investigate the correlation between the students' critical thinking and reading comprehension, a Pearson Product-Moment correlation was applied. The results indicated a negative significant correlation between the students' critical thinking and reading comprehension ( $r = -0.138, p < .05$ ). However, no significant correlations were found between reading comprehension and the subscales of the critical thinking questionnaire: reading comprehension and 1) analysis ( $r = -0.013, p > .05$ ), 2) evaluation ( $r = 0.048, p > .05$ ), 3) inference ( $r = -0.068, p > .05$ ), 4) inductive reasoning ( $r = -0.100, p > .05$ ) and 5) deductive reasoning ( $r = -0.108, p > .05$ ) (see Table 2)

#### Investigation of the Second Null Hypothesis

2. There is no relationship between mindfulness and academic achievement.

**Table 3: The Results of Correlation between Students' Mindfulness and Reading Comprehension**

	Reading Comprehension	Sig.
<b>Mindfulness</b>	.143*	.034
<b>Attention</b>	.104	.122
<b>Awareness</b>	.063	.140

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To investigate the correlation between the students' mindfulness and reading comprehension, a Pearson Product-Moment correlation was applied. The results indicated a positive significant correlation between the students' mindfulness and reading comprehension ( $r = 0.143, p < .05$ ). However, no significant correlations were found between reading comprehension and the subscales of the mindfulness questionnaire: reading comprehension and attention ( $r = 0.104, p > .05$ ), reading comprehension and awareness ( $r = 0.063, p > .05$ ) (see Table 4)

#### Investigation of the Third Null Hypothesis

3. There is no relationship between critical thinking and mindfulness.

To investigate the correlation between the students' mindfulness and critical thinking, a Pearson Product-Moment correlation was applied. The results indicated no significant relationship between the students' mindfulness and critical thinking ( $r = -0.010, p > .05$ ) (see Table 4).

**Table 4: The correlation between the students' mindfulness and critical thinking**

	Critical Thinking	Sig.
<b>Mindfulness</b>	-.010	.887

## 5. DISCUSSION

The primary concern of this study was whether there is any relationship among Iranian EFL students' CT ability, mindfulness and their reading comprehension. Having the similarity

between the elements of CT and reading comprehension in mind, finding a positive correlation between these two variables was not far behind the expectation of the researcher of the present study. Considering our first research question which asked whether there is a relationship between students' critical thinking ability and their reading comprehension achievement, the result of the present study revealed that there was a negative significant relationship between these two variables ( $r = -0.138$ ). This indicated that critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners affected reading comprehension scores. This result emphasizes the important role of critical thinking in language learning and is in agreement with the findings in these studies (Nikoopour et al., 2011; Kamali & Fahim, 2011; Fahim & Komijani, 2010; Rashid & Hashim, 2008), concluding that it is very important for students who want to be successful in education to have the ability to think critically. Nikoopour et al. (2011) in their study found a strong relationship between Iranian EFL learners' critical thinking and their use of direct and indirect strategies. They also found that critical thinking was correlated positively with cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social language learning strategies, but not with compensation, memory and affective strategies. So they claimed that a unique change in critical thinking has a large effect on the overall use of direct and indirect language learning strategies. By analyzing the results of their study and the results of the present study, the researchers can claim that critical thinking affects language learning and this also supports the claim of Kamali and Fahim (2011) who reported that EFL learners' critical thinking levels have significant effects on their reading comprehension ability when faced with unknown vocabulary items. According to Kamali and Fahim (2011) improvements in critical thinking are paralleled by improvements in reading comprehension. They believe that the presence of such a strong relationship may be due to the fact that critical thinking and reading are both cognitive abilities which have some identifiable cognitive skills in common. Similarly, Fahim and Komijani (2010) found a significant relationship between critical thinking, L2 vocabulary knowledge, and L2 vocabulary learning strategies of Iranian EFL learners. They reported that critical thinking ability exists and influences the breadth and depth of EFL learners' vocabulary repertoire. According to Fahim and Komijani (2010), thinking critically and systematically will improve the way learners learn and critical thinking also improves comprehension by helping learners analyze the logical structure of the texts. The present study is not also in agreement with the study of Rashid and Hashim (2008). Rashid and Hashim (2008) found a moderate significant relationship between Malaysian EFL learners' critical thinking ability and their English language proficiency. They concluded that critical thinking ability is positively correlated with proficiency in English, and if learners' critical thinking ability is heightened, their English proficiency will be improved accordingly.

In the realm of language learning, specifically learning English as a second or foreign language, (Dabaghi, Zabihi, & Rezazadeh, 2013) believe that it is extremely influential to enhance the learners' critical thinking due to the presence of historical, social, cultural and political issues. Regarding the correlation of critical thinking, mindfulness and academic achievement among intermediate Iranian EFL learners. Some of the mental skills employed in reading comprehension, as Celce-Murcia (2001) quotes Grabe (1991), are inference, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation which are what experts include as being at the very core of critical thinking. "As to the cognitive skills here is what experts include as being at the very core of critical thinking: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation." (Facione, 1992, p.4) The results of previous researches indicate that there is a large positive significant relationship between teaching critical thinking and reading comprehension (Hosseini et al., 2012) The findings of the present study indicated that, negative relationship was found between Iranian ELF students' critical thinking and their reading ability. Therefore, these results reject the first and second null hypothesis and but support the second null hypothesis. The new model opened new windows for learners and broadened their horizon through introducing techniques that help them comprehend, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the text. It encouraged the learners to apply the concepts at hand to other situations and contexts and to

see the text from different perspectives and through different lenses. Experiencing this new model itself stimulated reading. The readers are not simply receiving the facts and knowledge in the text, but try to form their own opinions and viewpoints about what they read from the texts. According to Wallace (1999), in language teaching critical means both a preparedness to question and reflect on the meaning and uses of language and it argues for the need to draw attention to the ideological bases of discourses as they circulate both in everyday life and within specific texts. Paul (1995) argues that the reading class should train critical readers. He, therefore, emphasizes that critical readers should question, organize, interpret, synthesize, and digest what they read learners to read differently and actually modified their passive techniques. Pirozzi (2003) defines critical reading as “very high-level comprehension of written material requiring interpretation and evaluation skills”(p.325) and “it also entails using reference to go beyond what is stated explicitly, filling in informational gaps, and coming to logical conclusions”(p.325). He further stresses that critical reading emphasizes the active nature of. What the researcher wants to emphasize in this study is the importance of critical thinking and mindfulness in the everyday classroom so that the learners can think more critically, practice practically attention and awareness at the present moment and they are able to decide what is highly beneficial for them regarding social and political and even international changes in the domain of ELT industry. The present researcher is also of the strong opinion that we need to help our learners develop their critical thinking in EFL contexts.

#### **A. Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

The results of the study can be summarized as follow:

1. After administering and scoring the OPT, participants who achieved  $\pm 2SD$  220 were selected for this study.
2. Being exposed to three sessions in critical thinking, mindfulness and academic achievement among Intermediate Iranian EFL Learners respectively, the participants were given three questionnaires. After scoring, Descriptive Statistics was run. Thus the critical thinking and academic achievement have negative relationship.
3. Concerning the second null hypothesis, the results also indicated that mindfulness and academic achievement have positive relationship. So, the second null hypothesis was rejected.
4. Concerning the third null hypothesis, the results also indicated that critical thinking and mindfulness have not any relationship. So, the third null hypothesis was not rejected.

#### **B. Pedagogical Implication and Applications**

The implications of the study are threefold. First, it suggests that course designers and materials writers incorporate in their courses and contents, materials that stimulate learners' thinking processes and encourage learner attention and awareness strategies. EFL teachers are also recommended to train their learners in thinking critically and analytically (e.g., by asking them and encouraging them to ask challenging and inferential questions). Secondly, teachers should gradually remove themselves from the center of attention, encouraging learners to take more responsibility for their own learning. Thirdly, teachers should make learners conscious of the advantages that learning a foreign language like English could bring to them. The findings may benefit EFL learners in that they could seek opportunities to enhance their higher-order thinking skills (i.e. critical thinking), depend more on their own abilities in learning, and motivate themselves by thinking of the practical benefits of learning a foreign language. These findings might be helpful to those who develop curriculum for EFL teachers to include purposeful course(s) of reading with the purpose of training capable had used more cognitive and metacognitive strategies in and competent critical readers as well as critical thinkers In

addition, it might be of benefit to those who teach English, particularly reading courses to employ their creativity and include appropriate tasks and activities to strategies was higher among good readers. The present study may encourage the instructional training of the underlining strategy in facilitating Iranian university students' EFL reading comprehension. According to Facione and Facione (1996), every program targeted at developing CT at higher education must encompass these components: *truth-seeking, open-mindedness, analyticity, systematicity, self-confidence, inquisitiveness, and maturity* (cited in Jarvis, 2005). Teachers, in particular EFL teachers, are recommended to develop and integrate the abilities associated with CT in the classroom context via procedures such as assigning controversial topics for discussion and witting, encouraging divergence and reflectivity, reinforcing inference-making, and making them familiar with procedures that promote CT such as portfolio, concept mapping and journal writing.

### C. Suggestions for Further Research

1. Due to practical limitations, the present study only focused on intermediate Iranian EFL learners. However, the need is felt to investigate the correlation of such topics on advanced EFL learners (e.g. MA students majoring in English translation and TEFL) and on English teachers of High schools and Junior High schools, especially on English teachers of English language institutes in Iranian EFL contexts.
2. In this study, the researcher only scrutinized the correlation of critical thinking and mindfulness on reading comprehension. It is also possible to investigate the correlation of critical thinking and mindfulness on learners' ability in the writing, speaking and listening skills.
3. In this study, subjects' proficiency level as well as other factors like gender and age was taken into consideration. However, other factors like attitude and motivation can also be suggested for further investigations.

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MOJLTM

## CONSTRUCTIONISM AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aims to investigate whether the materials developed in the second language learning are based on constructivist learning principles. The study was conducted to examine the new English language textbooks designed for Iranian secondary schools based on these principles. The data was collected in fall term in 2015 and the participants of the study were 43 EFL teachers teaching English in different cities of Iran. Data collection instrument was Cisar's (2000) checklist used to elicit teachers' opinions about five main components of communication, culture, connection, comparison, and community. Matching with the principles of constructionism, two sections of checklist: communication and community were analyzed for the purpose of this study. The results showed that the communication category had high mean score, representing the teachers' agreement on the subject, while the community category received score.

**Keywords:** constructivist approach, curriculum development, textbook evaluation.

### 1. Introduction

The changes within the natural sciences generate conceptual changes in the social sciences and educations. The rise of behaviorism and cognitivism led to different theoretical models and assumptions about the nature of human learning. Subsequently the field of education has experienced a significant shift in thinking about the nature of human learning and the conditions that best promote the varied dimensions of human learning. As in psychology, there has been a paradigm shift in designed instruction; from behaviorism to cognitivism and now to constructivism (Cooper, 1993). The philosophical assumptions underlying both the behavioral and cognitive theories are primarily objectivistic; that is to say, the world is real and external to the learner. The goal of instruction is to map the structure of the world onto the learner (Jonassen, 1991).

Constructionism as one of the most influential views of learning during the last two decades of the 20th century represent a paradigm shift in the epistemology of knowledge and theory of learning and it has multiple roots in the philosophical and psychological viewpoints of this century, specifically in the works of Piaget, Bruner, and Goodman (Perkins, 1991). The adoption of theory of teaching clearly emerged in the guidelines of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The increasingly prevalent literature-based approaches to reading and process approaches to writing both share constructivist roots (McCarthy, 1994) and checking of current school textbooks reveals the influence of constructivist views of learning (Thompson, McLaughlin, & Smith, 1995).

### 1.2. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the present study is to evaluate curriculums developed in Iran for English language courses. Due to designing new textbooks for secondary schools, researcher aimed at investigating English textbooks of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades regarding the principles of constructivist approach. So following research question is posed:

Q: Are the materials developed for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades based on the principles constructionism?

## **2.Review of the related literature**

### **2.1. What is constructionism?**

Constructionism as a major referent in education has been understood in various ways including as a learning theory; a philosophical stance on human knowledge; and an approach to social enquiry (Taber, 2011). The term constructivism most probably dates back to Piaget's reference to his views as "constructivist" (Gruber & Voneche, 1977), as well as from Bruner's description of discovery learning as "constructionist" (1966). Woolfolk (1993, p. 485) argues that in constructionism:

... The key idea is that students actively construct their own knowledge: the mind of the student mediates input from the outside world to determine what the student will learn. Learning is active mental work, not passive reception of teaching.

According to London (1990), constructivism is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe leaving the new information as unrelated. In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, we must ask questions, explore, and assess what we know.

Seyyedrezaie and Barani (2013) bring up Brooks' (1987) classification of constructivism as radical, cognitive, situated, social, cultural, socio-cultural and critical. The most common of these are cognitive, radical and social constructivism. The first two kinds put more emphasis on individual elements in the process of constructing the knowledge by means of individual experiences in daily life and what is understood from those experiences. Social constructivism related to Vygotsky's ideas is based on the idea that all knowledge is constructed socially, and is in the social-centered group of constructivism.

### **2.2.Constructionism & Curriculum**

Due to the importance of curriculum in pedagogy, constructivist perspective highlighted the curriculum development to identify the features of textbooks and learning materials. Constructivist pedagogy aims to guide students to think and act like experts. The theory puts emphasis on the cognitive processes, self-reflective skills, and the learning process itself in order to develop the learners' thinking and knowledge construction skills (Seyyedrezaie & Barani, 2013). Thus, the curriculum activity is the dynamic process in which teachers and students interact through negotiation and cooperation.

When students negotiate among themselves and with the teacher issues relating to content, objectives, expectations, and evaluation components, they are more likely to embrace them and be responsible for accomplishing the tasks (Jonassen, 1992).As regard with the idea of negotiation, the social constructivism explores the learners' attitude about the materials and curriculum topics (Taber, 2011). The textbooks are expected to contain activities that might be things like problem solving, doing projects, having real-life experiences, story-writing, developing newspapers, searching, researching, doing experiments, developing puzzles,



playing games, as well as story-telling, role playing, skepticism, analysis, synthesis (Strommen, 1992).

### 2.3. Constructivist Learning Approach

Language is considered as the basic tool in constructionism because it is through language that discourses are constructed to produce or represent a particular version of events or people (Burr, 1995). Therefore, in the light of the concepts of discourse, constructionism, curriculum, and language, in this paper, discussions have been made on concept of constructivist learning and salient features of constructivist learning approach in curriculum development regarding second language learning.

According to Burr (2003), social constructionism considers the theory of speech act in domain of language. Language skills are actions and language is defined as doing something and creating something. Foucault as a discourse analyst also views language as key factor for not only the perception but also for the formation of our social world. Foucault (2005) states that to understand the social world, its objects and actors one must look at the way language forms and determines things and subjects. The basic question is thus not what characteristics the objects and subjects in the social world have, but rather what rules govern the formation of these objects and subjects?

Constructivism puts more emphasis on learners and their active engagement in the activities. Wilson (1996) defines the constructivist learning environment as "A place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem-solving activities". In constructivist learning environment, learners are able to create new knowledge, going far beyond the mere acquiring of knowledge. Jonassen *et al.*, (1999) note that students must wrestle with the responsibility that comes from being truly in charge of one's own learning and knowledge is something constructed in the process of social interaction (Goodson, 1990).

The constructivist approach includes an active learning method. The constructivist design encourages making sense of the subject matter, exposure to multiple sources of information, and opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding in diverse ways, such as problem-based learning, inquiry activities, dialogues with peers and teachers. The activities in the design focus on the sharing of individual meaning and the knowledge constructed by cooperation with peers (Driver & Oldham, 1986), bringing the students' creativity into full play.

The curriculum development is actually a dynamic, nonlinear and self-organized process in which the curriculum is being created and meaning is being constructed, so the curriculum goal, content and teaching methods should vary with the specific context and different students. This process is beyond the limitation of the fixed rigid procedure and allows the "mistakes" and "unexpected events" happen and makes these indefinite factors as important curriculum resources (Seyyedrezaie&Barani, 2013). Therefore, the constructivist curriculum evaluation is based on these principles. According to Wilson (1997), the curriculum of constructivist design let learners and teachers participate in the design process as characteristic of design. Moreover, the design process has a complex, non-linear structure that sometimes can lead to chaos around big ideas with multi-goals. Active learning method is the key principle of constructivist design, in which learners construct knowledge by means of physical and mental activities and actively engaging with learning activities. These activities might be things like problem solving, doing projects, having real-life experiences, story-writing, developing newspapers, searching, researching, doing experiments, developing puzzles, playing games, as well as story-telling, role playing, skepticism, analysis, synthesis (Strommen, 1992).

Constructivist curriculum also focuses on the sharing of individual meaning; and the knowledge constructed by cooperation with peers (Driver & Oldham, 1986). Thus, another important method used in a constructivist design is a collaborative learning. The common point of this method is that group members are responsible for both their learning and the learning of group members; the success of the group is rewarded. Other activities are applied in a constructivist design that encourage making sense of the subject matter, exposure to multiple sources of information, and opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding in diverse ways, such as problem-based learning, inquiry activities, dialogues with peers and teachers. Another important aspect of evaluation in constructivist approaches is the idea of negotiation. When students negotiate among themselves and with the teacher issues relating to content, objectives, expectations, and evaluation components, they are more likely to embrace them and be responsible for accomplishing the tasks (Jonassen, 1992).

The development and implementation of constructivist principles is completed through an effective curriculum development. According to Good and Brophy (1994), in constructivist learning approach:

*Learning is enhanced by social interaction:* The constructivist process works best in social settings as students have the opportunity to compare and share their ideas with others. Learning occurs as students attempt to resolve conflicting ideas. Although social interaction is frequently accomplished in small group activities, discussions within the entire class provide students the opportunity to vocalize their knowledge and to learn from others.

The materials developed on the basis of constructionism are qualified if they encourage and guide the learners to have an interactive relation with others, to think critically, to solve problems, to study collaboratively and that enable the learners to establish their own learning strategies.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The participants of the study consist of 43 EFL teachers at junior secondary school who were asked to complete the checklist. The participants included 23 females and 20 male instructors holding BA and MA degrees. They were teaching English in different cities of Iran. The teachers had taught for about 14 to 25 years. Among the teachers, 18 had 14-18, 13 had 18-20 and 12 had 20-25 years of teaching experience. They all took part in teacher training courses held by education ministry. More than 80 questionnaires and checklists were mailed to English teachers but 50 teachers having taught in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades filled out them and mailed them back to the researcher. Their age ranges from 34 to 47.

Background information concerning the gender and ELT experiences of the teachers are as follows:

**Table 1**

#### Gender of the participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	23	53.48 %
Male	20	46.51 %

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TOTAL                    43                    100.0

It is clear from the table that the majority of the participants (53%) were females.

**Table 2**

**Years of teaching experience**

Teaching experience	Frequency	Percentage
14 to 18 years	18	42 %
18 to 20 years	13	30 %
20 to 25 years	12	28 %
TOTAL	43	100.0

As can be seen from the table, the participants in this study are experienced in their fields as the large number of this population has fourteen to eighteen years of teaching experience.

**3.2. Instruments**

The study employed one questionnaire, Cisar's (2000) checklist and the English books of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in junior secondary school taught as the course book.

To conduct the evaluation, Cisar's (2000) checklist which is based on the American Council on Teaching of Foreign languages (ACTFL) standard was employed. It consisted of five main components with a 4-point Likert scale ranging from *Not at all* to *completely* which was used to elicit the teachers' viewpoints regarding the content of the books. The standards provide an opportunity to monitor all the phases of instruction. Generally, the standards used in the checklist could be categorized into five main components. These categories are communication, culture, connection, comparison, and community.

Communication refers to the ability to communicate in language with specific reference to the student's participation in interaction and communicative acts. Culture denotes the understanding of other cultures in view of the commonly held practices and products. The third component is Connection which sheds light on the degree to which learners acquire information and accordingly expand their knowledge of other discipline via foreign language learning. The Comparison element determines the strength of the book in terms of making an association between linguistic and cultural aspects of the textbooks under the investigation. The last component is Community which focuses on learner's participation in multilingual communities at home and around the world. Furthermore, it suggests how much the textbook encourages using language beyond the classroom setting.

The other instrument was a self-administered questionnaire in which they were asked some personal and background items such as gender, age, teaching experience, and degree. These personal items were used to classify the participants.

The last instruments were English books for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in junior secondary school in Iran. The textbooks "Prospect 1&2" are English textbook available in the schools.

The elements that have been covered in each unit can be described as Conversation at the beginning of the lesson. Three parts which reflect the isolated expressions are presented in the next page. The pronunciation section is presented with the integrated component, namely spelling and pronunciation and it is followed by the other section called listening and writing. Language skills are presented in the integrated parts which within the textbook are carried out as listening and writing or reading, speaking and writing. Each unit is centered on listening, speaking, reading and writing in a combined structure. In addition, the books contain a CD which includes the pronunciation of each part.

### 3.3. Adaptation

Since the present study considered the principles of communication and community accorded with constructionism, Cisar's (2000) checklist was adapted and only two sections of communication and community were used for the purpose of this study.

### 4. Data Analysis

The first sets of computations were those of the numbers, percentage and means and of each and every question or statement. This provides an idea about the extent to which each characteristic is satisfied in the textbook from view point of teachers. This provides us with the strong and weak points of the textbook in question in a detailed manner.

#### 4.1. Communication

The first category in the checklist focused on communication. The rationale behind the identification of it as a criteria for textbook evaluation lies in the idea that interactional features are important for language acquisition. In order to assess this category, the questionnaire consisted of the following 11 questions:

- Do the activities allow students to personalize their response or provide their own meaning?
- Do the activities allow students to provide their own form and structure?
- Do students interact with each other, a native speaker, or teacher in meaningful ways?
- Do the activities allow students to demonstrate or showcase their knowledge of and / or skill in using the foreign language?
- Do the activities include language that is authentic, accurate, and current?
- Is vocabulary presented in functional and /or cultural contexts or clusters?
- Are he activities set in a real-world context or represent a real-world task?
- Do the activities allow for student variation in applying different strategies for comprehension?
- Do the activities appeal to students' interests?
- Are the activities age-appropriate?

Considering the first goal in checklist, i.e., communication, the first question addressed on whether or not the activities allow students to personalize their response or provide their own

meaning, the results indicate that 25.5 % completely agree and 74.5 % partially agree. So, it can be said that the large number of teachers believe that students are able to personalize the activities.

The second question asks whether or not the activities allow students to provide their own form and structure, as Table 3 shows, all participants (100 %) agree and support the statement.

Students' interaction with each other or teacher in meaningful ways is the next item. The obtained data reveals that only 13.9 % completely agree, while a high percentage of participants (86.9 %) partially agree with the statement.

An extremely high percentage of the participants (90.6 %) partially agree with the next question which asks about the activities quality in demonstrating learners' knowledge in using L2. Only 9.3 % agree with this part completely.

**Table 3**

**Descriptive Statistics of the items on the communication**

Question	Number	Not at all				Partial ag.			Complete ag.	Mean
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	43					32 (74.5%)		11 (25.5%)	2.9	
			( 0	12	20)					
2	43					43 (100%)			2.32	
			( 5	19	19)					
3	43					37 (86 %)		6 (13.9%)	2.74	
			( 0	17	20)					
4	43					39 (90.6 %)		4 (9.3 %)	2.67	
			( 0	18	21)					
5	43					26 (60.27 %)		17 (39.23 %)	3.23	
			( 0	7	19)					
6	43					31 (72 %)		12 (28%)	3.02	
			( 0	11	20)					
7	43					27 (62.6%)		16 (37.4)	3.32	
			( 0	2	25)					
8	43					42 (97.7 %)		1 (2.3%)	2.41	
			( 0	26	16)					
9	43					40 (92.3 %)		3 (6.9 %)	2.30	

( 4 15 21)				
10	43	43 (100%)		2.69
( 4 17 22)				
11	43	27 (65.12%)	15 (34.88)	3.27
( 0 8 19)				

Around 60.27 % of participants state their partial agreement with the authentic, accurate, and current activities, while, 39.5 % of them agree with this category completely.

On whether or not the vocabulary is presented in functional / cultural contexts or clusters, the results reveal that an extremely high percentage of the teachers are in a partial agreement with it, 72% partially agree and 27.9 % completely agree with the statement.

To know the extent to which the activities are set in a real-world context, the data indicates that only 37.2 % completely agree and the majority of teachers (62.6 %) partially agree. So, it can be said that teachers are not satisfied with the activities context.

Do the activities provide guidance or hints for facilitating comprehension? The results show that only 2.3 % of the teachers choose complete agreement and a high percentage of them (97.2%) state that they partially agree which means the activities do not facilitate comprehension. The results represent weakness in this part.

Whether it is possible to apply different strategies for comprehension or not? The obtained data represents the fact that the activities do not allow learners to use different strategies for comprehension because only 6.9 % of the teachers agree with it completely and 93 % partially agree in this case.

To know about the next item which refers to activities application to students' interests, all participants (100%) agree partially.

The last question in this section asks about the age-appropriateness of activities. The results show that about 39.5 % of teachers completely agree and 59.5 % state their partial agreement in this category.

Table 3 reveals a complete consensus on the goals that communication has been considered appropriately with no disagreement. Accordingly, the highest mean in this section relates to question number 7 (3.32) and question 11 (3.27). The scores indicate that the teachers are satisfied with these items i.e., activities are set in a real-world context and also they are age-appropriate.

#### 4.2. Communities

The next category in the checklist concerns with communities to evaluate whether students are encouraged to use language outside of the classroom such as everyday situation vocabulary, finding employment, or discussing leisure activities. For this purpose, 4 questions are provided in the checklist:

- Are students asked to communicate with speakers of the foreign language outside their own classroom?

- Does the text identify professions, careers, or everyday situations which require or are enhanced by proficiency in the foreign language?
- Does the text present foreign language / culture projects that involve interacting with members of the local community or using resources?
- Are students encouraged or given opportunities to use the language for leisure activities?

Table 4 indicates that conceivable percentage of the teachers (44.17%) do not confirm the first question and represent their disagreement, since 51.15% of them declare their agreement with this item. The data show a partial consensus (93.13%) on the second item with 6.97% disagreement. While, the item scores the highest mean (2) in the table. Over 69.77% of the participants agree with the next question partially but the others (30.23 %) disagree. Virtually, all participants (97.7%) partially agree with the last item and only 2.3% of the do not agree at all.

**Table 4**

**Descriptive Statistics of the items on Communities**

Question	Number	Not at all				Partial ag.				Complete ag.	Mean
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	43	19 (44.17 %)				22 (51.15 %)					0.83
			(9	8	2)						
2	43	3 (6.97 %)				40 (93.13 %)					2
			(8	25	10)						
3	43	13 (30.23 %)				30 (69.77 %)					1.25
			(9	18	3)						
4	43	1 (2.3 %)				42 (97.7 %)					1.97
			(12	16	13)						

The total mean scores were calculated for two items, communication and community categories scored the means of 2.81 and 1.51, respectively.

**4.3. Discussion**

The results analyzed above indicated that out of 11 sections in the first category i.e., communication, 9 items elicited teachers' complete agreement and none of them received not at all to show their disagreement. The total mean is 2.81 which means that the prospect series are successful at preparing students and communicate effectively. It convincingly encourages the learners to get involved in communication acts. Employing authentic, accurate, real-world, and age-appropriate activities, the books provide the students with opportunities to relate grammatical points to the topics. This speaks well of the communicative dimension in prospects series. Therefore, the Prospect series satisfies teachers' expectations regarding the communication category. That is to say, the textbook included the interactional features as the main elements among the principles of constructivist approach.

As for the community part, the total mean score was 1.51. The items in this part received disagreement and partial agreement without any complete agreement.

## 5. Conclusion

The results revealed that teachers somehow agreed with these textbooks, but the activities are not rich in encouraging students to use language outside the classroom, increasing their proficiency in the foreign language or giving them opportunities to use language for leisure activities. Since learners have rare opportunity to participate in various communities or to interact with native speakers, the Prospect series are not successful in this domain.

### 5.1. Pedagogical Implications

According to the findings and discussions given above, the present study may have some implications for second/foreign teachers. Since learning English is more interactional than individual, based on the findings of this study, then language researchers can use secondary materials which covers more interactional pattern in their teaching period.

### 5.2. Suggestions for further research

Since the sample size was small, generalizing the present study is somehow problematic. Some of the related topics that could be taken up in the future are as follow:

1. This study was done on the basis of junior secondary school teachers; in this case, further research can be carried out on the basis of other school grades like high-school.
2. There are different types of books which cover more interactional materials than this series. So teachers can use them as secondary extra materials.

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# IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES AND EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUCH PREFERENCES

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to investigate the extent to which, teachers are aware of their students' learning style preferences. The participants in this study were 176 EFL learners (male and female) and 30 male and female teachers teaching English at three of the most well-known language institutes in Shiraz. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire in two versions (for teachers and learners separately) developed by Brindley (1984) and modified by the researcher. In order to find out the extent to which teachers are aware of their learners' learning style preferences, multiple independent sample *t*-tests were run. The findings revealed that teachers were well aware of such interests and preferences, only in some cases a few discrepancies were found (copying from the board as a learning technique, avoiding verbatim translation, being corrected immediately, preferred media of learning, games and role plays as class activities, and satisfaction from graded works).

**Keywords:** learners' preferences, teachers' perceptions, learning style

## 1. Introduction

Learning styles are described in different terms as: leaning preferences, sensory orientations, and intelligence styles. But what exactly learning styles or preferences are, needs to be discussed. The concept of learning style or preference has been described by many researchers in different ways. Reid (1998) defines learning styles as internally based characteristics often not perceived or consciously used by learners for the intake and comprehension of new information. Keef (1989) describes learning styles as the cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment. Included in this comprehensive definition are "cognitive styles," which are intrinsic information-processing patterns that represent a person's typical mode of perceiving, thinking, remembering, and problem-solving. Celce-Murcia (2001) defines learning styles as the general approaches-- for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual-- that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. These styles are the overall patterns that give general direction to language behavior. The gist of all-above mentioned definitions is that learning styles are the individual's characteristic and personal

ways of processing information, feeling, and behaving in learning context and that they differ from one language learner to another.

While learners' preferences in learning are definitely of great importance, these are the teachers who have to put the theories of optimum learning into practice. So far, not many researchers have considered teachers' perceptions of learners' learning style preferences as the core of their studies.

Despite a large number of studies that have been carried out regarding learners' preferences, a few of them have emphasized teachers' styles and preferences in teaching as an indispensable part of such studies. Moreover, most teachers and learners are not aware of such differences in learning and teaching style, and those who are, rarely take them into account, practically.

## 2. Literature Review

It has been a long time since the scholars; teachers and applied linguists have taken learners' needs and preferences into consideration while setting the lesson plans and teaching. The more the teachers are aware of their students preferences in learning, the more effective are the methods applied by them, and the greater achievement and satisfaction is gained as a result. Thus, it is not surprising that along with the latest teaching methods focusing on learners' needs, more and more studies are concerned with learners, their needs and preferences as time goes by.

Learning styles have been classified in various ways by different educators and researchers through the years, of which several have been the basis of studies in this domain. The most general categorization seems to be offered by Reid (1995) who categorized learning styles in terms of cognitive; sensory, and personality learning styles. Brown (2000) considered tolerance of ambiguity as a style as well.

Another classification of learning styles was devised by Reid (1998). These six learning styles adopted from Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire are Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Tactile, Group learning, and Individual learning.

Another thorough and frequently-cited model of learning style in different studies of this type is the one devised by Kolb in 1984. For the first time he devised this model based on his observations of the students' distress in classes due to mismatches between their learning styles and disciplinary majors (Kolb, 1981, cited in Montgomery & Groat, 1998). He considered learning styles on a continuum ranging from Concrete experience, Reflective observation, and ABSTRACT conceptualization to Active experimentation.

In the 1940s, Briggs Myers developed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), an instrument that measures, among other things, the degree to which an individual prefers sensing or intuition. This well-known model of identifying learners' learning styles devised by Briggs Myers and Cooks Briggs (McCaulley, *et al.*, 1983; Schroeder, 1993, cited in Montgomery and Groat, 1998) has been widely used in studies in this domain. It contains four dimensions classified as follows: Orientation to life, Perception, Decision making, and Attitude to the outside world.

Another well-known categorization is offered by Felder and Silverman (Felder, 1993; Felder and Silverman, 1988) who mention five aspects of learning styles of which two are a replication of Myers-Briggs and Kolb's model. Their model investigates learners' preferences for learning in terms of four dimensions: active v. reflective, sensing v. intuitive, visual v. verbal and sequential v. global.

One of the most noticeable studies in this domain was conducted by Reid in 1987. She examined 1388 students' perceptual learning style using Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ). As a result, it was found that kinesthetic and tactile learning styles are strongly preferred by ESL learners in comparison to audio and visual styles. Like the results of similar studies, group learning was not appealing to most learners compared to individual learning.

According to the results of her study, graduate students were more interested in visual and tactile learning styles than undergraduates, though kinesthetic and tactile learning styles were preferred by both graduates and undergraduates learners.

Wintergerst, DeCapua, and Marilyn (2003) also examined the learning style preferences of three different populations (Russian EFL students, Russian ESL students, and Asian ESL students). It was uncovered through the findings that group works were preferred to individual works by all three groups, particularly by Russian EFL and Asian ESL students. Once more the role of cultural differences was emphasized in gaining the final results.

Stapa (2003) carried out a study among ESP learners at the National University of Malaysia. Her subjects were 53 students, who were doing a course called English for Hospitality Purposes offered by the Faculty of Language Studies, and three teachers, teaching these students. Adopting a questionnaire developed by Brindley (1984), the study aimed to investigate the styles preferred by these ESP learners and find out whether the teachers are aware of their students' learning preferences. The findings showed that students' preferences do indeed correlate with those of teachers in many instances.

Considering all of the above-mentioned works in this field and the increasing need for more comprehensive and various studies with different study contexts and variables, the present study was conducted to take a step toward confronting this topical issue in current world of teaching.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

Learners' preferences in learning have always been among topical issues in language teaching; taking such preferences and their variety among individual learners into consideration, the main objective of the present study is to investigate the extent to which the teachers are aware of their students' learning style preferences.

### **4. Research Question**

Based on the objectives, this study seeks to answer the following question.

1. To what extent are teachers aware of their students' learning style preferences?

### **5. Methodology**

#### **5.1. Participants**

176 Iranian EFL learners (66 male and 110 female) and 30 (15 male and 15 female) Iranian EFL teachers from three most well-known language institutes in Shiraz (Iran Language Institute, Bahar and Navid language institutes) constituted the sample. The participants were all native speakers of Persian. The learner participants ranged from upper-intermediate to advanced learners in terms of proficiency level. The sampling strategy for selecting the participants was convenience sampling; since the researcher gathered the required data in the language institutes she was teaching and thus had access to.

## 5.2 Instruments

The instrument used in this study was a 13-item questionnaire developed by Brindley (1984) and modified by the researcher. It asks about students' and teachers' name, sex, age, and learners' preferences in learning English and teachers' perceptions in this regard. This questionnaire is used to determine the learners' learning style preferences and teachers' perceptions of such preferences. The questionnaire has two versions: Version 1 (see Appendix A), is designed for students and Version 2 (see Appendix B), for teachers.

In Version 1, the students are supposed to state how they prefer to learn the language, for example, if they are satisfied with their achievement in English, whether they benefit from working in groups, pairs, or individually, and how they allocate and utilize time for inside and/or outside classroom (if they do), in addition to their preferred means of learning (e.g. listening, reading, note-making, copying from board, etc.); moreover their preferred ways of being corrected and getting informed about their improvement in language learning are evaluated through some other items in this questionnaire. In Version 2, the teachers are asked to express their opinions as to how they feel their students prefer to learn the language through similar items. In the current version modified by the researcher, the original yes/no responses are converted to Likert scale responses as: 1= never, 2=hardly ever, 3=sometimes, 4= usually, 5= always.

To investigate the reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher conducted a pilot study. Then, the researcher ran two Cronbach's Alpha tests independently for the teachers' and learners' modified versions of the questionnaires. The results showed that the questionnaire demonstrated internal reliability, achieving an alpha coefficient of .860 for the items measuring students' learning preferences and .846 for those measuring teachers' perceptions of these preferences.

## 6. Data Analysis

In order to determine the extent of language teachers' awareness of EFL learners' learning style preferences, multiple *t*-tests were run for each item of the questionnaire separately. For analyzing the data, SPSS 16 was used.

## 7. Results

One of the main objectives of the current study is to examine the degree of agreement between teachers' and learners' responses to find out the extent to which the teachers are aware of the learners' preferences in learning and encourage them to apply the techniques by which optimal conditions for learning could be created. To do so, after evaluating teachers' and learners' responses regarding the preferred ways of learning separately, several independent *t*-tests were run. Tables 1 and 2 show the results of the descriptive statistics and the independent sample *t*-test of part A.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part A*

	job	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Achievement satisfaction	learner	176	3.6250	.84600	.06377
	teacher	30	3.7333	.78492	.14331
learning individually	learner	176	2.77	1.350	.102

	teacher	30	2.93	1.285	.235
in pairs	learner	176	3.3352	1.15442	.08702
	teacher	30	3.7667	.93526	.17075
in small groups	learner	176	3.5227	1.11075	.08373
	teacher	30	3.6000	1.00344	.18320
in one large group	learner	176	3.1761	1.33853	.10090
	teacher	30	3.0333	1.15917	.21163

*Table 2. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part A*

	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
Achievement satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	.560	.455	-.655	204	.513	-.10833	.16544	-.43453	.21786
learning individually	Equal variances assumed	.570	.451	-.606	204	.545	-.161	.265	-.683	.362
in pairs	Equal variances assumed	3.682	.056	-1.940	204	.054	-.43144	.22239	-.86991	.00703
in small groups	Equal variances assumed	1.161	.283	-.357	204	.722	-.07727	.21651	-.50416	.34961
in one large group	Equal variances assumed	1.469	.227	.550	204	.583	.14280	.25965	-.36913	.65474

According to Table 2, the teachers' perceptions and the learners' preferences regarding the preferred ways of learning are not significantly different. Item B deals with the learners' preferences for learning in or outside the classroom. Tables 3 and 4 show the results.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part B**

job	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
learning in the classroom	learner	176	3.4261	1.13902
	teacher	30	3.1667	1.11675
learning in/outside the classroom	learner	176	3.8011	1.01430
	teacher	30	3.6333	.99943

**Table 4. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part B**

	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
learning in the classroom	.457	.500	1.156	204	.249	.25947	.22436	-.18290	.70184
			1.173	39.988	.248	.25947	.22123	-.18766	.70659
learning in/outside the classroom	.070	.792	.839	204	.402	.16780	.19993	-.22639	.56200
			.848	39.873	.401	.16780	.19784	-.23209	.56769

The results of the *t*-test presented in Table 4, do not reveal great differences among teachers' and learners' responses in either cases. However in this part, based on the mean scores in Table 4, learners' preferences for learning in/outside the classroom are a bit greater than teachers' expectations with the learners' means of 3.4 and 3.8 compared to those of the teachers as 3.1 and 3.6.

Item C of the questionnaire evaluates learners' preferences for learning techniques as learning by a) listening b) reading c) copying from the board d) listening and taking notes e) reading and making notes f) repeating what you hear and g) making summaries. Tables 5 and 6 show the pertaining results.

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part C**

job		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
learning by listening	learner	176	3.4943	1.20947	.09117
	teacher	30	3.2000	1.06350	.19417
learning by reading	learner	176	3.7500	1.03372	.07792
	teacher	30	3.6333	1.15917	.21163
copying from the board	learner	176	2.8011	1.17118	.08828
	teacher	30	3.3000	1.02217	.18662
listening and taking notes	learner	176	3.6136	1.18014	.08896
	teacher	30	3.5333	1.13664	.20752
reading and making notes	learner	176	3.4602	1.10511	.08330
	teacher	30	3.6333	.96431	.17606
repeating	learner	176	3.3750	1.24039	.09350
	teacher	30	3.1667	1.20583	.22015
making summaries	learner	176	3.3125	1.31326	.09899
	teacher	30	3.2000	1.03057	.18815

**Table 6. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part C**

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



learning by listening	Equal variances assumed	1.863	.174	1.252	204	.212	.29432	.23502	-.16905	.75769
	Equal variances not assumed			1.372	42.851	.177	.29432	.21451	-.13832	.72695
learning by reading	Equal variances assumed	1.468	.227	.561	204	.575	.11667	.20789	-.29321	.52655
	Equal variances not assumed			.517	37.282	.608	.11667	.22552	-.34017	.57350
copying from board	Equal variances assumed	.257	.613	-2.194	204	.029	-.49886	.22738	-.94718	-.05054
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.416	43.074	.020	-.49886	.20645	-.91519	-.08254
listening and taking notes	Equal variances assumed	.451	.503	.346	204	.729	.08030	.23190	-.37693	.53754
	Equal variances not assumed			.356	40.411	.724	.08030	.22578	-.37588	.53648
reading and making notes	Equal variances assumed	.871	.352	-.807	204	.421	-.17311	.21455	-.59613	.24991
	Equal variances not assumed			-.889	43.080	.379	-.17311	.19477	-.56588	.21966
repeating	Equal variances assumed	.899	.344	.854	204	.394	.20833	.24405	-.27284	.68951
	Equal variances not assumed			.871	40.188	.389	.20833	.23918	-.27501	.69167

making summaries	Equal variances assumed	5.611	.019	.446	204	.656	.11250	.25221	-.38478	.60978
	Equal variances not assumed			.529	46.683	.599	.11250	.21261	-.31529	.54029

Table 6 indicates that the only difference observed among teachers' and learners' responses was in copying from the board (sig. =.02,  $p < .05$ ). According to Table 6, it seems that learners (mean =2.8) are less willing to learn through copying from the board than what the teachers (mean =3.3) expect.

Part D deals with different vocabulary learning strategies. The findings of the descriptive statistics and independent sample t-test are presented in Tables 7 and 8 below.

**Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part D**

job	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Vocabulary learning using words in sentence.	learner	176	3.9205	.99394	.07492
	teacher	30	3.6667	1.12444	.20529
relationship between known and new	learner	176	3.8636	1.00492	.07575
	teacher	30	3.5333	1.04166	.19018
Saying & writing words several times	learner	176	3.2443	1.22939	.09267
	teacher	30	3.4000	1.19193	.21762
avoiding translation	learner	176	3.0000	1.18563	.08937
	teacher	30	2.5000	.93772	.17120
guessing unknown	learner	176	3.1136	1.29113	.09732
	teacher	30	2.8667	.86037	.15708
reading without looking up words	learner	176	2.8466	1.22091	.09203
	teacher	30	2.9000	1.09387	.19971

**Table 8. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part C**

	Levene's Test for	t-test for Equality of Means
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	Equality of Variances								
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Vocabulary learning using words in sentence.	.903	.343	1.268	204	.206	.25379	.20019	-.14092	.64850
			1.161	37.130	.253	.25379	.21854	-.18896	.69654
relationship between known and new	.052	.821	1.655	204	.099	.33030	.19954	-.06313	.72373
			1.614	38.769	.115	.33030	.20471	-.08384	.74445
Saying writing words several times	.024	.878	-.644	204	.520	-.15568	.24179	-.63242	.32105
			-.658	40.252	.514	-.15568	.23652	-.63362	.32226
avoiding verbatim translation	.978	.324	2.194	204	.029	.50000	.22787	.05072	.94928
			2.589	46.387	.013	.50000	.19313	.11135	.88865
guessing unknown	10.283	.002	1.009	204	.314	.24697	.24474	-.23558	.72952
			1.337	54.214	.187	.24697	.18479	-.12347	.61741

reading without looking words	Equal variances upassumed	1.162	.282	-.225	204	.822	-.05341	.23775	-.52217	.41536
	Equal variances not assumed			-.243	42.308	.809	-.05341	.21990	-.49708	.39026

According to Table 8, there is a significant difference among teachers' and learners' responses in avoiding verbatim translation (sig. =.02,  $p < .05$ ). Table 7 indicating higher mean score of the learners' responses to this item (mean=3) revealed their greater preferences for such strategy than teachers' expectations (mean =2.5). It seems that teachers do not think their students are willing to avoid verbatim translation; that may result from learners' great tendency towards finding an equivalent for every single target language word in their mother tongue which can easily be observed among EFL learners especially in Iran with non- native English teachers who share learners' native language.

Part E deals with error correction techniques. The researcher ran the independent sample t-test to compare the teachers' expectations and learners' preferences. The results are tabulated in Tables 9 and 10 below.

**Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part E**

job		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
immediate error correction	learner	176	3.3693	1.28507	.09687
	teacher	30	2.5000	1.13715	.20761
later, at the end, in front of everyone	learner	176	3.2955	.99896	.07530
	teacher	30	3.1000	.88474	.16153
later, in private	learner	176	3.0170	1.39581	.10521
	teacher	30	3.4667	1.27937	.23358
peer correction	learner	176	2.9432	1.32111	.09958
	teacher	30	3.1000	.95953	.17518
self-correction	learner	176	3.7386	1.10577	.08335
	teacher	30	2.8000	1.24291	.22692

**Table 10. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part E**

	Levene's Test for Equality of	t-test for Equality of Means
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	Variances								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
immediate error correction	Equal variances assumed	.440	.508	3.479	204	.001	.86932	.24988	.37663	1.36201
	Equal variances not assumed			3.795	42.665	.000	.86932	.22910	.40719	1.33145
later, at the end, front everyone	Equal variances assumed	1.573	.211	1.006	204	.316	.19545	.19427	-.18758	.57849
	Equal variances not assumed			1.097	42.640	.279	.19545	.17822	-.16405	.55495
later, private	Equal variances assumed	.102	.750	-1.650	204	.101	-.44962	.27255	-.98700	.08776
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.755	41.677	.087	-.44962	.25618	-.96674	.06749
peer correction	Equal variances assumed	5.652	.018	-.622	204	.534	-.15682	.25203	-.65374	.34010
	Equal variances not assumed			-.778	49.906	.440	-.15682	.20151	-.56158	.24795
self-correction	Equal variances assumed	.580	.447	4.219	204	.000	.93864	.22247	.50001	1.37726
	Equal variances not assumed			3.883	37.241	.000	.93864	.24175	.44892	1.42836

Considering error correction techniques in part E of the questionnaire, Table 10 reveals that there is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions and learners' preferences in the following items: immediate error correction (sig. =.00,  $p < .05$ ) and self-correction (sig. =.00,  $p < .05$ ). According to the results presented in Table 9, learners' preference for immediate error correction (mean = 3.3) compared to that of the teachers (mean=2.5), exceeded teachers' perceptions.

Table 10 also shows that there is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions and learners' pREFERENCES regarding self-correction (sig. =.00,  $p < .05$ ). The greater desire for self-correction was expressed through learners' responses (mean = 3.7) compared to that of the teachers (mean= 2.8).

In part F, preferred media of learning as: a) TV/Video/Films b) radio c) CDs/DVDs d) written material e) the whiteboard and f) pictures/posters are evaluated. Tables 11 and 12 illustrate the results of the descriptive statistics and the independent sample *t*-test.

**Table 11. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part F**

job	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
learning from TV/video/film	learner	4.3125	.93140	.07021
	teacher	4.2000	.92476	.16884
radio	learner	2.7841	1.24165	.09359
	teacher	2.3000	1.11880	.20426
CD/DVD	learner	3.8920	1.13376	.08546
	teacher	3.9333	1.04826	.19139
written material	learner	3.5057	1.11610	.08413
	teacher	4.0000	.83045	.15162
whiteboard	learner	3.3523	1.17147	.08830
	teacher	3.7333	1.11211	.20304
picture/poster	learner	3.6193	1.26377	.09526
	teacher	3.7333	1.08066	.19730

**Table 12. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part F**

	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
learning from Equal variances	.033	.856	.612	204	.541	.11250	.18379	-.24986	.47486

TV/video/film assumed	Equal variances not assumed			.615	39.699	.542	.11250	.18285	-.25714	.48214
radio	Equal variances assumed	.106	.745	2.001	204	.047	.48409	.24195	.00704	.96114
	Equal variances not assumed			2.155	42.147	.037	.48409	.22469	.03070	.93748
CD/DVD	Equal variances assumed	.983	.323	-.186	204	.852	-.04129	.22162	-.47825	.39567
	Equal variances not assumed			-.197	41.445	.845	-.04129	.20960	-.46444	.38187
written material	Equal variances assumed	11.137	.001	-2.317	204	.021	-.49432	.21335	-.91496	-.07367
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.851	48.839	.006	-.49432	.17340	-.84280	-.14584
whiteboard	Equal variances assumed	.299	.585	-1.659	204	.099	-.38106	.22976	-.83407	.07195
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.721	40.766	.093	-.38106	.22141	-.82829	.06617
picture/poster	Equal variances assumed	2.489	.116	-.466	204	.642	-.11402	.24481	-.59669	.36866
	Equal variances not assumed			-.520	43.703	.605	-.11402	.21909	-.55565	.32762

In part F of this questionnaire; among these cases only radio (sig. =.04,  $p < .05$ ) and written material (sig. =.00,  $p < .05$ ) revealed significant differences. According to Table 12, teachers' perception of more popularity of written material among learners (mean=4) was higher than learners' actual willingness to this medium of learning (mean =3.5). Table 11 shows that although radio was more popular than what teachers expected ( the mean of 2.7 for learners' responses compared to that of the teachers as 2.3 ) , it was considered as the least popular medium of learning by learners compared to other media of learning in this item .

In part G of the questionnaire, learners were supposed to rate some class activities based on the performing frequency in their classrooms as: 1) role play 2) language games 3) songs 4) talking with and listening to other students 5) memorizing dialogues 6) getting information from guest speakers 7) getting information from planned visits 8) writing diary 9) learning about culture. Teachers also determined the frequency of applying these learning techniques in their classroom. The results are tabulated in Tables 13 and 14 as follows.

**Table 13. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part G**

	job	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
role play	learner	176	3.1818	1.36525	.10291
	teacher	30	4.0667	1.14269	.20863
games	learner	176	2.8409	1.42938	.10774
	teacher	30	3.4333	1.33089	.24299
songs	learner	176	2.8523	1.56782	.11818
	teacher	30	2.9667	1.42595	.26034
talking with & listening to others	learner	176	3.8295	1.05529	.07955
	teacher	30	4.1333	1.07425	.19613
memorizing dialogs	learner	176	3.4830	1.36056	.10256
	teacher	30	3.6667	1.37297	.25067
getting info from guest speakers	learner	176	3.1023	1.37354	.10353
	teacher	30	2.7667	1.52414	.27827
getting info from planned visits	learner	176	2.9886	1.36900	.10319
	teacher	30	2.6667	1.34762	.24604
writing a learning diary	learner	176	2.7727	1.31129	.09884
	teacher	30	2.9000	1.32222	.24140
learning about culture	learner	176	3.5682	1.16418	.08775
	teacher	30	3.7000	1.17884	.21523



*Table 14. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part G*

		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
role play	Equal variances assumed	3.739	.055	-3.353	204	.001	-.88485	.26386	1.40510	-.36460
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.804	44.394	.000	-.88485	.23263	1.35356	-.41614
games	Equal variances assumed	.590	.443	-2.118	204	.035	-.59242	.27965	1.14380	-.04105
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.229	41.260	.031	-.59242	.26580	1.12912	-.05573
songs	Equal variances assumed	4.605	.033	-.374	204	.709	-.11439	.30585	-.71743	.48864
	Equal variances not assumed			-.400	41.888	.691	-.11439	.28591	-.69143	.46264
talking with & listening to others	Equal variances assumed	.015	.902	-1.454	204	.148	-.30379	.20898	-.71583	.10825
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.435	39.149	.159	-.30379	.21165	-.73183	.12426
memorizing dialogs	Equal variances assumed	.282	.596	-.683	204	.496	-.18371	.26909	-.71427	.34685
	Equal variances not assumed			-.678	39.338	.502	-.18371	.27084	-.73138	.36396

getting info from guest speakers	Equal variances assumed	1.390	.240	1.217	204	.225	.33561	.27573	-.20804	.87925
	Equal variances not assumed			1.130	37.466	.266	.33561	.29690	-.26573	.93694
getting info from planned visits	Equal variances assumed	.001	.974	1.193	204	.234	.32197	.26981	-.21001	.85395
	Equal variances not assumed			1.207	39.895	.235	.32197	.26681	-.21731	.86125
writing learning diary	Equal variances assumed	.003	.954	-.491	204	.624	-.12727	.25932	-.63856	.38401
	Equal variances not assumed			-.488	39.355	.628	-.12727	.26086	-.65475	.40021
learning about culture	Equal variances assumed	.038	.846	-.572	204	.568	-.13182	.23037	-.58602	.32239
	Equal variances not assumed			-.567	39.264	.574	-.13182	.23243	-.60185	.33821

According to Table 14, Learners' responses are in agreement with those of the teachers in almost all cases except applying role plays (sig. =.00,  $p < .05$ ) and language games in classes (sig. =.03,  $p < .05$ ). Concerning the results of the descriptive statistics, language games are the least common activity in classrooms in learners' opinions (mean =2.8). However, teachers believe in applying language games more than what the students imagine (mean= 3.4). Role play was also the area of discrepancies among the teachers and the students (sig. =.00,  $p < .05$ ). Teachers believe in higher frequency of role play and interaction among the students in their classes (mean =4.01) compared to the students' opinions in this regard (mean =3.1).

The results of the descriptive statistics and the independent sample t-test for the items of part H which ask about the way learners prefer to learn about their progress in language learning are depicted in Tables 15 and 16.

**Table 15. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part H**

job	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
find improving by teacherslearner	176	3.3466	1.04706	.07892

tasks	teacher	30	3.6000	.81368	.14856
real-life language use	learner	176	4.1534	.89716	.06763
	teacher	30	4.1667	.87428	.15962

**Table 16. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part H**

		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
find improving by teachers tasks	Equal variances assumed	1.952	.164	-1.261	204	.209	-.25341	.20091	-.64954	.14272
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.506	47.060	.139	-.25341	.16822	-.59181	.08500
real-life language use	Equal variances assumed	.163	.687	-.075	204	.940	-.01326	.17657	-.36140	.33489
	Equal variances not assumed			-.076	40.131	.939	-.01326	.17336	-.36359	.33707

According to Table 14, teachers' and learners' opinions toward the items of part H of the questionnaire are highly close together and few differences are considered as dispensable.

Part I deals with the way through which they get a sense of satisfaction from learning. The results are presented in Tables 17 and 18.

**Table 17. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about the Items of Part I**

job	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
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satisfaction from graded learner works	176	3.5284	1.03056	.07768
teacher	30	4.0333	.88992	.16248
being told you made progress learner	176	3.7159	.93746	.07066
teacher	30	3.8333	1.13664	.20752
feeling confident in previous learner hard situations	176	3.9830	.93488	.07047
teacher	30	3.9667	1.03335	.18866

*Table 18. Independent Samples Test to Compare Teachers' and Learners' Opinions about Items of Part I*

	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	
satisfaction from graded works	6.609	.011	Equal variances assumed	-2.527	204	.012	-.50492	.19984	-.89895	-.11090
			Equal variances not assumed	-2.804	43.398	.008	-.50492	.18009	-.86802	-.14183
being told you made progress	1.689	.195	Equal variances assumed	-1.183	204	.130	-.11742	.19126	-.79452	-.04033
			Equal variances not assumed	-1.904	36.035	.165	-.11742	.21922	-.86201	.02716
feeling confident in previous hard situations	.034	.855	Equal variances assumed	.087	204	.931	.01629	.18755	-.35349	.38607
			Equal variances not assumed	.081	37.535	.936	.01629	.20139	-.39158	.42416

Although in part I regarding the way through which they get a sense of satisfaction from learning in case of getting a sense of satisfaction of having their work graded, the learners' responses are significantly different from those of the teachers (sig.=.00,  $p<.05$ ). Learners are not that satisfied with their works being graded (mean =3.5) as the teachers believe (mean=4.03).

## 6. Conclusion

The main objective of the present study was to find out the extent to which teachers are aware of learners' preferences. Considering the result of the *t*-test between teachers' and learners' responses, in most cases teachers' perceptions of their learners' preferences were greatly close to their actual preferences. The only cases revealing statistically significant discrepancies are as follows:

1. Teachers' expectations regarding learners' preferences for copying from the board as a learning technique fell short of learners' actual preferences.
2. Concerning the vocabulary learning techniques, learners' tendency towards avoiding verbatim translation was greater than teachers' expectations.
3. In terms of error correction techniques, unlike teachers' perceptions, learners have a greater tendency toward being corrected immediately and in front of everyone rather than later and in private correction that seemed more preferable by learners than teachers; moreover, learners had a greater desire for self-correction than their teachers' expectations.
4. Considering preferred media of learning, learners were less willing to learn through written material than what the teachers expected and more interested in learning through radio than what teachers supposed, even though, radio was the least popular medium of learning among learners.
5. Rating the class activities performed by the teachers in classes, learners believed games and role plays were not as frequently applied by the teachers as the teachers believed.
6. Learners are not that grade-minded as their teachers suppose, that is they are not that interested in having their work corrected in order to get a sense of satisfaction in learning neither they get such a sense by being told about their progress.

Taking such results into account, learners and teachers could be informed about various learning, error correction and assessment techniques. Neither the teachers nor the students should be restricted to certain teaching and learning techniques; furthermore, lesson planners and curriculum developers could include such preferences and techniques in their lesson plans and teachers could make use of such techniques based on their popularities among learners to increase the efficiency of their teaching and enhance learners' interest and success in learning a foreign language.

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# INVESTIGATING LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES of EFL LEARNERS AND EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNERS' PREFERENCES

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate learning style preferences of the Iranian efl learners. This study also investigated teachers' perceptions of learners' learning style preferences. A group of 176 efl learners and 30 efl teachers studying and teaching English at three language institutes in Shiraz constituted the sample. The data were gathered through a questionnaire developed by Brindley (1984) and modified by the researcher. The questionnaire had two versions (for teachers and learners separately). To analyze the information on learning preferences and teachers' perceptions questionnaire, descriptive statistics was used. The findings revealed that learners had different learning styles and preferences and most teachers were aware of such preferences.

**Key words:** learners, teachers' perceptions, learning style preferences

## Introduction

With recent trends moving toward more learner-centered methods in teaching a foreign language, considering learners' needs and preferences has become an indispensable part of most studies pertinent to teaching and learning a foreign language. These are the learners with their different learning styles and preferences who demand a variety of teaching methods and the teachers are the ones who are supposed to take these differences into account and keep being tuned in to the tastes of various learners. Teachers' styles and preferences in teaching are different; likewise, learners possess various styles and preferences in learning. According to Pallapu (2007, p. 34), "knowing the learning styles of the learners aids the designer or instructor to develop a curriculum to address various needs of the learners in a group or class". In addition, matching the learning styles of students in a class and the teaching style of the instructor would help improve students' learning, attitudes, behavior, and motivation (Felder, 1993, 1995; Felder and Henriques, 1995; Felder and Silverman, 1988; Kinsella, 1995). Regarding the recent popularity of such issues due to late emphasis on learners and their needs as the essence of any teaching program, the need for more research in this vein is felt more than ever specifically in EFL contexts recently focusing more on communicative methods as Iran.

## 3. Literature Review

According to Kolb (1984), Reid (1987), & Celce-Murcia (2001), various ways of taking in and processing information used by different learners are called learning styles or learning preferences; therefore, as it comes out in this definition there must be slight (if there are any) differences between learners' styles or preferences as two apparently different terms.

"Learning styles might be thought of as cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment". (Keefe, 1979, p. 4)

Keef (1979) also claims that through learning styles, individual student's preferences and tendencies in learning could be recognized. Moreover, he puts emphasis on cognitive, affective, and physiological aspects of learning styles that are stable in learners and aid them in their perception of, interaction with and response to the environment.

In 1995, Oxford and Anderson offered a more comprehensive definition for learning style that adds three more features as executive; social and behavioral to Keef's (1979) definition of learning style.

All the above- presented definitions of learning style besides Logan's and Thomas's definition of learning style as "the attitudes and behaviors determining individuals preferences in learning" (Logan, and Thomas, 2002, p. 29), reveal the intermingled nature of style and preference in learning.

Related to this study is Gorham's (1986) categorization of 'learning style' as:

(a) 'Instructional preferences': learners 'comfort and fit' with particular instructional methods such as independent study, lecture, 'games', discussion, etc. (Renzulli & Smith, 1978), including those preferences measured by inventories such as the Grasha-Reichmann Learning Styles Questionnaire (Reichmann & Grasha, 1974);

(b) 'Information processing style' such as Kolb's (1984) model of the experiential learning cycle and the associated learning styles (converger, diverger, accommodator, assimilator) or the related learning styles suggested by Honey and Mumford (1992) (activist style, reflector style, theorist style and pragmatist style);

(c) 'Cognitive personality elements' such as field dependence and independence (Witkin, Moore, Goodenough, & Cox, 1977). One may add to this the intuitive-analytical dimension (Allinson & Hayes, 1996) and the wholist-analytical and verbalizer-imager dimensions of cognitive style (Riding, 1991). The latter is a model of the ways in which individuals respectively process and represent information during thinking.

Riazi and Mansoorian (2008) conducted a study to investigate the preferred learning styles of Iranian EFL students who were studying English at EFL institutes in different cities in Iran. Findings of the study indicated that the auditory learning style, the visual learning style, the tactile learning style, and the kinesthetic learning or hands on activity learning were preferred by the students as the major styles.

Riazi and Riasati (2007) also conducted a study to identify their learning styles. The results showed that the students favored the communicative approach carried out in pair or group work and felt that it helped improve their English language skills. They also preferred taking part in classroom discussion and interaction in learning English.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**



This study aimed to determine language learning style preferences of the Iranian EFL learners. Furthermore, this study was also to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of the learners' preferences.

#### 4. Research Questions

Given the objectives of the study mentioned above, this research seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What are the learning style preferences of the Iranian EFL learners?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of learners' learning style preferences?

#### 5. Methodology

##### 5.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 176 EFL learners (66 male and 110 female) and 30 (15 male and 15 female) teachers, studying and teaching English at three language institutes in Shiraz (Iran Language Institute, Bahar and Navid language institutes). Concerning the focus of this study on learners' preferences in learning language and teachers' perceptions, the sample of this study encompasses learners ranging from upper-intermediate to advanced learners in terms of proficiency level.

##### 5.2 Instruments

Regarding the objectives of this study, a survey was conducted through a credible and well-known questionnaire devised by Brindley (1984). This questionnaire was modified and brought up-to-date in terms of word order, to simplify some items and some means of learning were brought up-to-date (e.g. learning from CDs/DVDs rather than tapes/cassettes in item 8 of the questionnaire) by the researcher. The researcher also converted the original yes/no responses to Likert scale responses as: 1= never, 2=hardly ever, 3=sometimes, 4= usually, 5= always.

The questionnaire included 13 items. It was used to determine the learners' learning style preferences and teachers' perceptions of such preferences. The questionnaire had two versions: Version 1 for students and Version 2 for teachers. The reliability of the modified questionnaires was estimated through a pilot study. The results of the Cronbach's Alpha tests showed that the teachers' ( $r = .846$ ) and learners' ( $r = .860$ ) modified versions of the questionnaire were reliable.

#### 8. Results

To investigate the learning style preferences of the Iranian EFL learners and teachers' perceptions of these preferences, the researcher ran the frequency analysis. Table1 shows the pertaining results.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Learners' preferences in Learning and Teachers' Perceptions of Learners' preferences in Learning*

		Never %	Hardly Ever %	Sometimes%	Usually %	Always %
<b>Item1</b>						
Achievement Satisfaction	Students	.6	2.3	51.1	26.1	19.9
	Teachers'	0	0	46.7	33.3	20

	perception					
<b>Item 2</b>						
Learning Individually	Students	23.3	19.3	29.5	12.5	15.3
	Teachers' perception	13.3	26.7	30	13.3	16.7
Learning in Pairs	Students	6.2	18.2	29.5	27.8	18.2
	Teachers' perception	3.3	0	36.7	36.7	23.3
Learning in Small Group	Students	5.1	9.7	36.9	24.4	23.9
	Teachers' perception	3.3	10	26.7	43.3	16.7
Learning in Large Group	Students	14.2	18.8	22.7	23.9	20.5
	Teachers' perception	3.3	40	20	23.3	13.3
<b>Item 3</b>						
Doing Homework		13.1	14.2	41.5	17.6	13.6
<b>Item 4</b>						
Next Class Preparation		8.0	10.2	27.3	30.7	23.9
Reviewing the Day's Work		5.7	20.5	31.8	25.6	16.5
<b>Item 5</b>						
Spending All Learning Time in the Classroom	Students	6.2	14.2	29.5	30.7	19.3
	Teachers' perception	6.7	20	36.7	23.3	13.3
Spending Some time on Learning in the classroom and Some time Outside the Classroom	Students	1.1	11.4	22.2	36.9	28.4
	Teachers' perception	0	13.3	33.3	30	23.3
<b>Item 6</b>						
Learning by:	Students	5.1	19.3	22.2	27.8	25.6

Listening	Teachers' perception	3.3	26.7	26.7	33.3	10
Reading	Students	2.8	8.0	27.8	34.1	27.3
	Teachers' perception	3.3	13.3	30	23.3	30
Copying from the Board	Students	15.9	23.3	34.7	17.0	9.1
	Teachers' perception	3.3	23.3	20	46.7	6.7
Listening and Taking Notes	Students	7.4	9.7	22.7	34.7	25.6
	Teachers' perception	10	6.7	16.7	53.3	13.3
Reading and Making Notes	Students	4.5	14.8	30.7	30.1	19.9
	Teachers' perception	0	10	40	26.7	23.3
Repeating what You Hear	Students	8.0	16.5	30.1	21.0	24.4
	Teachers' perception	13.3	10	36.7	26.7	13.3
Making Summaries	Students	11.4	15.9	27.8	19.9	25.0
	Teachers' perception	3.3	20	43.3	20	13.3
<b>Item 7</b>						
Vocabulary Learning by: Using Words in Sentences	Students	1.7	7.4	21.0	36.9	33.0
	Teachers' perception	6.7	6.7	23.3	40	23.3
Thinking of Relationship between Known and New	Students	1.1	8.0	27.3	30.7	33.0
	Teachers' perception	3.3	16.7	16.7	50	13.3
Saying or Writing Words Several Times	Students	8.5	20.5	29.0	22.2	19.9
	Teachers' perception	3.3	20	36.7	13.3	26.7
Avoiding Verbatim Translation	Students	9.1	27.3	33.5	14.8	15.3
	Teachers' perception	13.3	36.7	40	6.7	3.3

Guessing the Unknown words	Students	12.5	22.2	25.0	22.2	18.2
	Teachers' perception	3.3	30	46.7	16.7	3.3
Reading without Looking up words	Students	14.2	28.4	27.8	17.6	11.9
	Teachers' perception	10	26.7	33.3	23.3	6.7
<b>Item 8</b>						
Immediate Error Correction	Students	11.4	12.5	27.8	24.4	23.9
	Teachers' perception	11.4	12.5	27.8	24.4	23.9
Correcting Errors Later, at the end, in front of everyone	Students	4.0	15.3	39.8	29.0	11.9
	Teachers' perception	4	15.3	39.8	29	11.9
Correcting Errors Later, in Private	Students	19.3	17.6	25.6	17.0	20.5
	Teachers' perception	19.3	17.6	25.6	17	25.5
<b>Item 9</b>						
Peer Correction	Students	18.8	16.5	33.5	14.2	17.0
	Teachers' perception	18.8	16.5	33.5	14.2	17
Self-Correction	Students	2.8	11.4	26.1	28.4	31.2
	Teachers' perception	2.8	11.4	26.1	28.4	31.2
<b>Item 10</b>						
Learning from: CDs/DVDs	Students	2.3	11.9	20.5	25.0	40.3
	Teachers' perception	0	13.3	16.7	33.3	36.7

Written Material	Students	2.8	16.5	32.4	23.9	24.4
	Teachers' perception	0	3.3	23.3	43.3	30
White board	Students	6.2	17.0	33.0	22.7	21.0
	Teachers' perception	3.3	10	26.7	30	30
Pictures and Posters	Students	8.0	12.5	20.5	27.8	31.2
	Teachers' perception	3.3	10	23.3	36.7	26.7
Teachers' Perception of Learners' Interest in Learning from TV/Video/Film		0	6.7	13.3	33.3	46.7
Teachers' Perception of Learners' Interest in Learning through Radio		33.3	20	30	16.7	0
<b>Item 11</b>						
Applying: Role play	Students	15.9	15.3	25.6	21.0	22.2
	Teachers' perception	3.3	10	10	30	46.7
Applying: Language Games	Students	27.3	14.2	20.5	23.3	14.8
	Teachers' perception	10	16.7	20	26.7	26.7
Songs	Students	31.2	14.8	13.6	18.2	22.2
	Teachers' perception	20	16.7	33.3	6.7	23.3
Talking with and Listening to Other Students technique	Students	2.3	10.2	21.0	35.2	31.2
	Teachers' perception	0	13.3	10	26.7	50
Conversations/ Dialogs Memorization	Students	11.4	13.6	22.2	21.0	31.8
	Teachers' perception	13.3	6.7	13.3	33.3	33.3
Information Getting from Guest Speakers	Students	19.9	11.4	25.6	25.0	18.2
	Teachers' perception	30	16.7	20	13.3	20

Information Getting from Planned Visits	Students	21.6	13.6	24.4	25.0	15.3
	Teachers' perception	30	10	33.3	16.7	10
Writing Learning Diary <sup>a</sup>	Students	24.4	15.9	27.8	21.6	10.2
	Teachers' perception	20	20	20	30	10
Learning about Culture	Students	6.2	10.2	30.1	27.3	26.1
	Teachers' perception	6.7	6.7	26.7	30	30
<b>Item 12</b>						
Finding out about Progress by Teachers' Written Tasks	Students	4.5	12.5	43.8	22.2	17.0
	Teachers' perception	0	6.7	40	40	13.3
Finding out about Progress through Real Life Use of Language	Students	0.0	4.0	21.6	29.5	44.9
	Teachers' perception	0	3.3	20	33.3	43.3
<b>Item 13</b>						
Getting satisfaction from: Graded Works	Students	3.4	10.8	34.7	31.8	19.3
	Teachers' perception	0	10	6.7	53.3	30
Being Told One Has Made Progress	Students	.6	9.1	31.2	36.4	22.7
	Teachers' perception	3.3	6.7	16.7	20	53.3
Feeling Confident in Previously Hard Situations	Students	.6	5.1	25.0	33.0	35.8
	Teachers' perception	3.3	6.7	13.3	43.3	33.3

Table 1 represents the learners' responses to individual items of the questionnaire concerning the learning domain. In item1, the descriptive analysis of the data revealed that about half of the learners (51.1%) are sometimes satisfied with their achievement in learning English.

Item 2 investigated the learners' preferred learning style in class as individually, in pairs, in small groups or in one large group. The results are in line with the findings of studies by Riasati (2008), Wintergerst, DeCapua, & Marilyn (2003) that reveal most learners are in favor of group learning of any kind.

Considering the results of item three, 41.5 % of the learners were sometimes interested in doing homework while doing homework as a preparation for the next class was chosen as a usually-preferred activity by 30.7% of the learners and 31.8% of the learners chose doing homework as reviewing the days' work as a sometimes-preferred activity. Riasati (2008) also reported the same results.

In item 5 of the questionnaire, learners showed their almost equal tendency toward learning in the classroom with 20.5 % choosing sometimes and 30.7 % selecting usually as the degree of their preferences for in-class activities compared to 36.9%, 28.4%, 22.2%, revealing students' greater desires for usually, always and sometimes sharing learning time for both in- and outside-classroom activities respectively; critically speaking, a slightly greater tendency toward dividing the learning time between in- and outside- classroom activities is observed. The results are similar to the ones gained by Razawi, Muslim, Razali, Husin, & Abdul Samad (2011) which show learners' tendency towards learning by having contacts with people outside the classroom as well as learning through interactions with peers and teachers in the classroom.

In item 6, reading is reported as an almost-always-preferred way of learning by learners and listening and taking notes that are similarly almost always preferred to be done by the students; likewise, in the study done by Riasati (2008), "Listening and taking notes" received rather high percentage from students (78.5%).

According to Table 1, 30.7 % and 30.1% of learners expressed their tendency toward sometimes and usually learning by reading and making notes; the choice "sometimes" received the highest percentages (30.1, 27.9 %) which show learners are sometimes willing to learn by repeating and making summaries.

The results also showed that using words in sentences i.e. contextualization and relating the old and new language i.e. word associations were the most popular ways of learning vocabularies among the above-mentioned options in this item. The results expressed learners' tendency toward usually applying these methods in vocabulary learning. In a similar vein, Razawi, *et al.* (2011), found that learning vocabulary by using new words in a sentence, thinking of relationships between known and new and guessing the unknown are among the most preferred ways of vocabulary learning among learners.

Learning vocabularies through saying and writing them several times and avoiding verbatim translation are sometimes to be preferred by the learners (3.2, 3 respectively) after guessing unknown words that is a more preferred method. The findings are tabulated in Table 1; "sometimes" was the choice with the highest percentage among all options receiving 51, 25 and 33.5 % of learners' votes respectively.

As it is shown in Table 1, 50 % choosing hardly ever preference for reading without looking up the words, reveal the learners' less interest in going about the learning task without learning the new words.

The results of the descriptive statistics for Item 8 reveal that immediate error correction chosen by 49 % of the learners as a sometimes-preferred activity is more preferable to delayed error correction whether in front of other students and 39.8 % or in private, 25.6 % choosing them as sometimes-preferred activities. The findings are in keeping with those found in Kavaliauskiene (2003), Riasati (2008) and Razawi, *et al.* (2011) studies.

Item 9 investigates the extent of learners' interest in self- and peer-correction. As it is shown in Table 1, the results reveal the learners' greater preference for usually being asked to correct their written works mistakes rather than requesting other students to correct them.

Item 10 specifies the learners' favorite medium of learning. In general, 81.8 % of the participants chose options always and usually for learning through television/video/films that reveals the majorities' interest in these media of learning while 43.2 % chose hardly ever and never to express their preference for using radio as a medium of learning; similarly in studies carried out by Riasati (2008) and Bada & Okan (2000), most of learners expressed their willingness to learning through television/video/films. Moreover the findings of this study reveal that 65.3 %, 59 %, 48.3 % of participants select always and usually options for learning through CD/ DVDs, Pictures/ Posters and Written Material, respectively which are in agreement with those of Riasati's (2008) which show the participants would rather learn through using tapes and cassettes (in his study, similar to CDs and DVDs in present study).

Considering the results of Item 11, 66.4 % of learners believe that interaction with other learners is the most beneficial activity in learning that reveals the learners almost always like to do this task in their classes; memorizing the dialogs, learning about culture, role play and getting information from guest visitors are the activities that learners sometimes find beneficial to learning.

And finally, getting information from planned visits, playing games and singing and writing a learning diary are considered as less helpful activities by learners that are almost sometimes preferred to be done in classes. Concerning the percentages, 52.8, 53.4, 43.2 % of the learners chose always and usually options for memorizing the dialogs, learning about culture, role play and getting information from guest visitors respectively which shows their popularity among learners. On the other hand, 35.2, 41.5, 46 and 40.3 % chose hardly ever and never choices for getting information from planned visits, playing games, singing and writing a learning diary which reveals learners' less interest in doing these activities to aid learning. Likewise, based on the results of the study by Riasati (2008), 81.7% of the participants showed their interest in talking with and listening to other students.

Item 12 in this questionnaire deals with the learners' preferences in the assessment phase of learning. The results reveal that 74.4 % of learners would rather assess their improvement through real-life use of language by choosing this choice as an always- or usually -preferred activity (4.1) compared to written tasks by the teacher (3.1) that is sometimes preferred to be used for the purpose of progress evaluation by 39.2 % of the learners choosing this item as an always- or usually- preferred activity. The result of this study for this item is in line with that of Riasati's (2008) and Bada & Okan's (2000) which revealed an overwhelming majority of the students would rather assess their language ability on the basis of their performance in real-life situations.

And eventually, with the last item, learners were asked to determine the most preferable ways through which they get a sense of satisfaction. Feeling more confident in situations that were found difficult before is chosen as the most satisfactory way for the learners i.e. about 68.8 % of the learners always and usually get satisfaction from feeling more confident in the previously challenging situations; next to this way, 59.1 % of the learners like the teachers to tell them that they have been improved by choosing always and usually options for this item and with a slight difference having their homework graded is chosen as a sometimes preferred activity by 51.1 % of the learners choosing always and usually options for this item. Riasati (2008) also found that 78.5% of the learners were after gaining the command of the language not only being graded.

### **Teachers' perceptions:**

As mentioned earlier, items 3 and 4 pertaining to homework-doing preferences were removed from teachers' version of questionnaire since they are not observable by the teachers in the classrooms.



As it is shown in Table 1, 53.3 % of the teachers were always satisfied with their students' achievement in English learning.

According to Table 1, 60% of the teachers which make up a great percentage of the teachers believe that their learners always and usually are willing to do pair works and learn in small groups in classes. With learning individually only 30 % of the teachers agree and believe that their learners are interested in doing so. Concerning learning in large groups, 43.3 % of the teachers think learners are hardly ever or never interested in working in large groups. Regarding learning individually almost similar portions of teachers chose hardly ever and never (40%) and always and usually (30%) as the frequency of their learners' preference for applying this technique in their classes.

Based on the results presented in Table 1, in Item 5, 53.3 % of the teachers suppose that their learners would rather spend some time on learning outside the classroom while 36.6 % of the teachers imagine their learners sometimes prefer to spend their whole learning time in the classroom.

In item 6, most teachers (66%) believe their learners almost usually are willing to make use of this means of learning; copying from the board and reading with similar percentages of 53.4 % and 53.3 % were the next preferred means of learning by teachers; reading and making notes was chosen by 50 % of the teachers and repeating what they hear chosen by 40 % and finally making summaries was chosen by 33.3 % of the teachers. To sum up, teachers assume their learners are sometimes willing to apply all these techniques in learning with listening and taking notes being chosen as the most and making summaries as the least popular ones.

In item 7 of this questionnaire concerning the preferred ways of learning vocabularies by the learners, two choices as a) avoiding verbatim translation and b) guessing the unknown words were considered as the least preferred ways of vocabulary learning among the learners by teachers, the responses reveals teachers' expectation of learners' preference for occasionally doing these activities in classroom while learning the new words.

Concerning the other choices in this item, vocabulary learning through contextualization and relating known to new language are learners' favorite techniques which were chosen by similar percentage of 63.3 % of the teachers as always- or usually- preferred activities. The results reveal teachers' perceptions of these two techniques as being almost usually preferred to be done by their learners.

Vocabulary learning by saying and writing words several times is also chosen as an always- and usually- preferred technique by 40 % of the teachers. Finally 33.3 % of the teachers suppose that their learners sometimes are willing to learn vocabularies by reading without looking up the words; on the other hand 36.7 % of the teachers think their learners are never and hardly ever interested in reading without looking up the new words.

Among these choices teachers chose immediate error correction as the least preferred way of error correction that shows 53.3 % of the teachers believe their students hardly ever and never like to be corrected on the spot and in front of other learners in the classroom.

Concerning the item pertinent to error correction in front of everyone, at the end, the highest percentage of teachers i.e. 43.3 % of their responses to this item, believed that learners sometimes would rather be corrected in front of other students, at the end of the task.

And the last choice in this item which concerns being corrected later and in private receives the highest percentage of teachers' choices (i.e. 46.7 %). It seems to be the most desirable way of error correction by learners in their teachers' opinion.

Item 9 investigates teachers' concept of their learners' greater preferences for peer-correction or self-correction while making mistakes in writing; 43.4 % of the teachers assert that their learners like self-correction better than peer-correction. Moreover, 33.3 % of the teachers believe that learners never and hardly ever like to be corrected by their peers.

In item 10 concerning the preferred means of learning, teachers chose learning from television/video/films and written material as the most preferred media of learning by the learners. The results also indicated that 53.3 % of the teachers suppose their learners never or hardly ever show tendency towards learning through radio.

Considering other items, 70 % of the teachers imagine learners always or usually like to learn through CDs or DVDs. 63.4 % and 60 % believe that the learners always or usually are willing to learn through pictures and posters and whiteboards respectively.

In item 11, talking with and listening to other learners and role play were chosen as the most effective activities to be done in classes by similar percentage of 76.7 % of the teachers choosing always and usually options. Thus, teachers believe that learners' interaction is usually efficient in learning; moreover, 20 % of the teachers suppose that language games are sometimes beneficial to learning while getting information from planned visits and guest speakers are considered as less effective activities. The results reveal that teachers are less willing to do these activities in their classroom since they find them less effective compared to the other activities included in this item ; in other words, 46.7 and 40 % of the teachers believe that their learners hardly ever or never are willing to learn from guest speakers and planned visits respectively.

Using songs and learning diaries are considered as never or hardly ever efficient activities in classrooms by 36.7 and 40 % of the teachers respectively; however learning about culture and memorizing dialogs are considered as always and usually efficient class activities by 60 and 66.6 % of the teachers.

Teachers' perceptions regarding the item 12 were highly close to the learners' preferences. It is inferred that real-life use of the language is regarded as the main goal of the learning both by the teachers and learners which reveals learners' progress in language learning besides written tasks assigned by the teachers considered as an effective way to learn about the learners' improvement in learning.

Telling the students about their progress in learning and grading their work were considered as the most desirable ways that convey a sense of satisfaction to the students in teachers' opinion, that is, the learners usually feel satisfied by being informed about their improvement in learning and having their works graded by the teachers. 83.3 % and 73.3 % of the teachers chose always and usually as the frequency of learners' preferences for having their works graded and being told about their progress to get a sense of satisfaction; moreover, a rather high percentage of teachers i.e. 76.6 percent of the teachers assume their learners always or usually get a sense of satisfaction of feeling confident in previously found difficult situations.

## 9. Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to identify learning style preferences of the Iranian EFL learners and teachers' perceptions of such preferences. Based on the results of this research, a rather great percentage of Iranian EFL learners in the present study besides being satisfied with their achievements in English learning expressed their preferences for:

1. Group learning more than individual learning
2. Doing homework especially as a preparation for their next class

3. Sharing their learning time between in- class learning and practicing English with people outside the classroom environment
4. Learning by reading , listening and taking notes better than mere listening, reading and making notes, repetition, summarizing and copying from the board
5. Vocabulary learning through contextualization, i.e. using words in sentences and associating known with new vocabularies
6. As it is shown in Table 1, 50 % choosing hardly ever preference for reading without looking up the words, reveal the learners' less interest in going about the learning task without learning the new words.
7. Being corrected immediately and in front of everyone rather than at the end or later in private
8. Self- correction rather than peer- correction
9. Learning through TV/ Video / Films , CDs / DVDs
10. Doing role play and interactions i.e. talking with and listening to other students, learning about culture and dialog memorization, etc.
11. Being informed about their progress by being able to use the learnt language in real-life situations rather than written tasks set by the teacher
12. Getting a sense of satisfaction through feeling more confident in previously- found hard situations and being told about their progress rather than mere relying on grades.

Similarly, a great number of teachers are satisfied with their learners' achievements in English and suppose their learners are willing to:

1. Learn in groups rather than individual learning
2. Spend their learning time both on in- class and outside the classroom learning
3. Learn by reading, reading as they are making notes and listening and taking notes, etc.
4. Learn vocabularies through contextualization and associating known with new material and saying and writing words several times
5. Be corrected later and in private rather than immediate or delayed correction in front of everyone
6. Correct their own work rather than asking their peers to correct them
7. Learn through TV/ Video / Films, written material, CDs/ DVDs, etc.
8. Apply role- play and interactions learn about culture, dialog memorization, etc.
9. Be able to use the language in authentic context thereby to be informed about their progress in learning
10. Have their work graded and be told about their progress to get a sense of satisfaction of their learning process.

The results of the study suggest that learners have some certain fields of interest in language learning and a variety of learning styles and preferences and most experienced teachers are well aware of such differences and preferences.

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## EFFECTS OF PRE-TASK AND ON-LINE PLANNING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' L2 ORAL PRODUCTION

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### ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the effects of pre-task and on-line planning on complexity, accuracy and fluency in oral reproduction of Iranian efl learners. Participants in this study consisted of 85 intermediate learners who were selected from a larger available population of 120 third-year university students based on their oxford placement test (opt) scores. These learners were randomly divided into four groups: group 1 had no pre-task and on-line planning time, group 2 were provided with pre-task planning time but no on-line planning time, group 3 had no pre-task planning time but they had time for on-line planning, group 4 had time for both pre-task and on-line planning. A narrative picture description task was used for oral elicitation. The data were then analyzed and coded by the researchers based on measures of complexity, accuracy and fluency operationalized in this research. Three separate one-way anovas with post-hoc shceffe test were run (using spss version 18) in order to analyze the data and find any significant differences. Results showed that joint effects of pre-task and on-line planning had no effect on fluency but the effects on accuracy and complexity were statistically significant. Also, pre-task planning had a significant effect on fluency and complexity while on-line planning group had higher accuracy and complexity scores.

**Keywords:** pre-task planning, on-line planning, complexity, accuracy, fluency

### 1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, studies on the effects of pre-task and on-line planning on complexity, accuracy and fluency (thereof CAF) have received a lot of attention from researchers working in the field of task-based language learning and teaching. A multitude of studies has emerged to the conclusion that providing language learners with the opportunity to plan before or within a task would give them the chance to produce discourse of higher quality (Crookes 1989; Ellis 1987; Foster & Skehan 1996; Wigglesworth 1997). Ellis (2005) believes that providing learners with the opportunity to plan strategically can have beneficial effects on task-based production and may also assist second language development. Whereas the number of studies that have investigated the effects of strategic planning on oral task performance (Crookes 1989; Ellis 1987; Foster & Skehan 1996; Wigglesworth 1997) abounds in the literature, there have also been a few studies on on-line planning. Ellis and Yuan (2005) have studied the effects of modality and on-line planning. They were able to show that both variables have an impact on complexity and accuracy. Early studies (Hulstijn and Hulstijn 1984; Ellis 1987) compared performance of learners under pressured and unpressured conditions, but did not specifically deal with the effect of these on complexity, accuracy and fluency. The studies done so far have emphasized on pre-task planning or on-line planning as separate constructs. As Ellis (2009) points out no study has examined the joint effects of pre-task and on-line planning on complexity, accuracy and fluency. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to address this gap in previous research.

### Review of literature

So far numerous studies have focused on different types of task planning on complexity, accuracy and fluency. Foster (1996) studied 32 learners who were learning English as a second language. He studied the effect of planning time on CAF; and found that those who planned before their oral performance paused less, were less silent and produced fewer repetitions than non-planners. He also found that planners used a variety of past tense forms and produced more clauses per C-unit than non-planners. Foster and Skehan (1996) examined the effects of planning time on learners' performance on three different types of communication tasks (a personal information exchange task, a narration, and a decision-making task). These tasks were performed by three groups of ESL learners in UK. Group 1 had no planning time. Group 2 had 10 minutes of unguided planning time. Group three had 10 minutes of detailed planning time with detailed guidance as to how to use the planning time and how to develop ideas for the completion of the tasks. Performance was measured in terms of fluency (number of repetitions, reformulations, replacements, false starts, pauses, and silence), complexity (the number of clauses per C-unit/syntactic variety), and accuracy (the proportion of error-free to total clauses). Results indicate that there were strong effects of planning on fluency and clear effects on complexity. However, the relationship between planning and accuracy was rather complex; the most accurate performance was produced by less detailed planning.

Wendel (1997) examined the effect of planning on CAF of 40 intermediate Japanese students. He conducted this research under two conditions; a) 10 minutes unguided planning with note-taking and b) no planning. As for fluency he found that planning led to more syllables and less pauses. Planning had a significant effect on complexity but it was quite insignificant as far as accuracy was concerned. Mehnert (1998) studied the effect of length of planning time on oral performance of 31 German speakers. He used two tasks; one instruction task (structured) and one exposition (unstructured). It was revealed that planning had an effect on number of syllables per minute but no effect was found for complexity. In the case of structured tasks planning resulted in fewer errors per 100 words. Rutherford (2001) conducted a research on the effect of teacher-directed planning on thirty one ESL intermediate students' oral production and actual nature of their planning. He used two narrative tasks based on tightly structured picture stories and found no significant results for complexity and accuracy.

Yuan and Ellis (2003) researched the effect of pre-task planning on CAF of forty two Chinese students. They used a narrative picture description task for elicitation of the oral performance. A no-planning and a pre-task planning (10 minutes) design was employed plus pressured task performance. They found that planning group produced more pruned syllables per minute than no-planning group, but the results for accuracy were statistically insignificant. Also, planning group produced more clauses per T-unit than no-planning group. Also, Yuan and Ellis (2003) investigated the effects of on-line planning on fluency, complexity, and accuracy, in addition to the effects of no planning and strategic planning. They reported that the no-planning group performed more fluently than the on-line planning group. Although there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups, this result indicates that on-line planning may decrease the speed of speech. As for complexity, statistically significant effects of on-line planning were found for grammatical complexity. Also, there was a statistically significant difference between the no-planning and on-line planning groups in terms of accuracy, the on-line planning group being more accurate than the no-planning group.

Skehan and Foster (2005) also investigated the effects of on-line planning in comparison with the effects of strategic planning. To make sure that the learners plan while performing a decision-making task, they provided new information that affects the learners' decision in the middle of the task. The learners in their study worked in pairs and discussed what would be an appropriate sentence for people who committed various crimes, either killing or seriously injuring another person. For example, one of the cases was that of a woman who killed her

husband after discovering that he had an affair with another woman. Five minutes into the task, new evidence about the crime was introduced, which in this case was that the husband had been violent and abusive to his wife and children and also had had a series of affairs. By providing the information that was not included in the original description of each case, Skehan and Foster (2005) attempted to force the learners to get involved in on-line planning. The performances during the first five minutes and the second five minutes were compared, but no clear effects of on-line planning were found. Skehan and Foster (2005) stated that further research is necessary to determine the effects of on-line planning.

Sangarun (2005) investigated three types of planning (meaning-focused, form-focused and form and meaning focused) on oral performance of forty intermediate Thai students. He made use of an instruction task and an argumentative task. An overall effect for planning was found on measures of fluency and accuracy. Overall, learners focused on meaning irrespective of the type of planning. Gilabert (2007) studied the effects of planning on CAF of forty eight lower intermediate students. He used four wordless comic strips to elicit oral narratives performed under four conditions: 1) no-planning/Here-and-Now; 2) 10 minutes planning/Here-and-Now; 3) no-planning/There-and-Then; 4) 10 minutes planning/There-and-Then. Results revealed that both planned conditions (i.e. 2 and 4) resulted in greater fluency and lexical richness than two unplanned conditions. There was no effect for planning on either complexity or accuracy. In contrast, the There-and-Then conditions (i.e. 3 and 4) resulted in greater accuracy than the Here-and-Now conditions.

Guara-Tavares (2008) investigated the effects of planning on complexity, accuracy and fluency of fifty intermediate Brazilian learners of English. He used two picture-cued narrative tasks. Task 1 was performed by both control and experimental groups under no-planning condition and task 2 was performed by control group under no-planning condition and under planning condition by the experimental group. Planning time in this research was ten minutes. He found no statistically significant differences between control and experimental groups on task one. On task two the experimental group was significantly more accurate and complex than the control group. In another study Mochizuki and Ortega (2008) investigated the effects of guiding learners to attend to a specific grammatical feature and later performance of that feature in a task. A picture story re-telling task with audio narrative stimuli were used in this study. There were three groups; a no-planning group who had to re-tell the story immediately after listening to it, an unguided planning who had five minutes to plan and a guided planning group who received handouts about how to make relative clauses. He found no group difference in general complexity. As for accuracy it was revealed that guided planners produced more and more accurate relative clauses than the unguided planners. For the measure of fluency non-guided planners were more fluent than no-planning and guided planning group. Ahmadian (2012) investigated the relationship between working memory capacity and L2 oral performance under careful on-line planning condition. The participants (N=40) were EFL learners who were asked to perform an oral narrative task under careful on-line planning condition. Results indicated no relationship between working memory capacity and complexity. However, he found positive correlation between working memory capacity on the one hand and fluency and accuracy on the other. In the light of previous research and in line with the gap pointed out by Ellis (2009), the following research questions were put forth:

### **3. Method**

#### *3.1 Research Questions*

1. How does pre-task planning time affect complexity, accuracy and fluency in oral production?
2. How does on-line planning time affect complexity, accuracy and fluency in oral production?



3. How does pre-task and on-line planning time affect complexity, accuracy and fluency in oral production?

### 3.2 *Research Hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1: providing pre-task planning time will have a positive effect on complexity, accuracy and fluency.

Hypothesis 2: providing on-line planning will have a positive effect on complexity, accuracy and fluency.

Hypothesis 3: simultaneous provision of on-line and pre-task planning time will have a positive effect on complexity, accuracy and fluency.

### 3.3 *Planning Time*

Planning time is divided into two types: pre-task planning and on-line planning. For this type of planning, learners are given a period of time prior to their task performance, during which they deliberate on what and how they are going to do the task. There are two types of pre-task planning, namely, rehearsal and strategic planning. Many studies (Crookes, 1989; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Kawauchi, 2005a, 2005b; Mehnert, 1998; Ortega, 1999, 2005; Skehan & Foster, 1997, 2005; Wendel, 1997; Wigglesworth, 1997; Yuan & Ellis, 2003) have used the term pre-task planning to refer to strategic planning only. Planning time also varies in different studies but in the majority of the studies the learners had a ten-minute preparation time (Crookes, 1989; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Kawauchi, 2005a, 2005b; Mehnert, 1998; Ortega, 1999; Skehan & Foster, 1997, 2005; Wendel, 1997; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). On-line planning, which is also referred to as within-task planning, is a type of planning that is available while learners engage in task performance. Ellis (2005) classifies on-line planning into two categories: pressured and unpressured planning. The difference between them is the time given to learners for the task performance. In pressured on-line planning, learners have a time limit to complete the task, which restricts their time to engage in planning during the task. On the other hand, in unpressured planning, learners are allowed to spend as much time as they wish on the task. By providing the learners with unlimited time, researchers assume that learners will engage in on-line planning while performing the task.

### 3.4 *Theoretical Perspective*

The studies mentioned above have been informed by a number of theoretical perspectives. Many of the research reviewed above has drawn on Levelt's (1989) model of language production. As far as planning is concerned Levelt's model provides the clearest and fullest account of how planning can influence production Ellis (2009). According to Levelt's model (1989, 1993), speech production consists of three major components: the Conceptualizer, the Formulator, and the Articulator. Levelt also identified two characteristics of speech production, which are relevant to task planning: (i) controlled and automatic processing and (ii) incremental production. According to Levelt, some of the components of the speech production process (specifically, the conceptualizer and the monitor) operate under controlled processing, while other components (specifically, the formulator and the articulator) operate largely automatically. However, what is true for native speakers may not be true for learners, who are likely to experience problems with formulation and articulation (De Bot 1992). Levelt's model, in conjunction with a view of the learner as a limited information processor who experiences difficulty in attending to all aspects of language production at the same time, provides a basis for explaining a number of the key findings of the planning studies. Different types of planning can be predicted to ease the pressure on the learner's working memory in different ways, variably affecting the competition and trade-offs evident in different aspects of language production. Both rehearsal and strategic planning are likely to assist conceptualization and thus facilitate fluency. They may also have some impact on formulation and articulation as learners

are likely to have accessed relevant linguistic resources, while planning and will find it easier to access them again during formulation and articulation. However, if learners are primarily oriented towards fluency, strategic planning may not benefit either complexity or accuracy. Another possibility, if learners are viewed as having a limited processing capacity, is that they will find it difficult to attend to both complexity and accuracy and so will prioritize one of these. This is what a number of the studies seem to show. While all of them demonstrate a positive effect for strategic planning on fluency, several of them found that it supported either complexity or accuracy but not both.

### 3.5 Participants

The participants in the present study were 85 Iranian EFL learners between 19 and 27 years of age studying English as a foreign language at two universities, Shahrekord Azad University and Safahan Non-Profit University, in Isfahan, Iran. Fifty were male and thirty five female. They had been studying English from 7 to 9 years. They were all at an intermediate level of English proficiency, as indicated by their scores in the grammar section of the Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 1992) they had taken. They were all third year students, studying English at university for 18 hours per week at the time of the study. The participants were all Persian speakers and had a similar, if not identical, learning background both at high school and at university. They were randomly assigned to three experimental groups and a control group.

### 3.6 Materials

The study made use of a narrative task rather than an interactive task. Foster & Skehan (1996, 1999) found that in their studies, which included interactive tasks, there were a few students who were too inactive to be included in data analysis. Learners' outcomes are also influenced by the interlocutor's reconfirmations, clarification requests, and recasts, which will make it difficult to analyze the effects of planning on individual learners' task performance. In contrast, a narrative task is considered to be cognitively more demanding than personal story telling (Skehan & Foster 1995, 1997; Foster & Skehan 1996; Kawauchi 1998; Wigglesworth 1997). Story-elicitation procedures can also prevent too much individual variation in the story lines (Ortega 1999). Ejzenberg (1992) showed that her participants reported that a narrative task was more efficient in assessing their oral ability than a dialogue task. In this study, one narrative picture description task was used. The pictures depict a story which happens to a shopper at a supermarket. The participants are required to look at the pictures in front of them and narrate what they see happening in the pictures.

## 4. Design

The study involved between-participants design with four levels of planning conditions (pressured planning and careful planning) and pre-task planning (+pre-task planning and -pre-task planning). The participants completed one task consisting of different sets of related pictures. The task required them to produce an oral narrative. A total of 85 participants took part in the study. They were randomly assigned to one of four groups which were then asked to perform the task in the Pressured Planning, the Careful Planning condition or + pre-task planning and -pre-task planning. All the participants were administered an OPT to ensure that the groups had equivalent English proficiency at the outset of the study. The textual products of the two tasks from both conditions were recorded and analyzed in terms of fluency, complexity and accuracy.

### 4.1 Task conditions

In this study, on-line planning and pre-task planning were operationalized at four levels: (1) No pre-task planning, No on-line planning. (2) +pre-task planning, No on-line planning. (3) No pre-

task planning, careful on-line planning. (4) +pre-task planning, careful on-line planning. The participants performed the task in a laboratory setting.

**4.1.1 Condition (1): No pre-task planning, No on-line planning (Group 1)**

In this condition, participants were required to perform the task immediately after studying the pictures for a very short time (30 seconds) and had to complete the task within a limited time (2 minutes). Thus, they had almost no time for planning the task in advance and were also pressured to perform the task rapidly so that opportunities for on-line planning were limited.

**4.1.2 Condition (2): +pre-task planning, No on-line planning (Group 2)**

In this condition, participants had (10 minutes) planning time before their narration. They could use this time to plan, take notes or prepare what they were going to say in advance. But before starting their narration, their notes were removed. They were also pressured to complete the task within a two-minute time limit to reduce opportunities for on-line planning.

**4.1.3 Condition (3): No pre-task planning, unpressured on-line planning (Group 3)**

In this condition, participants had no pre-task planning and therefore had to perform the task immediately after studying the pictures for a very short time (30 seconds), but they were under no such pressure unlike the participants in condition 2 to complete the task. In other words they had ten minutes to complete their narration on-line.

**4.1.4 Condition (4): +pre-task planning, unpressured on-line planning (Group 4)**

In this condition, participants had (10 minutes) planning time before their narration and also ample time for on-line planning. In other words, they were unpressured during the performance of the task and they could also plan their speech before the narration.

## **5. Measures**

Measures of accuracy, fluency, and complexity were developed to evaluate the quality of the participants' oral and written production. These measures have all been used in previous studies (e.g. Foster & Skehan 1996; Wendel 1997; Yuan & Ellis 2003) and were the same for both modalities.

### **5.1 Fluency Measure**

Fluency is the production of language in real time without undue pausing or hesitation (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). In this study fluency was measured in terms of the number of syllables produced per minute of speech. This was also chosen as a measure of fluency by Yuan and Ellis (2003).

#### **5.1.2 Complexity measure**

According to Foster, Tonkyn and Wigglesworth (2000) T-unit seems to be the most popular unit for the analysis of both written and spoken data. Hunt (1965) defines the T-unit as a main clause plus any other clauses which are dependent upon it. Therefore, the number of clauses per T-units were calculated as the measure of complexity.

#### **5.1.3 Accuracy measure**

To measure the accuracy of oral production, Foster and Skehan (1996) used Error-free clauses as a percentage of the total number of clauses. Following them, the number of clauses was

counted. Then, the number of error-free clauses was counted and accuracy was measured by calculating the number of error-free clauses as a percentage of the total number of clauses.

## 6. Results

The results are presented in the order of descriptive statistics first and then anova results along with the post-hoc Scheffe test for each measure. In order to find out about the mean differences among the four groups, descriptive statistics was conducted. Table 1 presents the descriptive data regarding fluency across the four groups.

Table 1. Descriptive data for fluency across the four groups.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
No PP - No OP	21	1.6410	.24440	.05333	1.5297	1.7522	1.12	1.96
PP - No OP	23	1.9265	.44974	.09378	1.7320	2.1210	1.28	2.98
No PP - OP	20	1.4140	.15709	.03513	1.3405	1.4875	1.20	1.86
PP - OP	21	1.7829	.27425	.05985	1.6580	1.9077	1.20	2.34
Total	85	1.6999	.35609	.03862	1.6231	1.7767	1.12	2.98

As it is clear from table 1 the mean for no pp-no op is 1.64 and the SD is .24. This is in contrast with the pp-op group who had time for both pre-task planning and on-line planning with the mean and SD of 1.78 and 2.74 respectively. The mean for the pp-no op is 1.92 which shows a remarkable difference with the no pp- op who had no time for pre-task planning but had time for on-line planning with a mean of 1.41 and a SD of .15.

In order to see if all four groups differed significantly in their fluency measures a one-way Anova was run. There was a statistically significant difference at  $p < .05$  level in scores obtained for groups fluency:  $F(10.75)$ ,  $p = .000$  table 2 presents the anova results for fluency.

Table 2. One-Way Anova results for fluency of the four groups.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.033	3	1.011	10.752	.000
Within Groups	7.618	81	.094		
Total	10.651	84			

Post-hoc comparisons using the Scheffe test revealed that group 3 (no pp-op) differed significantly from group 2 (pp-no op) and group 4 (pp-op). The pp-op group (M=1.78) differed significantly from no pp-op (M=1.41) but no such differences were found between this group and group 1 and 2. Group 1 (M= 1.64, SD= 0.24) differed significantly from group 2 (M=1.92, SD= .44).

Table 3. Post-hoc Scheffe test for fluency of the four groups.

(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No PP - No OP	PP - No OP	-.28557*	.09256	.029	-.5498	-.0213
	No PP - OP	.22695	.09582	.141	-.0466	.5005
	PP - OP	-.14190	.09464	.526	-.4121	.1283
PP - No OP	No PP - No OP	.28557*	.09256	.029	.0213	.5498
	No PP - OP	.51252*	.09376	.000	.2448	.7802
	PP - OP	.14366	.09256	.496	-.1206	.4079
No PP - OP	No PP - No OP	-.22695	.09582	.141	-.5005	.0466
	PP - No OP	-.51252*	.09376	.000	-.7802	-.2448
	PP - OP	-.36886*	.09582	.003	-.6424	-.0953
PP - OP	No PP - No OP	.14190	.09464	.526	-.1283	.4121
	PP - No OP	-.14366	.09256	.496	-.4079	.1206
	No PP - OP	.36886*	.09582	.003	.0953	.6424

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

The same procedure is repeated for accuracy across the four groups. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics related to accuracy of the four groups.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for accuracy of the four groups.

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for				
				Mean	Minimum	Maximum		
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
No PP - No OP	21	3.0033	.46259	.10095	2.7928	3.2139	2.22	3.75

PP - No OP	23	3.8461	.64649	.13480	3.5665	4.1257	2.56	5.33
No PP - OP	20	4.5155	.87103	.19477	4.1078	4.9232	2.88	6.18
PP - OP	21	4.8814	.56416	.12311	4.6246	5.1382	4.05	6.33
Total	85	4.0512	.95785	.10389	3.8446	4.2578	2.22	6.33

Descriptive statistics in table 4 shows that group 1 has a mean of 3.0 and a SD of .46. The results for group 4 with a mean and SD of 4.88 and .56 respectively shows a significant difference between this group who had time for both pre-task and on-line planning and group 1 who had no such opportunity. Group 3 with a mean of 4.51 and a SD of .87 differs significantly from groups 1 and 2 but no such difference between this group and group 4 is not indicated by the results.

In order to see if all groups differed significantly in their accuracy measures a one-way anova was run. Table 5 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level in scores obtained for the four groups accuracy:  $F(33.74)$ ,  $p = .000$ .

Table 5. One-Way Anova for accuracy of the four groups

(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No PP - No OP	PP - No OP	-.84275*	.19628	.001	-1.4032	-.2823
	No PP - OP	-1.51217*	.20318	.000	-2.0923	-.9320
	PP - OP	-1.87810*	.20069	.000	-2.4511	-1.3051
PP - No OP	No PP - No OP	.84275*	.19628	.001	.2823	1.4032
	No PP - OP	-.66941*	.19883	.014	-1.2371	-.1017
	PP - OP	-1.03534*	.19628	.000	-1.5958	-.4749
No PP - OP	No PP - No OP	1.51217*	.20318	.000	.9320	2.0923
	PP - No OP	.66941*	.19883	.014	.1017	1.2371
	PP - OP	-.36593	.20318	.362	-.9461	.2142
PP - OP	No PP - No OP	1.87810*	.20069	.000	1.3051	2.4511
	PP - No OP	1.03534*	.19628	.000	.4749	1.5958
	No PP - OP	.36593	.20318	.362	-.2142	.9461

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

Post-hoc comparisons using the scheffe test reveal that group 1 differs significantly from other groups. The results for group 2 show the same trend. This group too differs significantly from other three groups in their measures of accuracy. Results for group 3 who had no time for pre-task planning but had ample time for on-line planning, shows that the difference between this group and group 1 and 2 is significant but there is no significance between this group and group 4 who had time for both pre-task and on-line planning. Table 6 shows the results for post-hoc scheffe test.

Table 6. Post-hoc Scheffe test for accuracy of the four groups.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
No PP - No OP	21	1.7657	.25707	.05610	1.6487	1.8827	1.25	2.11
PP - No OP	23	2.9470	.37812	.07884	2.7834	3.1105	2.25	3.90
No PP - OP	20	2.2830	.23138	.05174	2.1747	2.3913	1.94	2.90
PP - OP	21	2.4348	.29807	.06504	2.2991	2.5704	2.01	2.98
Total	85	2.3724	.52127	.05654	2.2599	2.4848	1.25	3.90

Descriptive results related to the effects of planning time on complexity are presented in table 7. As it is clear from table 7, group 1 (M= 1.76, SD= .25) seems to differ from group2 with a mean of 2.94 and SD of .37. The mean and SD for group 4 are 2.43 and .29 respectively. Group 3 who had no time for pre-task planning but had on-line planning time has a mean and SD of 2.28 and .23 respectively.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics for complexity across the four groups.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.564	3	5.188	57.870	.000
Within Groups	7.261	81	.090		
Total	22.825	84			

In addition a one-way anova was run to see if all groups differed in any significant way in their complexity measures. As can be seen from table 8, there is a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level in scores obtained for the four groups complexity:  $F(57.87), P = .000$

Table 8. One-way Anova for complexity of the four groups.

(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	PP - No OP	-1.18124*	.09037	.000	-1.4393	-.9232
No PP - No OP	No PP - OP	-.51729*	.09355	.000	-.7844	-.2502
	PP - OP	-.66905*	.09240	.000	-.9329	-.4052
	No PP - No OP	1.18124*	.09037	.000	.9232	1.4393
PP - No OP	No PP - OP	.66396*	.09154	.000	.4026	.9253
	PP - OP	.51219*	.09037	.000	.2542	.7702
	No PP - No OP	.51729*	.09355	.000	.2502	.7844
No PP - OP	PP - No OP	-.66396*	.09154	.000	-.9253	-.4026
	PP - OP	-.15176	.09355	.456	-.4189	.1153
	No PP - No OP	.66905*	.09240	.000	.4052	.9329
PP - OP	PP - No OP	-.51219*	.09037	.000	-.7702	-.2542
	No PP - OP	.15176	.09355	.456	-.1153	.4189

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

Post-hoc comparisons using the shceffe test show that group 1 who had neither pre-task nor on-line planning differs significantly from group 2 (M= 2.94), group 3 (M= 2.28), and group 4 (M= 2.43) who had time for pre-task and on-line planning. Group 2 (M= 2.94) differs significantly from other three groups. Moreover, group 3 (= 2.28) differs in a significant way from the other groups in their complexity measures. Group 4 (M= 2.43) who had time for pre-task and on-line planning differs significantly from group 1 who had no time for planning before and during their task completion. In addition, group 4 indicates a slight improvement from group 3 who had on-line planning only. See table 9.

Table 9. Post-hoc Scheffe test for complexity of the four groups.

(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	PP - No OP	-1.18124*	.09037	.000	-1.4393	-.9232
No PP - No OP	No PP - OP	-.51729*	.09355	.000	-.7844	-.2502
	PP - OP	-.66905*	.09240	.000	-.9329	-.4052



	No PP - No OP	1.18124*	.09037	.000	.9232	1.4393
PP - No OP	No PP - OP	.66396*	.09154	.000	.4026	.9253
	PP - OP	.51219*	.09037	.000	.2542	.7702
	No PP - No OP	.51729*	.09355	.000	.2502	.7844
No PP - OP	PP - No OP	-.66396*	.09154	.000	-.9253	-.4026
	PP - OP	-.15176	.09355	.456	-.4189	.1153
	No PP - No OP	.66905*	.09240	.000	.4052	.9329
PP - OP	PP - No OP	-.51219*	.09037	.000	-.7702	-.2542
	No PP - OP	.15176	.09355	.456	-.1153	.4189

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

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

The first research question addressed the effects of pre-task planning time on complexity, accuracy and fluency and it was hypothesized that pre-task planning time would have a positive effect on CAF. The findings in this study indicate the positive role of pre-task planning time on fluency for the group who had time for pre-task planning as compared to group 1 who had no planning time at all and group 3 who had on-line planning time but no pre-task planning. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed as far as fluency is concerned. This gives more support to the findings of Wendel (1989 as cited in Ellis, 2003), Yuan and Ellis (2003), Crookes (1989) and Foster and Skehan (1996). When learners are provided with planning time prior to their task performance, they indulge themselves more in the content rather than the form. They get involved in narrating the story and place much emphasis on their speech fluency at the expense of accuracy which is in line with Skehan's attention limited capacity model (Skehan, 1998). Also, in line with several previous planning studies (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Mehnert, 1998; Ortega, 1999; Yan & Ellis, 2003), providing learners with sufficient pre-task planning time, which reduces task demands, makes learners speak more fluently. In contrast, the absence of pre-task planning time places a heavy burden on learners' processing and memory capacity during performance, and consequently reduces their fluency.

Accuracy was not affected significantly by pre-task planning time, which is contrary to the findings of Foster and Skehan (1996), Mehnert (1998) and Wigglesworth (1997). Schacter (1974, as cited in Skehan and Foster, 2001) as well as Robinson (as cited in Skehan and Foster, 2001) claim that planning time makes learners avoid making use of structures that they have not mastered yet, as a result they are likely to produce more accurate utterances. This claim is partially supported by the results obtained for group 1 which serves as a point of departure in comparing different groups. Compared to group 1, who have no planning time at all, group 2 shows some slight improvements in their accuracy, but if one compares group 2 with group 3 who had on-line planning time and group 4, who had both pre-task and on-line planning, then Robinson and Schacter's argumentation is called into question. The findings of this study regarding accuracy measures are in line with the findings of Ortega (1999) and Yuan and Ellis (2003) who concluded that pre-task planning time cannot lead to the development of accuracy.

Therefore, the hypothesis regarding the effect of pre-task planning on accuracy is rejected by the findings in this study. Complexity, like fluency, was significantly influenced by pre-task planning time which provides support for hypothesis one on the effect of pre-task planning on complexity. Group 2 who are given pre-task planning time outperformed other groups in measures of complexity. This lends support to the findings of Yuan and Ellis (2003), Wigglesworth (1997) and Ortega (1999). The results regarding complexity are also in line with Wendel (1997) who argues that pre-task planning plays a major role in enhancing complexity and that learners use the pre-task planning time to organize the story by thinking initially about what they wanted to say and only secondarily how they would say it in English. In terms of Levelt's (1989) Speech Production Model they prioritize conceptualization over formulation and articulation and these results in enhanced complexity.

The second research question addressed the effects of on-line planning time on complexity, accuracy and fluency. It was hypothesized that on-line planning would have a positive effect on CAF. The findings in this study indicate the positive effect of on-line planning on accuracy for the group who had no pre-task planning time but rather on-line planning. This finding confirms the hypothesis regarding the effect of on-line planning on accuracy. Furthermore, this finding provides more support for the findings of Yuan and Ellis (2003). Fluency on the other hand was not influenced by on-line planning time which is in line with Yuan and Ellis (2003). However, the hypothesis regarding the effect of on-line planning time on fluency is rejected. This provides as pointed out by Ellis (2009) more support for the proposition that when learners are given ample time to perform a task they use it to formulate their utterances more carefully, which leads to an increase in complexity and accuracy on the one hand and a decrease in fluency on the other. Compared with fluency, complexity was also affected by on-line planning and this is construed as support for the hypothesis regarding the effect of on-line planning on complexity. Although there was a difference between the scores for the groups who had pre-task and on-line planning time, the difference was not very much significant as far as complexity was concerned. There are some possible explanations for these findings. The learners in the careful on-line planning group may have been able to attend to form to a greater extent during the formulation stage. Allowing learners to formulate without pressure may help them to overcome their problems by accessing linguistic resources through controlled processing. In addition they may have used the time at their disposal to monitor their speech more. Also, the explanation for these findings can be related to Levelt's theoretical models of speech production outlined above. Complexity is a reflection of micro-planning. When learners have the time to plan on-line carefully, their propositions will be more elaborate and their formulations correspondingly more complex.

The third research question aimed to find out the joint effects of pre-task and on-line planning on complexity, accuracy and fluency. It was hypothesized that simultaneous provision of pre-task and on-line planning time would have a positive effect on CAF. The results indicate a significant effect for accuracy and complexity. Therefore, the hypothesis regarding the effect of simultaneous effect of pre-task and on-line planning on accuracy and complexity is confirmed. This finding is in line with the findings of Yuan and Ellis (2003). On the contrary, fluency is not much affected by this planning condition. As far as fluency is concerned, findings also lend support to the findings of Ahmadian (2012) who found no increase in fluency measures for his subjects. Learners who are provided with pre-task and on-line planning time produce more accurate and complex sentences while their fluency is negatively affected. Therefore, the hypothesis concerning the effect of both types of planning on fluency is rejected by the findings in this research. Comparing this group with group 3 who had no pre-task but on-line planning time, almost the same trend can be observed; that is, accuracy is positively affected whereas fluency and complexity are quite negatively affected by on-line planning. One possible explanation for this may be that when learners are provided with both planning conditions, they make no useful use of their pre-task planning time or may simply forget what they have

planned in advance and they rely more on their during-task planning time. This, in turn, may force learners to pay more attention to grammatical accuracy and syntactic complexity at the expense of fluency. Ellis (2005) maintains that on-line planning is thought to involve planning what to say and how to say something while one is performing a task. Therefore, the decrease in fluency can be attributed to what Baddeley (2003) refers to as working memory capacity-limited cognitive mechanism that enables one to temporarily maintain several pieces of information in mind while comprehending, thinking, speaking, and doing. Whereas previous studies focused on the effects of strategic planning, the study reported in this article investigated the effects of within-task planning and also joint effects of pre-task and on-line planning on L2 learners' narrative productions. It demonstrates that, like strategic planning, on-line planning can have a marked effect on the complexity and accuracy of learners' output. The results of this study also suggest that on-line planning is effective in terms of complexity and accuracy, but fluency is adversely affected by on-line planning. However, when learners are given pre-task planning time, fluency and complexity are increased whereas no significant increase in accuracy is obtained. This shows a trade-off effect between accuracy and complexity on the one hand and fluency and accuracy on the other as predicted by Skehan's (1998) limited capacity hypothesis. Furthermore, taking Swain's (1995) output hypothesis into account, the results of this study offer a rationale for the inclusion of planning time opportunities in L2 classrooms because more output can provide learners with more opportunities to notice their problem, test language-relevant hypothesis and reflect on their output. The results of this study can also be interpreted with regard to Levelt's model of speech production. The key to understanding the results lies in how different planning conditions affect the major processes of conceptualisation, formulation and monitoring. As Yuan and Ellis (2005) rightly note when learners have limited procedural ability in the L2 they experience problems in formulating messages. They may be able to compensate for this lack of procedural ability by monitoring their output using explicit L2 knowledge but only if their working memories are not overloaded. Thus, the opportunity to plan carefully provides the most favorable conditions, allowing them additional time to conceptualise, formulate and monitor by means of controlled processes.

This study was conducted with intermediate learners. More studies; however, are called for in order to investigate the effects of pre-task and on-line planning across different proficiency levels. Moreover, this study involved only a narrative task more future research should be directed toward investigating other task types in order to elucidate the effects of these types of planning on various aspects of language production, namely, complexity, accuracy, and fluency.

## 7. Implications

The findings of this study can contribute to task-based teaching methodology since planning is considered as one of the task implementation factors that can be manipulated by giving chance or not providing time for planning, offering different types of planning to the learners in task performance, and providing learners with various lengths of time and planning effects can be observed in the performance of language learners (Ellis, 2009). Still, depending on the purpose of oral tasks teaching instructors may assign EFL learners different aspects of the speech performance by emphasizing on altering the type of planning conditions. As it was indicated by Ellis and Yuan (2004), the utilization of planning activity can be considered as an effective pedagogical tool for language learners in order to improve their speaking skills. As a result, it is inevitable for language instructors to develop a variety of planning activities in L2 speaking classes. Furthermore, teachers could assist learners to learn how to utilize planning strategies by employing various kinds of planning activities in EFL contexts.

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## IRANIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION (KONKOOR) OF B.A.: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

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### ABSTRACT

Referring the importance of validity in test, Cohen et.al (2000) state that effective research is impossible or even worthless without the presence of validity (p.105). This study was an attempt to investigate the reliability, content and criterion-related validity of one of the Iranian National University Entrance Examination (Konkoor) at B.A level. To find out the reliability and validity, a sample of 30 B.A. students who were studying teaching English participated in the study voluntarily. Results of analyses showed that the reliability index of B.A. entrance exam is .74, and that majority of the questions derived from English book 3 and one-third of questions are related to the pre-university book. So the test proved to have content validity. The findings indicated the concurrent validity of this test which was estimated through correlating the scores of participants on the two tests with Pearson Product correlation.

**Keywords:** National University Entrance Examination; Reliability; Content Validity; Criterion-related Validity

### 1. Introduction

Iranian Entrance examinations are evidently of crucial importance since based on the examinees' performance on such exams, vital decisions are made; decisions that do have decisive impacts directly on the examinees' future (Razmjoo & Heydari Tabrizi, 2010). It is a norm-referenced test on the basis of which students are selected from the top to the bottom (Gronlund & Linn, 1990; Hudson, 2005). Iranian Measurement Organization (IMO) has been in charge of preparing and administering tests for university candidates for several decades nationwide. Iranian National University Entrance Exam (INUEE) has got a screening function to select the most appropriate students for the majors that they have applied (Alavi, 2012).

#### 1.1. Description of Test Contents

Normally, test constructors at B.A level follow a fixed procedure in the process of test construction. This paper investigates the analysis of one of the Iranian National University Entrance Examination (Konkoor), namely the general English of science (1394). To this end, a three section test of general English for the candidates of B.A. is planned to analyze on the bases of its reliability and validity. The totals of 25 items are devoted to the grammar and vocabulary section (Part A), cloze test (Part B) and reading comprehension (Part C) that are divided into two passages (I, and II). Part A includes 12 questions, part B, 5 questions, and part C, 8 questions which follow a multiple-choice format. Each main part followed by a brief direction (Appendix 1).

### 1.2. What is Reliability?

Reliability is, in fact, a prerequisite to validity in performance assessment in the sense that the test must provide consistent, replicable information about candidates' language performance (Clark, 1979). That is, no test can achieve its intended purpose if the test results are unreliable.

### 1.3. What is Validity?

Validity' in testing and assessment has traditionally been understood to mean discovering whether a test 'measures accurately what it is intended to measure' (Hughes, 1989: 22), or uncovering the 'appropriateness of a given test or any of its component parts as a measure of what it is purposed to measure' (Henning, 1987:170). This view of validity presupposes that when we write a test we have the *intention* to measure something, that the 'something' is 'real', and that validity inquiry concerns finding out whether a test 'actually does measure' what is intended. Hughes (2003) categorizes validity under four main sections naming: Content validity, construct validity, face validity, and criterion-related validity (also called predictive and concurrent validity).

Content validity involves two crucial concepts: content relevance and content coverage. Content relevance refers to the extent to which the aspects of ability to be assessed are actually tested by the task, indicating the requirement to specify the ability domain and the test method facets. Content coverage concerns the extent to which the test tasks adequately demonstrate the performance in the target context, which may be achieved by randomly selecting representative samples (Bachman, 1990).

According to Fulcher and Davidson (2007), "*Predictive validity* is the term used when the test scores are used to predict some future criterion, such as academic success. If the scores are used to predict a criterion at the same time the test is given, we are studying *concurrent validity*," (p.5).

## 2. Literature Review

This study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between the general English courses offered at the B.A. program of translation studies at Islamic Azad University and the students' general English performance in M.A. entrance examination of the master program in TEFL at Islamic Azad University. To find out the relationship, a sample of 30 B.A. students who were studying translation studies participated in the study voluntarily. To analyze the data, the researcher used multiple regression methods of analyses. Results of analyses showed that the general courses explained 67 percent of the variance in the UEE performances. Of these five courses, only one of them made the significant unique contribution to the prediction of the UEE scores.

A study was conducted by Alavi (2012) to find out the predictive validity of final English exams as a measure of success in Iranian national university entrance exam. The study involved a sample of 42 students at pre-university level in different fields of study. The results showed that there was a positive relationship between each of the exams and Iranian national university entrance English exam, separately and in combination.

Razmjoo (2006) stated that the University Entrance Examination held in Iran during the past two decades are frequently criticized as being invalid, and non-standardized with lots of problems in terms of principles of testing in general and test construction in particular. Yet some of the basic principles of language testing are not observed in the process of constructing the exam.

Farhady (1985) found little correspondence between the manner materials are taught to the students and the manner the students are tested on them. In a similar attempt, Yarmohammadi

(1986) came to this conclusion that in such exams, the role of communication is, to a great extent, ignored. Moreover, among language skills only one skill (reading, namely) and among language components only grammar and vocabulary are tested.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The population under study consisted of all the B.A. students of teaching English at Farhangiyen University during the academic year of 2015. A sample of 25 participants decided to take part in the study voluntarily. The participants included 25 males. The reason for selecting them was based on the researcher's access to them.

#### 3.2. Instruments

To elicit data the researchers used their English scores of one of the Iranian National University Entrance Examination (Konkour) , namely the general English of science (1394) among the students of teaching English; Moreover, Nelson Test of Proficiency was administered to the same group of learners to in order to calculate the concurrent validity. The reliability index of this test was estimated through Kuder-Richarson formula 21 as 0.82.

#### 3.3. Procedure

Two sets of data were at hand. One set of data was including the participants' score on the performance of B.A. entrance examination of science (Konkour). The second set of data collected from the scores of participants on the Nelson Test of Proficiency.

### 4. Results

Once the data was gathered, version 17 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to analyzed data was used to compute the *reliability* of the B.A. entrance examination is computed through. Cronbach alpha. Table 1 displays the reliability indices for B.A. entrance examination of science (Konkour).

Table1

*Reliability index*

Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
0.74	25

The result is indicated in table 1. The result shows that the reliability is .74 and it can be acceptable. Since this index is large enough and it is near to one (bigger than practically accepted measure 0.65), we can conclude that B.A. entrance exam is reliable.

In this study, two methods of checking the validity were checked through the content validity and criterion-related validity (concurrent) respectively.

Table 2

*The overall table of specification*

Part			Total



	Section	Test Specifications	Number of Items	Number of Items
A.	Grammar	Pre-university English book- lesson 4	76	4
		English book 3- lesson 5	77	
		English book 3- lesson 6	78	
		Pre-university English book- lesson 3	79	
A.	Vocabulary	Pre-university English book- lesson 3	80	8
		English book 3- lesson 4	81	
		Pre-university English book- lesson 6	82	
		Pre-university English book- lesson 1	83	
		English book 3- lesson 3	84	
		English book 3- lesson 6	85	
		English book 3- lesson 4	86	
		Pre-university English book- lesson 6	87	
B	Cloze test	English book 3- lesson 3	88	5
		English book 3- lesson 1	89	
		English book 3- lesson 2	90	
		English book 3- lesson 4	91	
		English book 3- lesson 2	92	
C	Reading Comprehension	They include neither in Pre-university English book nor English book 3	93- 100	8

According to Table 2, Grammar section includes equal distribution of a number of items which derived from English book 3 and Pre-university English book, it is the same about Vocabulary part; while, four items from English book 3 and Pre-university English book stem from the same lessons. So this unequal distribution may lead to minor problems in the distribution of specs.

Information on concurrent criterion relatedness is undoubtedly the most commonly used in language testing. Such information typically takes one of two forms: (1) examining differences in test performance among groups of individuals at different levels of language ability, or (2) examining correlations among various measures of a given ability (Bachman,1990). In this study, the researchers used the examining correlations among two measures of English ability (B.A entrance exam and Nelson Test of Proficiency).

The concurrent validity of this test was estimated through correlating the scores of subjects on the two tests. Participant's performance score on general English section of B.A entrance examination (science) was put into comparison with Nelson Test of Proficiency. The reliability index of Nelson Test of Proficiency (100C), was estimated .82. In order to check this validity, Pearson Product correlation was employed and the results depicted that the validity is 0.84. Consequently, there is a high correlation between these two tests.

## 5. Conclusion

The result of the study shows that the reliability index of B.A. entrance exam is .74 . Since this index is large enough and it is near to one (bigger than practically accepted measure 0.65), we can conclude that B.A. entrance exam is reliable.

Most of the questions derived from English book 3 and one-third of questions are related to the pre-university book. So the test has content validity. The concurrent validity of this test was estimated through correlating the scores of subjects on the two tests. In order to check this validity, Pearson Product correlation was employed and the results depicted that the validity is 0.84. Consequently, there is a high correlation between these two tests. Continued attention to the issues of validity and reliability in second language performance assessment is a challenging but necessary endeavor for Iranian English teachers who are teaching in high school and pre-university level. The present study is limited in its scope: only one of the B.A national entrance examination was analyzed; the researchers hope that the findings of this very study and other similar ones help improve the B.A exams since evaluation is not to prove but to improve.

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### Appendix 1

#### Part A: Grammar and Vocabulary

**Directions:** Questions 76-87 are incomplete sentences. Beneath each sentence, you will see four words or phrases, marked (1), (2), (3), and (4). Choose the one word or phrase that best completes the sentence. Then mark your answer sheet.

76- Helen is ..... good English teacher that I'm sure you will be happy with her.

1) so 2) so a 3) very 4) such a

77- Our neighbor's big dog is very ..... and my little girl is usually ..... when

she sees it.

1) frightened – frightened 2) frightened – frightening

3) frightening – frightening 4) frightening – frightened

78- The new high-quality models of sunglasses are going to ..... in our factory next year.

1) be produced 2) be producing 3) produced 4) produce

79- Unfortunately, I forgot to email the photographs ..... at the birthday party to my friends.

1) taken 2) which took 3) were taken 4) that I took them

80- Reza is sick and the doctor has advised him to ..... the amount of fat in his food.

1) ignore 2) reduce 3) prepare 4) destroy

81- This type of plant, which is rare here, is ..... found in the mountains of South America.

1) briefly 2) formally 3) commonly 4) efficiently

82- Mr. Alavi is interested in Asian countries, so he went on a long journey of ..... into China.

1) prediction 2) destination 3) exploration 4) communication

83- Our plans are very ....., so we can meet you either on Wednesday or on Thursday.

1) private 2) flexible 3) actual 4) immediate

84- Muslims always ..... their shoes before entering a mosque or other holy places.

1) take off 2) turn off 3) make up 4) call up

85- In my opinion, the climbing of Mount Everest was an excellent example of human .....

1) device 2) gesture 3) mystery 4) endeavor

86- Both Mr. and Mrs. Karimi are worried about their son because he does not take life .....

1) regularly 2) seriously 3) emotionally 4) comfortably

87- She was not in a good mood, so she welcomed her guests with a(n) ..... smile on her face.

1) brilliant 2) primary 3) artificial 4) effective

#### Part B: Cloze Test

Directions: Questions 88-92 are related to the following passage. Read the passage and decide which choice (1), (2), (3), or (4) best fits each space. Then mark your answer sheet.

The earliest known people of North America were Indians and Eskimos. They probably (88) ..... to North America from Asia by way of Alaska, over a long

(89) ..... of time. They spread to the east and south throughout North America.

The Eskimos and many of the Indian tribes lived in undeveloped ways, (90) ..... stone weapons and tools. Many were wandering hunters in the (91) ..... and forests. The Indians of Mexico and Central America had an advanced civilization, with fine buildings, art, and systems of law and (92) ..... The greatest of the ancient Indian peoples, among them the Mayas and Aztecs, built beautiful stone temples and palaces.

88- 1) migrated 2) increased 3) stretched 4) survived

89- 1) phase 2) pattern 3) period 4) process

90- 1) used 2) using 3) for using 4) they used

91- 1) communities 2) planets 3) towers 4) plains

92- 1) document 2) department 3) environment 4) government

#### Part C: Reading Comprehension

Directions: In this part of the test, you will read two passages. Each passage is followed by four questions. Answer the questions by choosing the best choice (1), (2), (3), or (4).

**Then mark your answer sheet.**

**Passage 1:**

We can look at nature in the same way that we look at a complicated machine, to see how all the parts fit together. Every living thing has its place in nature, and ecology is the study of how things live in relation to their surroundings. It is a relatively new science and is of great importance today. It helps us understand how plants and animals depend on each other and their surroundings in order to survive. Ecology also helps us work toward saving animals and plants from extinction and solving the problems caused by pollution. Plants and animals can be divided into different groups, depending on their ecological function. Plants capture the Sun's light energy and use it to produce new growth, so they are called producers; animals consume plants and other animals, so they are called consumers. All the plants and animals that live in one area and feed off each other make up a community. The relationship between the plants and animals in a community is called a food web; energy passes through the community via these food webs.

**93- Which of the following is the best title for the passage?**

- 1) Living Animals in Nature
- 2) Saving Animals and Plants
- 3) Ecology and Food Webs
- 4) Nature: A Complicated Machine

**94- Which of the following is NOT true about ecology?**

- 1) It studies the relationship between plants, animals and the environment.
- 2) It divides plants and animals into different groups.
- 3) It is a rather new field of study.
- 4) It is a very important science.

**95- What does the word "they" in line 9 refer to?**

- 1) Plants
- 2) Animals
- 3) Producers
- 4) Both animals and plants

**96- Which of the following can be concluded from the passage?**

- 1) The main ecological function of a food web is to capture the Sun's light.
- 2) The main problem made by pollution is the extinction of plants and animals.
- 3) All plants that produce food for human beings and animals form a community.
- 4) In order to have a healthy environment, both producers and consumers are needed.

**Passage 2:**

Robert Boyle (1627-1691) lived at a time when many young men in England were becoming interested in science and in making scientific experiments. He himself was a great scientist in chemistry. His life was spent in scientific research and he made a number of important discoveries. He was one of a group of learned men who often met together to discuss new developments and discoveries in science; this "invisible college", as it was called, eventually became the Royal Society in 1660.

Boyle was born in Ireland. When he was eight years old, he went to school at Eton, in England, and three years later he set off to travel in Europe with his French private teacher. While he was in Italy, he studied the work of the great scientist Galileo. Having returned home, he began carrying out his own experiments. He and his assistant, the inventor Robert Hooke, made an air-pump which enabled him to perform experiments with air and to discover, for example, that air is essential for breathing, for burning, and for the transmission of sound.

Boyle believed that all matter was made up of what he called "primary particles" and thus he anticipated modern atomic theories.

**97- Which of the following is NOT true about Boyle?**

- 1) He somehow predicted the emergence of modern atomic theories.
- 2) He devoted his life to studying and doing scientific experiments.
- 3) He met the great scientist Galileo when he was in Europe.
- 4) He went to Europe when he was only 11 years old.

**98- What does the "invisible college" refer to in the first paragraph?**

- 1) Boyle's regular meetings with other scientists
  - 2) The Royal Society that Boyle established himself
  - 3) Secret discussions on new developments in science
  - 4) The building where Boyle did his scientific experiments
- 99- Which of the following countries is NOT mentioned in the passage?**
- 1) Italy 2) England 3) Ireland 4) France
- 100- Which of the following can be concluded from the passage?**
- 1) Boyle was most probably born in a family with a good financial status.
  - 2) The air-pump enabled Boyle to develop his theory of primary particles.
  - 3) It was Robert Hooke who helped Boyle make most of his discoveries.
  - 4) While traveling in Europe, Boyle and Hooke made an air-pump.

# THE EFFECT OF EXPLICIT TEACHING OF DISCOURSE MARKERS VS. INPUT ENHANCEMENT ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' IMMEDIATE AND DELAYED WRITING PERFORMANCE

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## ABSTRACT

Writing is one of the main skills in learning any language. Learning about discourse markers and their role in writing may help learners develop good writing ability. The present study was set out with the purpose of determining whether instructional intervention in the form of teaching discourse markers to Iranian EFL learners through explicit instruction and input enhancement leads to improved writing ability. To do so, the researchers selected a total number of 60 learners from three intact classes and divided them into two experimental and one control group randomly. The first experimental group received explicit instruction on discourse markers, the second group was presented through input enhancement, but the control group didn't have any treatment. The learners in all three groups took a writing pretest. After treatment was offered to each respective group, the participants took one immediate post-test and one delayed posttest on writing to investigate the changes that had happened as a result of treatment. Then, the writing papers were scored by three independent raters, and the interrater reliability was found to be at acceptable range. Data analysis indicated that instruction on discourse markers, whether in the form of explicit instruction or input enhancement leads to improved writing ability. However, the participants in the explicit instruction group outperformed those in input enhancement group showing that, although instructional intervention in any form is effective, teaching discourse markers explicitly in EFL situation is much more effective than input enhancement that may simply go unnoticed by the learners.

**Key words:** Discourse Discourse markers, Cohesion, Explicit instruction, Input enhancement, retention

## 1. Introduction

English is growingly being used as an international language across the globe; this is motivated by a growing need to communicate with others to understand them and become understood. One of the most important skills in communication in any language, including

English, is writing, which is as old as humanity since from the first days the cave-dwelling human beings recorded their observations on rocks.

A writer's aim, in any type of writing, is to get his meanings across in as much a clear and comprehensible way as possible. To do so, he/she needs to be equipped with a set of sub-skills and subcomponents of writing. In other words, writing is a complicated skill that involves the integration of some components and subskills in order to encode the message intended by the message producer. However, unlike oral language, we have the advantage of time on the writer's side since the writer is not under time pressure in which he is supposed to produce the message on time so that he will not lose his/her turn in oral interactions. The writer can write, review, and revise his ideas as many times as needed or possible to brush up his intended message and express it as clearly as possible. The writer can deeply dig and delve into his/her available mental resources and his language repertoire to encode his/her meaning into clear meaningful messages will be later decoded and deciphered by the readers.

To do so, the writer needs to be equipped with a set of skills and subskills one of which is the skill of being able to write in a cohesive and coherent manner. In fact, one important feature facilitating the comprehensibility of a text is cohesion, defined as the meaning relationships existing within a text and contributing to the textuality of a text (Halliday & Hassan, 1976). One type of cohesion is termed as grammatical cohesion, referring to the grammatical connections between individual clauses or utterances in speaking or writing.

Brown and Yule (1983) categorize grammatical cohesion into three broad categories of reference, substitution/ellipsis, and conjunctions. The last category, conjunctions, that establish the relationships between sentences and clauses are very similar to what Schffrin (as cited in Asadi, 2012) labels as discourse markers (DMs). Swan (as cited in Ayman Sabry Daif-Allah & Khaled Albashar, 2013) believes that DMs are the words and expressions used to show the relationship between what a speaker is saying, what has already been said, and what is going to be said. More clearly, DMs serve to establish cohesion in the text, which in turn, promotes the comprehensibility of it and helps produce more comprehensible writing. This is endorsed by Rahimi (as cited in Ayman Sabry Daif-Allah & Khaled Albasher, 2013) who believes that DMs are one of the components of communicative competence since they help learners produce fluent and meaningful pieces of discourse in English.

As for any other language skill, as claimed by the proponents of interventionist approaches to L2 instruction, writing and its related skills and subcomponents can be taught in different ways. Explicit instruction and input enhancement are two instances, both of which are attempts to focus the learners' attention on language forms. In other words, both try to bring the language items to the attention of the learners. The former does so by using explicit teaching of the language forms while the latter attempts to teach formal features of language through indirect implicit ways. Specifically speaking, both explicit instruction and input enhancement are rooted in noticing hypothesis according to which learning takes place when the learner notices the language forms in the input. In other words, in order to become intake, the input should be brought to the attention of the learners to make it more salient which, psycholinguistically speaking, leave long lasting traces in the learners' long term memory (Schmidt, 2001; Benati, 2004).

In explicit instruction which is carried out through Focus on Forms (Fs) procedures, the teacher provides the learner with explicit metalinguistic explanations on the form being taught. The explanations may, sometimes, be followed by some tangible examples in which the structure under focus is included. Later some exercises prepared for the purpose of further practice may be introduced. In input enhancement the teacher provides no explicit instruction of metalinguistic explanations. Instead, he/she attempts to provide the learners with ample samples of the language in which the form to be taught has become salient so that the learner

can notice them and infer some conclusions by comparing the salient features together and with the other available input. The input becomes more salient through special stress or tone of voice in oral language and through typographical features like underlining, boldfacing, highlighting, using different colors, etc. These procedures serve the purpose of enhancing the saliency of the input which in turn promotes learning.

According to Long's interaction hypothesis, learners interact with the 'interactants' or factors present in their learning environment. Besides the teacher and other learners, the L2 learner is involved in interaction with the texts he/she is exposed to. Texts are composed of linguistic items, lexical or grammatical. One of the linguistic items that establish the textuality of a text are discourse markers (DMs), which are of fundamental significance in helping the readers understand a text.

Some studies have been conducted to explore the use of DMs by L2 learners. For example, a study by Field and Yip (1992) indicated that non-native students of English in Hong Kong used more conjunctions than Australian students did, and they usually put all conjunctions at the beginning of the sentence. In another study, by investigating paragraphs written by Saudi students, Ayman Sabry Daif-Allah and Khaled Albeshir (2013) found many problems in the students' writings in their organization of ideas, because of inadequate use of DMs. Also it was revealed in another study, done by the mentioned researchers in Qassim University, that the students are completely unaware of applying DMs in their writing which causes their experiencing some problems with the use of DMs. Moreover, as stated by Schiffrin (as cited in Asadi, 2011) mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation is not enough for improving writing; they need to be equipped with other skills and components, including DMs, in order to produce well-organized texts. Different studies have investigated the use of DMs from different perspectives. Scholars like Conner (1984), Field and Yip (1992), Karasi (1994) have focused their research on the frequency of DMs in students' writings. Some others have examined the nature of DMs used in students' writings (Liu and Braine, 2005; Bell 2012). Also, some other researchers investigated the relationship between DMs and writing quality. The results are, however, contradictory, which indicates the need for further exploration for the purpose of further clarification. For example, Allard and Ulatowaska (1991) found a high correlation between the number of lexical ties and writing quality, while Zhang (2000) reported no significant relationship between the number of cohesive ties employed and quality of writing. Therefore, there is a need for further investigations to find the effect of teaching DMs in its Iranian EFL context. In other words, in line with Schmidt's (1993) 'Noticing Hypothesis' whether focusing the learners' attention on language either through explicit instruction or input enhancement in Iran would lead to improved writing or not is a rather new area of research that calls for further investigation; this is the point to be further discussed in the following section.

Many EFL learners, Particularly Iranian EFL learners, being unaware of the fact, either underuse or misuse DMs in their writings. This may stem from lack of appropriate instruction on the part of the teachers. Iranian EFL learners are simply unaware of the role of DMs in writing effective comprehensible texts. In other words, despite the vital importance of DMs, the effect of instructing Iranian EFL learners on the use of DMs, to the researcher's knowledge, has been the focus of few studies, if ever, and little research has been done on the effect of DM instruction on students' writing quality. So this study aims at investigating the effect of instruction on the use of DMs on improving the Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. More precisely, the present study was an attempt to find out which of the mentioned ways of providing input for learning, namely explicit instruction or input enhancement, is more effective in helping EFL learners to master DMs. To reach this purpose, the researchers raised the following research questions:

RQ. Is there any significant difference among the explicit, input enhancement, and control groups regarding their writing performance in the immediate and delayed post-tests?



H0. There is not any significant difference among the explicit, input enhancement, and control groups regarding their writing performance in the immediate or delayed post-tests?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Participants**

The all-female 60 participants for the present study were selected out of a total number of 126 intermediate -level EFL learners learning English in Goldise Now Language Institute in Mianeh, East Azerbaijan. The 126 learners had already passed their pre-intermediate level successfully and had managed to enter the intermediate level. They had been registered and grouped in 8 classes that met for three 90-minute sessions in a week during a term that lasted 20 sessions out of which two sessions were allotted to mid-term and final exams. Since all of the third year EFL learners of the institute had been registered and grouped by the institute, they were considered as intact groups.

As mentioned above, 60 learners in three randomly selected intact groups of 20 were selected as the final participants for the study. Two groups, each comprising 20 learners, were randomly selected as the experimental groups labelled as Explicit Instruction Group (EIG) and Input Enhancement Group (IEG) groups; the other group which included 20 learners was labelled and used as the Control Group (CG).

It should also be added that the first language of all the participants in the experimental groups was Azeri, and all of them had learnt Farsi as their second language while English was their foreign language. Finally, it should be mentioned that the age range of the participants ranged between 14 and 26. Even though the participants were in the intermediate level, in order to check their homogeneity in terms of language proficiency, the researcher administered a Preliminary English Test (PET).

### **2.2. Instruments and Materials**

The first instrument used in the study was the reading and listening section of a Preliminary English Test (PET) which was used for ensuring homogeneity in terms of English proficiency across the participants in the experimental and control groups.

The second instrument used in the study was three writing tasks selected from the institute's textbook, entitled American English File 2. One task required the learners to describe the steps in finding an apartment for rent for two English students who were newcomers to the city. Another writing adopted from the teachers' book required the learners to write about the steps in using an ATM machine. Meanwhile, a third task asked the students to write about the steps in cooking a nice vanilla cake. The purpose in all three tasks was eliciting the learners' knowledge of the use of sequencing DMs while writing about the steps in doing each activity. Out of the three tasks, one (cooking cake) was randomly selected for use as the pretest, another one (using an ATM) was used as the immediate posttest, and the third one (finding an apartment) was selected for use as the delayed posttest. Since all three tasks were introduced in the teacher's guide, they were considered to be at the same difficulty level.

Moreover, a set of pictures were prepared for teaching some vocabulary needed in writing on the topics mentioned in the tasks. For example, they got familiar with the notions and words needed in using an ATM, the ingredients required in cooking a cake, and the vocabulary related to different parts of an apartment commonly used by real estate agents. This eliminated the probable unequal background knowledge on the topics across the participants.

### 2.3.Procedure

In the onset of the study EIG, IEG, and CG groups were randomly selected out of the available intact groups. Before starting the term, all the groups took a writing pretest about the steps in cooking a nice vanilla cake and the obtained papers were corrected by three independent experts (including the researcher/teacher) on the use of sequencing DMs. The inter-rater reliability for the pretest scores of each participant by three independent raters (including the researcher/teacher) was calculated none of which fell below the acceptable range of .7. After, the two session treatment on DMs across the groups, the learners were given immediate posttest in the form of the second writing task on the use of ATMs. The obtained papers were again corrected by three independent raters, and the reliability of the ratings was checked again. The third writing task on the steps in finding a good apartment was used as the delayed posttest, and it was administered after the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the term. The obtained results were again rated by the three raters the reliability of which was obtained and for all participants, the reliability coefficient turned out to be higher than .70.

#### 2.3.1. Treatment Procedure

There were two experimental groups in the study, namely Explicit Instruction Group (EIG) and Input Enhancement Group (IEG). EIG received treatment in the form of direct and explicit instruction on the use of sequencing DMs. The participants were first presented with a model in which the sequencing DMs were used. The teacher explicitly explained the role of sequencing DMs such as first, second, third, then, after that, later, and finally and tried to show the step-wise meaning relationship between the sentences that made the paragraph. Later, the researcher asked the participants to analyze more model paragraphs in which sequencing DMs had been used and show the explicit meaning relationships all over the paragraph. After two sessions of explicit instruction of DMs, the participants participated in the immediate posttest on using ATM.

The learners in the second experimental group, IEG, received treatment in the form of input enhancement of the DMs. For two sessions, the learners in this group were flooded with the enhanced DMs by boldfacing. The model paragraphs were the same as those used in EIG; the difference was in the fact that the DMs in EIG were marked by boldface. No explicit instructions on DMs were provided. The learners were merely bombarded with the boldfaced enhanced input of DMs, and they were left to discover the meaning relationships between the sentences in the text by themselves. As for EIG, after two sessions the learners in this group completed the immediate writing task on ATM.

For the control group, there was no extra explanation about discourse markers, and no enhancement of the discourse markers in their books. They had the normal input of their text books.

The participants of all groups took the delayed posttest after the 15<sup>th</sup> session, and the papers were scored by two raters.

#### 2.3.2. Scoring Procedure of the Writings

Since the focus of the present study was on the use of sequencing DMs, the tasks were prepared in a way that they elicited the use of DMs in writing from the participants. As such, the writing samples obtained from the students in pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest were scored by the raters in terms of the use/non-use of DMs as well as the appropriate use of them. A total score of 10 was allotted to each obtained writing sample by the writers; in other words, the maximum score for each piece of writing was 10. For each case of the failure in the use of DMs or the inappropriate use of DMs, one score was subtracted from the total mark of 10. The inter-rater reliability for each participant's scores in pretest, immediate

posttest, and delayed posttest was calculated. The reliability index co-efficient for all of the three tests turned out to be higher than .70.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Testing Hypothesis One on the Effect of Explicit Teaching of DMs on Writing Performance

To test the first null hypothesis, the researcher conducted descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test, the results of which are given in Table 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.3.

*Descriptive statistics for the pre-test and post-test mean scores of explicit instruction group*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 explicit instruction group pretest	9.9000	20	2.10013	.46960
explicit instruction group post	15.8500	20	1.95408	.43695

As indicated in Table 4.3, the mean score and SD for EIG in the pretest were 9.9 and 2.1, respectively ( $M = 9.9, SD = 2.1$ ) while the mean and SD in the post test were 15.85 and 1.95, respectively ( $M = 15.58, SD = 1.95$ ).

Moreover, in order to find out whether the difference between the group's pre and post test scores is statistically significant or not, the researcher ran a paired-samples t-test.

Table 4.4.

*Paired samples t-test for the comparison of explicit instruction group in the pre and post-test*

	mean	Std. deviation	t	Df	Sig.
Pair 1 EIG pre-test / post-test	-5.95	1.05	-25.34	19	.000

The results of paired samples t-test comparing the means of the EIG group in the pretest and post-test indicates that the p value of 0 is less than the critical value of .05 ( $t(19) = -25.34, p = 0 < 0.05$ ) indicating that there is a significant difference between the participants' mean scores in the pretest and post-test. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected, and explicit instruction has a significant effect on the learners' use of DMs in their written production.

### 3.2. Testing Hypothesis Two on the Effect of Input Enhancement of DMs on Writing Performance

To test the second null hypothesis, another paired samples T-test was conducted between the pretest and posttest scores of IEG to determine whether input enhancement of the DMs really improved the Iranian EFL learners' writing performance in terms of the use of DMs. The results are given in Table 4.5 and Table 4.6.

Table 4.5.

*Descriptive statistics for the pre-test and post-test mean scores of input enhancement group*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pair 1 Input enhancement group pretest	10.5000	20	1.82093	.40717
Input enhancement group post test	13.4500	20	1.60509	.35891

As the descriptive statistics in Table 4.5 indicate, the means score and SD for IEG in the pretest are 10.5 and 1.82, respectively ( $M = 10.5, SD = 1.82$ ), and the mean and SD for the post test scores are 13.45 and 1.60, respectively ( $M = 13.45, SD = 1.60$ ). In order to see whether the difference in this group's pre and post test scores is statistically significant or not, the researcher ran a paired samples t-test the results of which are given in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6.

*Paired samples t-test test for the comparison of input enhancement group in the pre and post-test*

	mean	Std. deviation	T	Df	Sig.
Pair 1 IEG pre-test / post-test	-2.95	1.70	-7.75	19	.000

As the results in Table 4.6 indicate, the p value of 0 is less than the significance level of .05 ( $t(19) = -7.75, p = .000$ ). Therefore, the second null hypothesis is also rejected indicating that input enhancement of DMs really improves the participants' writing performance in terms of the use of DMs.

### 3.3. Testing Hypothesis 3 on the Difference between EIG and IEG in terms of their use of DMs in their Immediate and Delayed Writing Performance

In order to test this hypothesis, first the researcher ran some descriptive statistics, which are indicated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7.

*Descriptive statistics for the comparison of three groups in three test conditions*

	group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
pre-test	EIG	9.9000	2.10013	20
	IEG	10.5000	1.82093	20
	CG	9.6000	1.63514	20
	Total	10.0000	1.86856	60
immediate post test	EIG	15.8500	1.95408	20
	IEG	13.4500	1.60509	20
	CG	9.8500	1.34849	20
	Total	13.0500	2.97119	60
delayed post test	EIG	15.1500	2.30046	20
	IEG	12.7500	1.51744	20
	CG	10.1000	1.55259	20
	Total	12.6667	2.74737	60

As indicated in Table 4.7, in the pretest the mean and SD for EIG was obtained as 9.9 and 2.2; the mean and SD for IE group turned out to be 10.5 and 1.82, while for the CG, the mean and SD were obtained as 9.6, and 1.63, respectively. This further confirmed the results of PET that indicated the homogeneity of the groups before treatment.

Moreover, the results in Table 4.7 also show that in the immediate post-test, the mean and SD for EIG are obtained as 15.85 and 1.95; for IEG the mean and SD turned out to be 13.45, and 1.6 while for the CG group the mean and SD was obtained as 9.85, and 1.35, respectively. So we observe some differences among the groups in the post-tests, but in order to check it statistically, the researcher ran MANOVA for testing the third hypothesis.

Finally, in the delayed posttest the mean and SD for EIG were 15.15 and 2.3; for IEG the mean and SD turned out to be 12.75 and 1.51 while for the control group the mean and SD were obtained as 10.1 and 1.55, respectively.

However, before conducting MANOVA, we should be certain whether our data meet the assumption of the equality of Covariance matrices. So the researcher ran Box's test of equality of covariance matrices the results of which are given in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8.

*Box's test of Equality of Covariance Matrices*

Box's M	35.140
F	2.703
df1	12
df2	15745.154
Sig.	.09

As it is shown in table 4.8, the amount of significance is more than 0.001, which means that the assumption of the equality of the covariance matrices has not been violated and we can do the next analysis.

Another assumption of MANOVA is the equality of the variance, which has been done through the Levene's test. The results of this test are shown in the Table 4.9.

Table 4.9.

*Levene's test of equality of error variances*

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
pre-test	.758	2	57	.473
immediate post test	1.101	2	57	.340
delayed post test	3.591	2	57	.064

As indicated in Table 4.9, none of the values are less than .05, so we have not violated the assumption of equality of variances for any of the variables. Moreover, the analysis of the data indicated the normality of the data for MANOVA analysis.

After assuring the needed assumptions, the researcher ran multivariate analysis for the comparison of three groups during the three test conditions of pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test. The results of this analysis are shown in the Table 4.10.

Table 4.10.

*Multivariate Tests<sup>c</sup>*

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared

Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.986	1275.211 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	55.000	.000	.986
	Wilks' Lambda	.014	1275.211 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	55.000	.000	.986
	Hotelling's Trace	69.557	1275.211 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	55.000	.000	.986
	Roy's Largest Root	69.557	1275.211 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	55.000	.000	.986
Group	Pillai's Trace	.900	15.268	6.000	112.000	.000	.450
	Wilks' Lambda	.164	26.908 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	110.000	.000	.595
	Hotelling's Trace	4.699	42.294	6.000	108.000	.000	.701
	Roy's Largest Root	4.615	86.142 <sup>b</sup>	3.000	56.000	.000	.822

As indicated in table 4.10, there is a significant difference among the groups in their writing performance,  $F(6, 110) = 26.90$ ,  $p = .000$  and the amount of Wilks' lambda is .16 and partial eta squared equals .59. Moreover, in order to locate the source of this difference, the researcher ran the between subjects tests, the results of which are given in table 4.11.

Table 4.11

*Tests of between-subjects effects*

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	pre-test	8.400 <sup>a</sup>	2	4.200	1.212	.305	.041
	immediate post test	364.800 <sup>b</sup>	2	182.400	66.625	.000	.700
	delayed post test	255.233 <sup>c</sup>	2	127.617	38.265	.000	.573
Intercept	pre-test	6000.000	1	6000.000	1730.769	.000	.968
	immediate post test	10218.150	1	10218.150	3732.359	.000	.985
	delayed post test	9626.667	1	9626.667	2886.481	.000	.981
Group	pre-test	8.400	2	4.200	1.212	.305	.041

	immediate post test	364.800	2	182.400	66.625	.000	.700
	delayed post test	255.233	2	127.617	38.265	.000	.573
Error	pre-test	197.600	57	3.467			
	immediate post test	156.050	57	2.738			
	delayed post test	190.100	57	3.335			
Total	pre-test	6206.000	60				
	immediate post test	10739.000	60				
	delayed post test	10072.000	60				
Corrected Total	pre-test	206.000	59				
	immediate post test	520.850	59				
	delayed post test	445.333	59				

As the data in table 4.11 reveal, there is no difference among the groups in their pre-test, because the p value of .30 is more than the set alpha. However in the case of immediate post-test  $F(2, 57) = 66.62, p = .000$ , partial eta squared = .70 and delayed post-tests  $F(2, 57) = 38.26, p = .000$ , partial eta squared = .57, this difference is meaningful. In order to locate the source of this difference, the researcher ran the post hoc analysis of Tukey, the results of which are given in the Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

*Post hoc analysis of Tukey test*

Dependent Variable	(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
pre-test	1.00	2.00	-.6000	.58878	.568	-2.0169	.8169
		3.00	.3000	.58878	.867	-1.1169	1.7169
	2.00	1.00	.6000	.58878	.568	-.8169	2.0169
		3.00	.9000	.58878	.285	-.5169	2.3169



	3.00	1.00	-.3000	.58878	.867	-1.7169	1.1169
		2.00	-.9000	.58878	.285	-2.3169	.5169
immediate test	post 1.00	2.00	2.4000*	.52323	.000	1.1409	3.6591
		3.00	6.0000*	.52323	.000	4.7409	7.2591
	2.00	1.00	-2.4000*	.52323	.000	-3.6591	-1.1409
		3.00	3.6000*	.52323	.000	2.3409	4.8591
	3.00	1.00	-6.0000*	.52323	.000	-7.2591	-4.7409
		2.00	-3.6000*	.52323	.000	-4.8591	-2.3409
delayed post test	1.00	2.00	2.4000*	.57750	.000	1.0103	3.7897
		3.00	5.0500*	.57750	.000	3.6603	6.4397
	2.00	1.00	-2.4000*	.57750	.000	-3.7897	-1.0103
		3.00	2.6500*	.57750	.000	1.2603	4.0397
	3.00	1.00	-5.0500*	.57750	.000	-6.4397	-3.6603
		2.00	-2.6500*	.57750	.000	-4.0397	-1.2603

The results of Tukey test in table 4.12 show that in the immediate and delayed post-tests the difference between the explicit instruction group and input enhancement group as well as the difference between the explicit instruction and control groups is meaningful. In a similar way the difference between the input enhancement group and control group during the immediate and delayed post-test administrations is meaningful.

Further examination of the mean scores of the groups in table 4.7 indicates that in the immediate post-test, the explicit instruction group with the mean score of 15.85 and standard deviation of 1.95 and also in the delayed post-test with the mean score of 15.15 and standard deviation of 2.3 has outperformed the other two groups.

#### 4. Discussion

Generally, the rejection of null hypotheses 1 and 2 indicate the absolute positive role of instructional interventions in mastering a second language. In other words, the general findings of the present study does not confirm the position of scholars like Chomsky, who either totally refute the positive effect of instruction, or give it a minimal role in helping L2 learners improve their language proficiency. The participants in both explicit instruction group and input enhancement groups outperformed the participants in the control group, confirming the view that besides comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), learners need to notice the linguistic elements (Swain, 1985; Schmidt, 1993), which can happen in various ways including explicit instruction and input enhancement. In other words, the rejection of the first and second

null hypotheses indicates that interventional L2 learning, favored by many rather new approaches to L2 learning, definitely facilitates learning. Moreover, as the results of the present study, show the comparatively higher mean score of the participants in EIG and IEG in comparison with the control group points to the absolute facilitating role of instruction, both explicitly and implicitly, and instruction in any form helps learners improve their learning in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in Vygotsky's terms.

Specifically speaking, the rejection of the first null hypothesis indicated that explicit instruction of DMs facilitates the learners' performance in terms of their use of DMs in their writing. This confirms the position taken by Ayman Sabry-Daif Allah and Khaled Albeshir (2013) who found that DMs, as the signposts of the flow of information, need explicit instruction. The rejection of the first null hypothesis also comes as a further confirmation of the claim already made by Schmidt and Frota (1986) who believed that explicit instruction of language in formal classroom settings improves learning. Similar results have already been obtained by Fotos (1992), Silman (1987, 1992), and Fakuda (2009). The reason may lie in the fact that explicit instruction as a form of consciousness raising activity improves noticing which, in turn, improves explicit knowledge of language (Ellis, 1994). Robinson (1996), similarly, believes that noticing (instruction, for example) helps focus attentional resources. A further confirmation of the positive role of explicit instruction in improving performance has also already been endorsed by Swain (1998) and DeKeyser (1998).

The second null hypothesis was rejected implying that instructional intervention in the form of input enhancement, originally offered by Sharwood Smith (1995), improves performance. In other words, the results of the present study show that input enhancement of the DMs leads to better noticing, which, in turn, improves the use of DMs in the learners' written performance. Similarly, Combs (2005) found that the greater saliency of the linguistic items leads to greater noticing and mastery of them. The same results have already been reported by Shook (1994), Jourdenias et al. (1995), Leeman et al. (1995) who found that input enhancement leads to greater acquisition of target structures. In other words, the studies on the effect of input enhancement on learning language, like the results from the present study, point to the efficiency of increasing the learners' awareness of the input text leads to improved performance in L2.

The third null hypothesis, claiming the existence of no significant difference between EIG, IEG, and control groups was rejected. It was statistically revealed that explicit instruction bears better results in the participants' written performance in terms of the use of DMs. This runs counter to the results of the study by Doughty (1991) who found that explicit instruction works the same as input enhancement in improving learner performance. It also disconfirms the results obtained by Wong (2004) and Hernandez (2001) who found that teaching language through input enhancement is more beneficial in improving the learners' performance. However, the rejection of the third hypothesis confirmed the results obtained by Alanen (1995), House (1996), De Graff (1997), Yoshimo (2001), Hernandez (2008), and de la Fuente (2009) who found better results with explicit instruction on language elements rather than implicit and indirect teaching of language. House (1996) believed that explicit instruction helps learners consciously compare L1 and L2 knowledge and come to useful insights. The superiority of explicit instruction to implicit instruction in Iranian EFL situation can be traced back to the overdependence of the Iranian EFL learners on explicit teacher instruction, as the main source of learning. Iranian learners traditionally rely on teacher as the dispenser of knowledge. Therefore, the Iranian EFL learners are advised to use explicit ways in L2 instruction although input enhancement is also effective. Explicit instruction bears better results in Iranian EFL situation than input enhancement.

The present study bears some pedagogical implications for use in EFL educational settings of Iran, which will be discussed in this section: First, the findings of this study pointed to the

absolute usefulness of educational intervention in the form of both explicit instruction and input enhancement in TEFL in Iran. This refutes the idea of the people who are against on-site classroom instruction, and prefer long distance education. At least, regarding foreign language regular classroom instruction in both forms proved to be effective. Second, explicit instruction, despite being despised by rather communicatively-oriented scholars, compared to input enhancement proved to bear better results in terms of the use of DMs in the written production of the learners. This also disconfirms the position of rather humanistically oriented practitioners who allot greater role to the learners themselves through discovery learning procedures. In other words, when the learners are left to discover the regularities and irregularities or patterns of language for themselves, the results are not as much promising as the time they are provided with the explicit instruction on the part of the teachers. Third, Iranian EFL learners, unlike the learners in many other situations, are traditionally over-dependent on the teachers as the main authority or power of the classroom who has the legitimate right of disposing information to the learners. Fourth, EFL learners in Iran, as for many other EFL learners in other contexts, need to attend to the information being targeted for learning. In other words, the teachers need to devise appropriate procedures to bring the language elements to the attention of the learners in whatever appropriate ways. In Iranian context, due to its authoritarian educational system, explicit instruction proved to be more effective than input enhancement. In other educational contexts, with rather learner centered form of instruction input enhancement may prove to be more useful. Finally, the findings of this study may have implications for syllabus design and curriculum development. Although the general trend in the area is towards the development of learner-centered education through the development of meaningful learning activities, due to the superiority of explicit teacher instruction, the English textbooks in Iran should be designed in a way that would suit teacher centered instruction and would leave the room for teacher initiatives.

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# THE IMPACT OF EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT PRACTICE ON EXPANDING OF THE BREADTH & DEPTH OF VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated to determine the contribution of explicit and implicit practice on expanding of breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. At first, the pretest was given, in order to make sure that, the participants are at the same level of english proficiency, ranged in age of 17 to 37. the participants were given the nelson english language proficiency test from the pole of ninety learners 60 of them were selected. The participants were randomly assigned in two groups at the beginning of the course. The pretest distributed into two groups, and the data was collected. One of the groups taught through implicit instruction and another one by explicit instruction, after ten sessions of instructions, the same test as posttest was performed for two groups and the data were collected and analyzed by the appropriate statistical analysis. this study revealed that, the implicit practice had a better effect on breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge.

**Key terms:** explicit practice, implicit practice, breadth of vocabulary, depth of vocabulary, efl learners.

## 1. Introduction:

Johnson and Jackson (2006) argued that language is the result of the interplay between various elements (sub-skills) at the same time. The wish to evaluate such a view toward language and language skills was one of the prompts in commencing the present study. This study sought to explore whether proficiency in vocabulary knowledge was the result of (more or less) equal interface of the selected variables that proved to be instrumental in explicit and implicit practice on breadth and depth of vocabulary learning.

In the context of Iran where English is taught and learned as a foreign language, it has become an extensive endeavor to teach students the vocabulary knowledge rather than speaking, listening, reading and writing in L2. For many universities and secondary school students who study English as a part of other general education requirements, vocabulary learning is considered as an essential skill in the process of second language learning.

Nowadays, vocabulary learning is an indispensable part of high-stake exams in Iran, such as Test of English as a Foreign Language, International English Language Test System, the Test of Language by the Iranian Measurement Organization, Tax-Exempt Equipment Leasing Program, and even exams for universities. Therefore, the ability to comprehend the meaning of words efficiently is an ever-increasing characteristic of literacy. As a result, teachers are responsible for helping students to become efficient.

Over the last two decades the main focus has been on language teaching and language for communication. This fact is a key guideline for increasing the attention in second language research.

Numerous efforts have been made to define vocabulary knowledge and there have been various definitions or better say proposals, so to what is meant by knowing a word (Nation, 2000; Qian, 2002; Schmitt & Meara, 1997; Segler, 2001). Mostly, vocabulary knowledge is considered as a multidimensional construct (Nation, 2001; Qian, 1999, 2002; Read, 1993; Wesche & Paribakht, 1996). Ruhl (1989) suggested that the meaning of words lies in the context and it depends on two major sources (cited in Nation, 2001, p.51):

1. The inherent lexical meaning: the meaning of words as dependent item
2. The inferential meaning: the meaning of words in relation to the neighboring words and readers world knowledge Accordingly to Nation (1990), word knowledge can be defined under four categories, namely: form (whether it is written or oral), function (knowledge of frequency and appropriate use of words), position (grammatical or collocational knowledge), and meaning (knowledge of concepts and associations). (cited in Wesche & Paribakht, 1996).

Sinclair (1991) focused on the matter of usage and argued that 'knowing a word involves knowing how to use it in sentences' (cited in Nation, 2001, p.106).

According to Laufer (1997) knowing a word means having knowledge of its form (pronunciation and spelling), word structure (the basic free morpheme and its derivations and inflections), syntactic patterns (in the sentence and the phrase), meaning (referential, pragmatic, affective), lexical relations (synonyms, antonyms and hyponymy), and collocation (patterns that occurs with each other).

Also Hendrickson (1999) argued that vocabulary knowledge contains three dimensions which are "precision" "depth" and "receptive and productive" knowledge. (cited in Qian & Schedle, 2004).

Qian (2002) pointed out that depth of vocabulary knowledge is dealing with how well the words are known. This knowledge includes different aspects, such as, pronunciation, register, frequency, morphological, syntactic, collocation properties, and the knowledge of spelling, word formation, and various meanings of a word. (Corrigan, 2007; Hunt & Begler, 2005). Also, Hunt and Begler (2005) believed that the depth of vocabulary is an important factor in turning learners to proficient and advanced readers. Depth of vocabulary knowledge is defined by Curtis (2006) as the level of flexibility and precision of word knowledge. She suggested that developing depth has to do with enriching the words that were previously known via meaning for words.

Breadth of vocabulary knowledge can be interpreted as the quantitative part of the lexical knowledge or the number of the words that one is familiar with, at least superficially. It deals with quantitative questions like "how many words" (Corrigan, 2007; Qian, 2002; Segler, 2001) SLVA research shows that the explicit temporary study of decontextualized vocabulary is valuable in the EFL reading classroom and early studies of decontextualized vocabulary learning (e.g. Anderson and Jordan, 1928; Thorndike, 1908) have been replicated by a variety of contemporary researchers and the results have consistently known explicit learning to be effective (e.g., Bahrlick and Phelps, 1987; Beaton, Grunberg, and Ellis, 1995; Laufer and Shmueli, 1997; Prince, 1996; Webb, 1962). First language (L1) research undertaken in the US from the late 1960, to the 1980s (e.g., Anderson , Heibert , Scott , and Wilkinson, 1985; Chall, 1967) Perfetti ,(1985) confirmed that "...an early and explicit emphasis on the medium(on word recognition and decoding) was more effective for reading achievement ,not only on tests of word recognition and oral reading ,but on silent reading comprehension as well" (Chall, 1987, p. 10)

In addition, programs that incorporate direct vocabulary instruction have been found to be more effective for vocabulary development than those that rely exclusively on indirect means (Folse, 2004; Johnson and Pearson, 1984; Petty, Herold and Stoll, 1968; Zimmerman, 1997). These positive findings may have occurred because explicit lexical learning strategies enhance noticing and provide opportunities for recycling; two factors that permit learners to integrate newly met vocabulary effectively into long-term memory provided that they attend to form and meaning (Prince, 1996; Schacter and Graf, 1986) Williams (2005) entitles paper learning without awareness in which he explains that implicit learning occurs without intention to learn and without awareness of what has been learned. Ellis(1994) defined implicit learning as " acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally ,simply and without conscious operation" ,while explicit learning is said to be characterized by "more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypothesis in a search for structure.

This study sought to explore whether proficiency in vocabulary knowledge was the result of (more or less) equal interface of the selected variables that proved to be instrumental in explicit and implicit practice on breadth and depth of vocabulary learning.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

There are not many studies on the simultaneous comparison of multiple factors, especially in L2 context. As a result, the discrepancies happen in pedagogy about what is basic and most important to teach in the process of learning to read efficiently. What is obvious from the analysis of the previous studies is that the contribution of depth of vocabulary knowledge has been ignored.

Similarly, the relation between learning of vocabulary and depth of vocabulary knowledge is not adequately investigated. As a manifestation of this fact, it is rightly claimed that the literature on the significance of depth of vocabulary knowledge in vocabulary learning is limited and in need of future research.

Qian (2002) believed that while at times learners use only partial knowledge of a word in order to comprehend a text, mostly more lexical knowledge (than only breadth) is desirable. Therefore, in his opinion, it was of utmost importance that the researchers made use of measures of both aspects of vocabulary knowledge, as applying only one of them falls short of yielding complete description of learners' knowledge. It was necessary, therefore, to establish a relationship between the relative roles of Explicit and Implicit vocabulary breadth and vocabulary depth in vocabulary learning. Finally, most of the research on vocabulary learning, worked on participants at beginning and intermediate levels. However, in order to arrive at greater specificity, the advanced levels of language instruction were in need of more research.



Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the role of implicit and explicit practice, vocabulary breadth and vocabulary depth, in assessing and predicting learning on vocabulary task for basic comprehension.

### **3. Significance of the study**

According to Ellis (1994), L2 vocabulary acquisition is very complex and it involves several learning processes. Krashen identifies two kinds of linguistic knowledge; acquisition and learning. Acquisition takes place automatically in natural communication provided that the learner is focused on meaning and input is comprehensible (Ellis,2004).The explicit learning hypothesis stresses the role of learners as active processors of information ,who by using vocabulary learning strategies can enhance vocabulary acquisition (Ellis,1995). If a learner has to analyze, synthesize, rework or associate new materials with already -known information, the processing will be deeper and will give the new material a higher chance to be settled in the learners mind (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995) . However, the implicit and explicit attitudes have supporters on their sides.

The present study aimed to investigate the significant implicit and explicit practice on depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge. In the case that there existed such a relationship, the results could lead to appropriate teaching and even teaching training .Teacher would become more conscious about vocabulary teaching process and would help learners to recognize the more important sources of knowledge and the ways to memorize them.

### **4. Research questions**

Q1: Is there a significant difference in the improvement of breadth of vocabulary across implicit & explicit

Practice condition?

Q2: Is there significant difference in the improvement of depth of vocabulary across implicit & explicit

Practice condition?

Q3: Is there a significant difference between vocabulary two groups of implicit/explicit with respect to

Vocabulary knowledge?

Q4: Is there a significant difference between male & female's scores on tests of vocabulary knowledge (breadth & depth)?

Q4-1: Is there a significant difference between male and female's improvement in vocabulary Knowledge (breadth & depth) in implicit training?

Q4-2: Is there a significant difference between male & female's improvement in vocabulary Knowledge (breadth & depth) in explicit training?

Q5: Is there a significant difference between means of pre- test and post test scores in implicit group?

Q6: Is there a significant difference between means of pre- test and post test scores in explicit group?

5. Method

#### **5.1. Participants**

The participants in this study included a group of 60 advance learners of English who studied English in Gooya language institute in Gonabad. There were 30 male (50%) and 30 female (50%) ranged in ages of 19 to 34.They were all native speakers of Persian who were learning English as a foreign language. These participants were recruited from classes at advance levels. None of these participants had taken TOEFLtest before, nor did they live in an English speaking country. Based on the placement test of the Institute and Nelson English Language proficiency

test, they were all homogeneous in terms of English education background. They all had received English instruction for several years.

### 5.2. Instrumentations

The instruments used in this study include: vocabulary levels test (VLT), depth of vocabulary knowledge

(DVK), and test of Nelson proficiency.

### 5.3. Procedure

#### Data collection:

The students of the advanced level in Gooya institute were informed that they were going to be given attest that had equal importance as their final exam and they were obliged to take this test .Thus, prior to their final exams, they were required to choose a date and time (from the schedule that was provided by the institute).The total time needed for completing the test was two and a half hours. Two elicitation tasks were administered to the participants in a single session. The time frame for all test sessions was the same

.In order to homogenize the learners in two groups, Nelson proficiency test was used as a pre-test, then, two exams of VLT test and DVK test were given and learners answered an item even if they guessed their choices were incorrect, because the incorrect responses would not receive negative points. After that, vocabulary learning was taught in two ways (Explicit/ Implicit) and finally, a final exam (VLT test and

DVK test) was administered between two groups repeatedly as a post test.

#### Data analysis:

This study was designed to find out the contribution of explicit and implicit practice on the vocabulary breadth, depth of vocabulary knowledge .The method that tested the difference between two types of instruction was t-test. These tests are often referred to as "unpaired" or "independent samples" t-tests, as they are typically applied when the statistical units underlying the two samples being compared are non-overlapping.

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

Most often the basic descriptive statistic, including the calculation of mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum of the scores, are the common statistical analyses that are performed in almost any study.

**Table 4-1 and 4-2 present the results of those calculations for all the instruments used in this study**

**Table 4-1: Descriptive Statistics of vocabulary tests; Nelson proficiency test**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vocabulary level test	60	40.86	88.55	74.26	10.47
Depth of vocabulary knowledge test	60	36.88	84.38	67.29	9.27
Nelson English proficiency test(pre test)	60	22	30	26.13	2.636
Nelson English proficiency test( post test)	60	27	41	33.17	3.957

## 4.2. Inferential statistics

### 4.2.1. Kolmogorov Smirnov Test

In statistics, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (K–S test) is a nonparametric test for the equality of continuous, one-dimensional probability distributions that can be used to compare a sample with a reference probability distribution (one-sample K–S test), or to compare two samples (two-sample K–Stets). The Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic quantifies a distance between the empirical distribution function of the sample and the cumulative distribution function of the reference distribution, or between the empirical distribution functions of two samples. The null distribution of this statistic is calculated under the null hypothesis that the samples are drawn from the same distribution (in the two-sample case) or that the sample is drawn from the reference distribution (in the one-sample case). In each case, the distributions considered under the null hypothesis are continuous distributions but are otherwise unrestricted. In following tables, the first test scores follow normal distribution with mean and standard deviation of 74.26 and 10.047. Software output is displayed in the below tables.

**Table 4-2. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov in VLT**

		VLT
N		60
Normal Parameters	Mean	74.26
	Std. Deviation	10.470
	Absolute	.120
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.086
	Negative	-.120
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	.656
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.783

The test distribution is normal

**Table 4-3. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov in DVK**

		DVK
N		60
Normal Parameters	Mean	67.29
	Std. Deviation	9.27
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.146
	Positive	.118
	Negative	-.146
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.801
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.543

**The test distribution is normal**

### 3.1. Pearson test

In statistics, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (sometimes referred to as the PPMCC or

PCC, or Pearson's  $r$ ) is a measure of the linear correlation (dependence) between two variables X and Y

giving a value between +1 and -1 inclusive, where 1 is total positive correlation, 0 is no correlation, and -

1 is negative correlation. It is widely used in the sciences as a measure of the degree of linear dependence between two variables.

Pearson's correlation coefficient between two variables is defined as the covariance of the two variables divided by the product of their standard deviations.

For considering the correlation between test scores, we use Pearson test. The results of these tests are given in the below. In both of VLT/DVK tests, the Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.762. So, there is positive correlation between scores on the two tests.

**Table 4-26. Correlations scores between two tests**

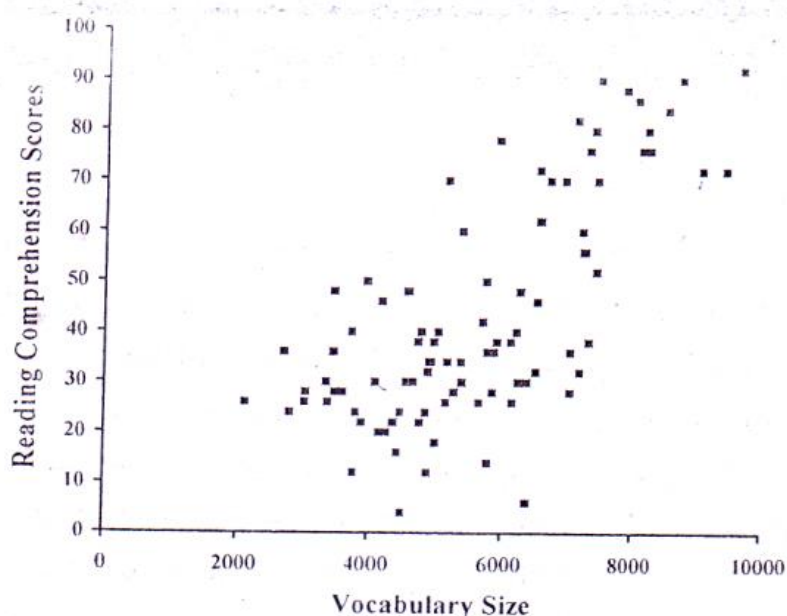
		VAR00004	VAR00005
VAR00004	Pearson Correlation	1	.762 <sup>***</sup>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
VAR00005	Pearson Correlation	.762 <sup>***</sup>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

#### 5.4 General findings

What can be inferred from the findings of the study is that, the contribution of components is not equal, and some components outperform others. These findings are somehow in line with and complementary of the results of the study done by Qian (2002).

This study is about the relationship between Explicit & Implicit practice on breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. It can be concluded that most of students who had score high in VLT (more than

80%) were in the range of 60% to 80%,. The testers who gained DVK scores in the range of 40%



to 60% varied in size of vocabulary between 3, 500 to 7, and 500. However, there exist some outliers in each range.

Figure 5-1: scatter diagram of vocabulary size and reading comprehension scores

The findings of the study, lend support to Laufer (1997), Hirsh, and Nation (1992) who declared that reading efficiently requires at least 3,000 to 5,000 words. However, in addition to what have been just mentioned, the table apparently shows a positive correlation between reading comprehension and the number of known words. The table apparently illustrates that the effect of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension performance is significantly positive (as the high correlation between reading comprehension and breadth model three-confirms).

Although, the results of this study cannot be definitely generalized to the total population of our foreign language learner, they can be interpreted that in order to gain a high score, students need to extend their vocabulary size, or breadth, higher than 7,000. While, if achieving a lower score satisfies their needs, vocabulary repertoire around 5,000 would yield the results they required.

#### 5.5 Pedagogical implications

So far, the major results and findings of the study were discussed. In this part some implications of the findings for pedagogy are drawn, which are as follows:

First, positive relationship between vocabulary learning and all the mentioned variables lends support to the effectiveness of vocabulary knowledge. This being the case, in order to improve learning of vocabulary, it is highly recommended that the teachers provide the students with various tasks on both sources of knowledge. It is worth noting that ignoring one of the variables (for example structure) at the cost of another (for example vocabulary) is not recommended at all.

Second, teaching and teaching-training programmers can make use of these results and can make necessary changes in the materials and course books to somehow shift and moderate the extreme focus from vocabulary breadth to other aspects of vocabulary knowledge, such as depth.

### 5.6. Conclusion

This study showed that the implicit training had a better impact on learning vocabulary. In addition, the findings presented that there was a significant relationship between scores of DVK and VLT tests.

Furthermore, this study showed that it could not be commented on differences in learning between males and females certainly

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# THE EFFECT OF INDUCTIVE- DEDUCTIVE TEACHING ON THE GRAMMAR LEARNING OF THE FIELD DEPENDENT- INDEPENDENT IRANIAN EFL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

Deductive teaching approaches were often employed in grammar teaching. Thus, this research study attempted to discover the effect of inductive-deductive grammar teaching on grammar learning of field dependent-independent Iranian EFL learners. The participants were 82 freshmen, male and female EFL learners. They were between 19 to 22 years old and selected from Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran. Firstly, a TOEFL proficiency test was administered to homogenize them. After taking GEFT test they took a pretest, received treatment and finally they took a posttest. Analyzing collected data through the statistics of independent samples T-test, the findings revealed that there was no significant difference between FD and FI cognitive styles in the amount of progress in grammar learning through two inductive and deductive modes of grammar teaching.

**Keywords:** Inductive, Deductive, Field dependent, Field independent, Cognitive styles, Grammar.

## 1. Introduction

Grammar is one of the basic elements that every setting of EFL language learning is perpetually contingent on. Lynn Savage, Bitterlin and Price (2010) argue that when grammar is incorrect or misunderstood in any of these areas, communication may be disrupted. Similarly, Takahashi (2005) argues that EFL language learner needs sound grammar knowledge to perform any kind of sophisticated linguistic task and everyday language.

There are different modes to teach grammar and among which we have picked inductive-deductive modes up, since, in different texts and contexts, there have often been innumerable debates and experimental studies on the effectiveness of inductive and deductive modes of teaching materials. But this time, looking piercingly from a new panorama, we endeavored to inquire that effectiveness while considering the inner world (psych) of the learner.

As a revolution in psychology, individual differences constructing the body of personality is composed of two dimensions; learning styles and cognitive styles each entailing several learning and cognitive differences in different individuals resourcing from so many biological, cultural, and gender-specific data. Among cognitive styles this study focuses on bipolar FD/ FI cognitive styles

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Grammar Concept



Having a retrospective glimpse of the long history of grammar opens a new avenue to better understand the status of this study in the scope of grammar instruction. The “grammar” concept for the first time conjured up in Greek and always there have been controversial debates between two grammarians (in the favor of teaching grammar) and anti-grammarians (against teaching grammar).

## **2.2. Inductive Teaching**

Larsen-Freeman (2003) believes inductive grammar and language learning is one of the main principles of some methods, such as Direct method, Michigan method (audio-lingual) and Silent method, as cited in Sanze (2005). Nessel and Dixon (2008) argue that the analysis of structure can be taught inductively through guided discovery since teacher’s questions invite the students to think and discover the patterns in the known words and generalize the relevant rules.

## **2.3. Deductive Teaching**

Hulstijn (2005) stated, in an explicit teaching instruction, the target grammar rules were always clearly stated or provided at the beginning (deductive approach). Larsen-Freeman (2009, p. 528) maintains that “explicit instruction is where students are instructed in the rules or patterns (deductive)”. Archer and Hughes (2010) describe the deductive instruction as a technique whereby the pedagogue introduces demonstrations of the target instructional materials and clear explication on the rationales and aims.

## **2.4. Cognitive Style**

Sternberg and Grigorenko (2001) divided the cognitive styles into three broad categories; cognition-centered, personality-centered, and activity-centered. Cognition centered styles include dimensions such as field dependence vs. field independence, holistic vs. serial processing, leveling vs. sharpening, reflection vs. impulsivity, and so on. Cheng and Zheng (2002, p. 423) define it as: “the learner's way of distinguishing, processing, storing, extracting information in the cognitive process, and the learner's orientation of solving problems as well”.

## **2.5. Field Dependent- Field Independent Cognitive Styles**

According to Ehrman and Leaver (2003) FI addresses the degree to which an individual focuses on some aspect of experience and separates it from its background. A FI learner can pick out exactly the tree of his interest among a mass of trees in forest. On the other hand, FD is used in the literature in two ways; a) absence of discrimination and b) awareness of the entire field.

Khoury (2013) states that FI is a feature of learning style which inclines the individuals to de-contextualize an item or separate it from its field to re-contextualize it and field sensitivity is individual inclination to adhere and succumb to context in such a way that makes them incompetent to discriminate component parts from their background.

## **2.6. Studies Conducted on Inductive- Deductive Teaching**

The results of a study by Shih (2008) is summarized as follows; 1. No significant difference was found between inductive and deductive groups on the performance of the immediate test. Inductive approach was as effective as deductive one in grammar teaching. Chiang’s (2011) study revealed that 1. the participant’s final grade in the two semesters did not present any difference between inductive- deductive teaching methods 2. participant’s grades on the four exams on the four exams did not show any significant differences 3. the sum of the words and the sum of the sentences used on the four exams between inductive and deductive groups.

Kemper, Verhoeven, and Bosman's (2012) suggested that explicit and implicit instruction of an orthographical spelling rule was equally effective in both groups and that the spelling knowledge they had acquired was instance-based. Findings suggested that explicit instruction was more effective than implicit instruction for the teaching of spelling rules when generalization was aimed at. Additionally, Nazari's (2012) study on the effect of implicit and explicit grammar instruction on learner's achievements revealed the outperformance of the participants in the explicit group over the implicit group in both productive and receptive modes.

### **2.7. Studies Conducted on FD- FI Cognitive Styles**

The results of Nilforooshan and Afghari (2007) study on "The Effect of FD-FI as a Source of Variation in EFL Learner's Writing Performance" revealed a significant difference between the two groups of field dependence and field independence in writing skill in general and narrative writing in particular. Field independent learners outperformed field dependents. However, no significant difference was found between field dependents and field independents in argumentative writing. The results of Dabaghi and Goharmehr's (2011) indicated that integrative grammar teaching led to better learning of grammar in comparison with the discrete-point method. Furthermore, FD learners took more advantage of an integrative method while the FIs benefited better from the discrete-point approach. The findings of this study has implications for teachers suggesting them to take into consideration individual differences to apply the best teaching methods appropriate for different learners.

Rezaee and Farhadi's (2012) test suggested that FI might have problem applying grammatical rules of the second language in order to make sentences which are semantically and syntactically well- formed. The results of Wang's (2012) indicated that both FI and FD students improved significantly, and FD student improvement was especially evident. Moreover, FD students in both groups improved more than FI students, but the difference was not significant.

### **3. The Statement of Problem**

In the EFL- ESL contexts pedagogues teach grammar whether in inductive or deductive approach while they do not consider the cognitive styles (FD/FI) of learners which is an axiomatic important issue in learning. To improve the quality of learning, the pedagogues are expected to teach in different appropriate approaches matched with the cognitive style of learner.

Consequently, here a problem raises and that is they do not know which teaching approach is more effective if it is meshed with right appropriate cognitive style of participants. And since very few studies has been run to investigate the way of grammar learning while considering their cognitive styles, the researcher tried to investigate it.

### **4. Research Questions**

The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between FD and FI Iranian EFL learners in the grammar learning through two modes of teaching: inductive and deductive?
2. If the two cognitive styles of FD and FI can affect the way of learning grammar, which one is in advantage when learning through two modes of inductive and deductive teaching?

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1. Participants**

The participants of this study were 86 freshmen, male and female EFL language learners majoring in English translation and literature following their first academic B.A. course of study. They were all between 19 to 22 years old and selected in a stratified simple randomization way of sampling from Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran. They were randomly assigned to four predetermined sub-groups of FD- FI with inductive - deductive approaches of grammar teaching. We attempted to assign equal number of male and female participants to each subgroup to control the independent variable of gender. They were all from the same cultural and linguistic background. After conducting TOEFL test 62 were left as the participants of study, the following table indicates these information.

*Table 4.1: The participants of main study*

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>Deductive</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>FI</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>7</b>
				<b>Male</b>	<b>6</b>		
			<b>FD</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>9</b>	
				<b>Male</b>	<b>9</b>		
		<b>Inductive</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>FI</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>6</b>
				<b>Male</b>	<b>8</b>		
			<b>FD</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>12</b>	
				<b>Male</b>	<b>5</b>		

#### **4.2. Instruments**

The following instruments were deployed to conduct the process of data collection: The first instrument was a proficiency TOEFL test selected from TOEFL Actual Tests by Moallefin Ebteda (2004) administered at the beginning of course to the purpose of pinpointing their potential level of proficiency in English Grammar and homogenizing them. The total mark of test was 90, those participants receiving the score of 1. standard deviation above and below the mean of scores were considered as the participants of research study. The second instrument was a Group Embedded figure Test (GEFT) by Witkin, Oltman, Raskin and Karp (1971). It was presented at the beginning of the course to discover the cognitive style of the participants. GEFT test was composed of three sections to find simple forms hidden in complex forms. No mark was dedicated to the first section and 18 marks were allocated to second and third sections. Those scores above the mean score were considered as FI and those below mean score as FD cognitive styles.

The third instrument was a self-made Pre-test which was assembled under the supervision of two experts who had received Ph.D. in TEFL. It was taken by participants at the beginning of the course, before the treatment, to determine the potential level of participants' knowledge on the target grammar (adverb clauses). The Pre- test totally was composed of 20 items and 1 score was designated to each item; therefore the total score was equal to 20. The materials on target grammar which were applied in the pre-test were chosen and designed based on Comprehensive Grammar Vocabulary and Idioms for TOEFL by Teimoori (2007), Communicate What You Mean by Pollock (1997), TOEFL Grammar Flash by Broukal (2005), Oxford Practice Grammar by Eastwood (2011), and Modern English by Frank (1972). The fourth instrument was a posttest which was composed of 20 items on target grammar. It was designed with the same

features to pretest but the items were changed; in effect they were designed in parallel (identical) form with the same grammar content, but not designed with exactly the same items included in pre-test. The researchers conducted a pilot study to obtain the reliability of these tests by administering the pretest to 62 students with the same background knowledge and field of study but other than those participating in the main study. Then the tests reliability indexes was calculated via statistic KR 20 formula. The estimate reliability index was about 0.85 that certified the reliability of the pretest to conduct in the main study.

#### **4.3. Materials**

A self-designed pamphlet on “English Adverb Clauses and the Conditions of Reducing Adverb Clauses” was used as the course instructional material. We selected this grammatical point because participants were following their first semester of academic education in university. In fact, it means that they had not learnt the target grammar yet, since the given grammar was to be taught during the second semester following the B.A. instructional course. The instructional materials on Adverb clauses included in the pamphlet was selected from Comprehensive Grammar Vocabulary and Idioms for TOEFL by Teimoori (2007), Communicate What You Mean by Pollock (1997), TOEFL Grammar Flash by Broukal (2005), Oxford Practice Grammar by Eastwood (2011), and Modern English by Frank (1972). It was composed of three parts; the first part appearing under the title of “All kinds of English sentences "contains definitions and introduced all kinds of English sentences, such as simple, compound and complex sentence along with 25 relevant examples to distinct them from each other. In this part, the structure of complex sentence was broken and analyzed profoundly and all kinds of subordinate clauses were introduced and exemplified. The second part presented 7 rules (notes) on the reduction rules of subordinate adverb clauses and 16 relevant examples are introduced along with these explanations. In the last part of the pamphlet 8 general rules (notes) on adverb clauses were introduced and exemplified.

A Video Project was deployed to teach the instructional materials to students through power point software program. The instructional materials included in pamphlet were designed in power point software program in different order of explanations and examples to the appropriate inductive or deductive teaching approach. On one hand, in deductive approach, materials were power pointed in such an order that first explanations of rules and then, exemplifications was presented, on the other hand, in inductive approach, the order of design was vice versa, i.e. first exemplification and then explanations were presented while teaching instructional materials.

#### **4.4. Data Collection Procedures**

In the first step, at the beginning of the experiment the researchers administered a proficiency TOEFL test (2004) selected from TOEFL Actual Tests by Moallefin Ebteda to homogenize participants of this study. Those participants receiving 1 standard deviation (SD= 7.29) above and below the mean of the scores were considered as the participants of study. Statistical analysis of the scores from TOEFL test revealed that those obtaining the score between the range of 33.75 and 48.32 must be considered as the participants of our study. As a result of this fact, the scores of 24 participants were not included in the statistical calculations of our study; consequently 62 participants were left as the participants of study.

In the second step, the participants took a GEFT test to determine their FD-FI cognitive styles. The total score on this test was 18, the mean score of the GEFT test was 11.37; therefore the participants obtaining scores above it were considered as FI and those below it FD. In the third step, considering number, FD-FI cognitive styles and gender, the researchers divided them into two equal groups through stratified simple random selection and then they assigned inductive instruction to one group and deductive to another.

In the stage four, the researchers administered the pretest as a pilot study to the first semester students of Lorestan University following their B.A. educational courses in English literature who had not still received any particular instruction on the given grammar. They did so to discover the reliability index of pretest and subsequently the statistical analysis of data gathered through Pearson- KR 21 revealed the correlation ship of about 0.85. In the step five, the participants in the main study took the pretest in order for the researchers not only would ascertain whether participants had some prior knowledge with respect to the given grammar or not, but also would assess participants' proficiency level in the given grammatical point. In addition, they would delete those participants with full knowledge on the given grammatical point.

In the step six, the participants took their first instructional session over 1 hour. Each session took 2 hours; in the first half the inductive group was instructed and during the second half deductive group was instructed. Finally, at the end of experiment about 10 days after the final instructional session, a posttest was administered to discover their potential grammar knowledge on the given grammar which was taught over three successive weeks.

#### **4.5. Inductive Grammar Instruction**

The procedure for conducting inductive grammar instruction was as follows; (1) one of the researchers deployed video project to present several examples containing the same target grammar (adverb clause) features. Examples were marked in different colors, font or underlined. (2) When an example was presented the teacher worked on it, reduced it, asked some conscious raising questions and allowed the students to carefully read it, formulate and then generalize the underlying rule to more examples and (3) if they weren't present of mind, teacher would introduce examples in target form. (4) If the rule were not disclosed to them the teacher would ask some conscious raising questions, slight hints, if not workable, finally a brief summary of underlying rule were given. (5) Then teacher could ask some students, if volunteered, to come to the board and assimilate rules into new textual context.

#### **4.6. Deductive Grammar Instruction**

The procedure for conducting the deductive grammar treatment was as follow; (1) the researcher (teacher) used video project to explain in details, only in target language, the features and rules on the premise of which the adverb clauses were reduced (2) then he presented few relevant examples on the target grammar. The examples or models were marked in different fonts, colored or underlined. (3) After that the teacher required some students, if volunteered, to come to the white board and write more examples or even he might ask them to translate some Persian examples to require them produce the target grammatical form. (4) Finally, the he asked some students to explicitly explain the underlying rule of the target grammar (rule verbalization).

#### **4.7. Data Analysis**

To answer the first research question we collected the scores on the pretest and posttest to be processed through statistic calculation. Then, we compared the scores of inductive and deductive groups through independent samples T- test to examine whether there were any difference and improvement within inductive and deductive groups while considering their cognitive style. To answer the second research question we investigated the data collected through statistical procedure to answer the first research question. Additional statistical analysis were conducted to compare the amount of progress in the grammar learning while considering gender, cognitive style and the teaching approach. To do so, we employed paired samples T-test. The significance of the independent samples test and paired sample test was 0.05.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Results of GEFT Test

A group embedded figure test (GEFT) was introduced to all the participants, but the scores of those 62 individuals considered as the participants of study after the presentation of TOEFL test were analyzed. As it was revealed through table 4.1, the statistical mean of scores on GEFT test was 11.37, those scores above this figure were considered as FI participants and those below it as FD. Consequently, as it is indicated via table 5.1, the results of GEFT test segregated 35 FD participants from 27 FI. Finally, each of them was divided into two equal numbers and included in a deductive or inductive group, in such a way that, 13 FI and 18 FD were included in deductive group and 14 FI and 17 FD were included in inductive group.

*Table 5.1: The results of GEFT test*

<b>GEFT Test</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>FI</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Deductive Group</b>
		<b>FD</b>	<b>18</b>		
	<b>62</b>	<b>FI</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Inductive Group</b>
		<b>FD</b>	<b>17</b>		

### 5.2. Results of Pretest and Posttest

As it is indicated through table 5.2 the mean of the scores on pretest and posttest, with regard to deductive group, in order is 4.13 and 11.58 and conclusively the amount of progress is 7.46. Also, the results, revealed through table 5.2, indicate that the mean of the scores on pretest and posttest, with regard to inductive group, in order is 3.53 and 11.54 and conclusively the amount of progress is 7.92. This is an indication of the fact that both inductive and deductive group progressed and two approaches of teaching showed themselves effective on grammar learning but there is no significant difference between the amounts of progress through these approaches of grammar teaching.

*Table 5.2: The mean progress of inductive and deductive groups*

		pretest	posttest			pretest	posttest	progress
	<b>deductive</b>	4.13	11.58	7.46	FI	4.20	11.11	6.92
					F	4.06	12.0	8.00

group P					D		6	
	inductive	3.53	11.45	7.92	FI	3.50	11.21	7.71
					FD	3.56	11.68	8.13

### 5.3. Results of the First Research Question

Although both inductive and deductive modes showed themselves effective on grammar learning (table 5-2), the results for the first research question “Is there any significant difference between FD and FI Iranian EFL learners in the grammar learning through two modes of teaching; inductive and deductive?” indicated that there was no significant difference between FD and FI Iranian EFL learners in grammar learning through two modes of teaching; *inductive* and *deductive*.

### 5.4. Descriptive Analysis

To answer the first research question we applied independent samples T-test, since the participants of each group were considered as an independent sample by itself. We had Leven’s test for equality of variances and some entries including sig. were presented. The significance level of sig. was 0.05 and if the amount of sig. for Leven’s test was more than the significant level, the results for the *equal variances assumed* was accepted and if the amount of sig. for Leven’s test was less than the significant level, the results for the *equal variances not assumed* was accepted.

### 5.5. Inferential Analysis

According to the results revealed in table 5.3, the amount of sig. in Levene’s Test was 0.811 that was more than significant level of 0.05; therefore the result of equal variances assumed was considered as the result of independent sample T- test, and since the amount of sig. (0.726) for the equal variances assumed was more than significant level (0.05), there was no significant difference between FD and FI Iranian EFL language learners through *inductive* grammar teaching.

*Table 5.3: Independent samples t-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

Progress	Equal variances assumed	0.058	0.811	0.354	29	0.726	0.340	0.962	-1.627	2.307
	Equal variances not assumed			0.357	28.700	0.723	0.340	0.952	-1.608	2.289

Also, as it was indicated in table 5.4, the amount of sig. (0.109) in Levene's Test was more than the significant level (0.05) and, as a result of this fact, *equal variances assumed* was accepted as the result of independent sample T- test. And finally, since the amount of sig (0.928) for equal variances assumed was more than the significant level (0.05), there wasn't any significant difference between FD and FI Iranian EFL language learners through *deductive* grammar teaching.

*Table 5.4: Independent Samples t-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
progress	Equal variances assumed	2.735	0.109	-0.091	29	0.928	-0.098	1.084	-2.317	2.120
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.098	28.023	0.922	-0.098	0.999	-2.146	1.949

Therefore, on the premise of data indicated through table 5.3 and 5.4 there is no significant difference between FD and FI Iranian EFL language learners in the grammar learning through inductive and deductive modes of teaching.



### **5.6. Results of the Second Research Question**

The second research question investigated whether two cognitive styles of FD and FI can influence the way of learning grammar, if so, which one is in advantage when learning through two modes of inductive and deductive teaching. To answer the second question we investigated the results indicated in the table 5.3 and 5.4 and since the amount of sig. obtained through independent sample T- test for both inductive and deductive teaching modes in order (0.811 & 0.109) were more than the significant level (0.05), therefore the equal of variances assumed was accepted for both of teaching modes, as the result of our investigation through independent sample T- test, and it meant that though the results of pretest and posttest revealed that both groups progressed in grammar learning, there was not any significant difference between FD and FI in the way of grammar learning through two modes of inductive and deductive grammar teaching.

## **6. Discussion**

The results of mean progress indicated through table 5.2 revealed that inductive and deductive groups were effective in the way of grammar learning. But the results of independent sample T- test, revealed in tables 5.3 and 5.4 indicated no significant difference between the amounts of progress in grammar learning through inductive- deductive teaching modes while considering FD- FI cognitive style of students, since the amount of sig. for inductive group was 0.811 and for deductive group 0.109. Consequently, the amount of sig. for both of them was more than the significant level of 0.05, subsequently, the equal variances was accepted for both groups and it meant that there has been no significant difference between two groups, while considering participants' cognitive style, in grammar learning.

### **6.1. The First Research Question**

The independent sample T- test statistics employed to answer the first research question, revealed no significant difference between FD and FI participants taught in inductive mode (table 5.3), since the amount of sig. for this group was 0.811. Therefore, the result of equal variances assumed, which was 0.726, was accepted as the result of Levene's test. Consequently, since this figure was more than the significant level of 0.05, there was no significant difference between FD and FI participants taught in inductive mode.

At the same time, the independent sample T- test statistics, utilized to discover whether there was a significant difference between FD and FI participants taught in deductive mode, revealed that there was no significant difference between FD and FI participants taught in deductive mode (table 5.4), since the amount of sig. for this group was 0.109. Therefore, the result of equal variances assumed, which was 0.928, was accepted as the result of Levine's test. Consequently, since this figure was more than the significant level of 0.05, there was no significant difference between FD and FI participants taught in deductive mode.

### **6.2 The Second Research Question**

Since the amount of sig. obtained through independent sample T- test for both inductive and deductive teaching modes in order (0.801 & 0.109) were more than the significant level (0.05), and it meant that though the results of pretest and posttest revealed that both groups progressed in grammar learning, there was not any significant difference between FD and FI in the way of grammar learning through two modes of inductive and deductive grammar teaching. Generally speaking, the inferential analysis of collected data revealed that though deductive teaching approach has worked more effectively than inductive teaching mode, there was no significant difference, in the way of grammar learning, between FD and FI participants taught in inductive and deductive methods.

This fact report probably was resourced from the following reasons; firstly the shortage of population, as this research study considered the interaction among four variables, secondly, by dint of the unfamiliarity with inductive mode participants often protested at the researcher by the words, such as “why don’t you first clarify the grammar and then move to example, and the last reason probably was resourced from the degree of difficulty of instructional materials (introducing and shortening the complex English sentences).

Considering inductive- deductive teaching modes, the finding of this research study as to the two research questions was in agreement with the findings of a study by Shih (2008) arguing that no significant difference was found between inductive and deductive groups on the performance of the immediate test. In accordance with our study, the results of Chiang’s (2011) study indicated that there no significant difference between inductive and deductive groups on the participant’s final grade, the sum of the words and the sentences used and sum of the simple and compound sentences used on the four exams. Additionally, the result of our study was in agreement with Wang’s (2012) indicated that both approaches were effective but the difference was not significant.

Inconsistent with above- mentioned studies, the findings of a study on implicit and explicit instruction of spelling rules by Kemper, Verhoeven, and Bosman’s (2012) suggested that explicit instruction was more effective than implicit instruction for the teaching of spelling rules when generalization was aimed at. The results of Dabaghi and Goharmehr’s (2011) study indicated that integrative grammar teaching led to better learning of grammar in comparison with the discrete-point method. Furthermore, FD learners took more advantage of an integrative method while the FIs benefited better from the discrete-point approach. Rezaee and Farhadi’s (2012) test suggested that despite the view that FI learners profit more from decontextualized analytic approaches and formal context such an approach may not help the learners and they might have problem applying grammatical rules of the second language in order to make sentences which are semantically and syntactically well- formed.

## 7. Conclusion

The present study attempted to discover “the effect of inductive- deductive teaching on the grammar learning of field dependent- independent language learners. The result of this research study indicated that both inductive and deductive groups with FD and FD cognitive styles progressed in the way of grammar learning. Generally speaking, after analyzing and inquiring the results obtained as to research questions we came to the conclusion that whether FD or FI, the cognitive style of the participants could not make an outstanding effect on the way of grammar learning through two modes of inductive or deductive grammar teaching. The findings of this research study may be conducive to L2 pedagogy in EFL settings. The findings of this study were a green light for EFL pedagogues. According to the findings of this research study, while teaching grammar, the teacher maybe allowed to use whether deductive or inductive teaching mode.

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WITKIN

## METHODOLOGICAL GUIDANCE OF EDUCATIONAL MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS

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### Abstract.

The need to adapt training in vocational institutes to modern requirement of the economy actualizes the topic of the study. The study aims at developing methodological guidance of educational monitoring effectiveness at universities. The main outcomes of the paper are to outline the subjects and the principal vectors of educational monitoring effectiveness. The importance of the outcomes given is that the identified educational monitoring methods enable to watch the outcomes of vocational training on the forecasted, realized and attained phases, ensures teachers, heads of institutions of vocational training practical and relevant information needed to adjust management, content, information, normative base of vocational training's organization. Identified educational monitoring methods provide systemic and structural integrity and the content and methodical continuity of all phases of vocational education.

**Keywords:** educational monitoring, effectiveness, universities, methodological guidance.

### Introduction

The study actualizes the necessity of vocational training adaptation to the modern economical needs. The modern world is characterized by the transitional stage in the developed countries attempting building of an economy based generally on the formation, delivering and application of new knowledge. The most significant thing in enhancement the economic picture of modern society is the human resources, especially its creative, research competences. Taking into account these tendencies, it is worth to allocate as an important one the training of creative specialists. In this regard significant changes in the system of vocational education are required for its adaptation to the needs of a modern economy. There are different kinds of social partnership in the system of vocational education, the cooperation of institutions of vocational education is enhanced and state-social forms of control are introduced. A particular significance

in this regard is given to the efficiency of managerial activities, without improvement of which it is useless to solve methodological and methodical objectives of the vocational education system. One of the efficient ways to attain the aims is monitoring, enabling to analyze, to make prognosis, to adjust and forecast the tendencies of development of vocational education system at national, regional, municipal and local levels (Burkova, 2006). Nowadays, there is no integrity in the methods to monitor vocational training. It is believed that the phenomenon "monitoring" is transformed from a more general ("the testing and fixing of students' knowledge", "monitoring of students' progress"), the quantitative ("evaluation of abilities and skills"), to the more strict ("control and taking into account of knowledge, abilities and skills" "assessment the level of attainment by students of the educational standard") (Polonsky, 2000; Kuprina, 1999; Majorov, 2005). Analysis of the frequency in the usage of definite phenomena enables monitoring to identify common features: system, process, analyses, watching, forecasting, and diagnostics of the state of the subject or process, examination. The subject of monitoring is an educational system that combines teachers, students, tasks, content, forms, methods and techniques of educational process. The main task of educational monitoring is an evaluation of knowledge, abilities and skills, competences (in general sense - educational progress) and their correspondence with a level of standard or statistic norm (Podlasiy, 2003). The information given by the educational monitoring, increases the level of interrelation between the different entities of the pedagogical process, and makes the environment for self-estimation and self-identification, self-learning and self-improvement for the participants (Niyazova, 2008). Educational monitoring of vocational education institutions is a deliberately built constant process of study and a general analysis of indices to forecast the state of the pedagogical system accordingly to the intended influences, tasks, formation of adjustment and prophylactic managerial measures. The paper aims at constructing methodical guidance on the educational monitoring in institutions of vocational education.

### **Methodological Framework**

The principal method of the study is the process-informational, as it enables to study the educational process as a certain phenomena and to give special analysis to the indices to find reasons and make prognosis to the conditions of the educational system, paying a deliberate attention to the objectives. The educational monitoring includes all spheres of institutions of vocational education, involving students' individual monitoring, and performing management, assessment (qualimetric), supervisory-management and informational functions. Based these functions, educational process can be fulfilled in accordance with all necessary information obtained in the monitoring course. So, monitoring possesses interdisciplinary nature. It can be seen as informational, diagnostic, prognostic process realized within the managerial activities. V.M. Polonsky (2000) considers monitoring as a long-term study of the state of training and education and the management of these processes by timely informing the actors about the possible occurrence of adverse, critical or dangerous situations.

On the basis of a process-informational method, the following principles of the study are identified: 1) consistency - consistent monitoring, with the aims and nature of the studied processes based on one-time, periodic, regular or random observations of the subjects of the educational system and their relationships (Kalimullin & Dobrotvorskaya, 2016; Lunev, Pugacheva & Stukolova, 2014a); 2) scientific nature - basing on analysis of strict scientific data, that are amenable to empirical testing and identification, and can be proved or refuted by other researchers (Lunev, Pugachova, Stukolova, 2014b); 3) objectivity, involving the use of data that do not contradict each other (the same results obtained by different groups of observers in estimation the level of specialists' willingness of professional activity) (Terentyeva et al., 2016b); 4) integrity, involving testing of indices, complex characteristics of which give a full picture of the subject in the whole, and not just about its separate parts (Pugacheva et al., 2016c); 5) efficiency, requiring information for managerial decisions-making in the appropriate time, and not at the moment when the changes cannot be corrected (Akhmetov et al., 2016); 6) adequacy, including choosing the procedures, which are adequate to monitoring aims and objectives, as

well as the possibilities and ethical standards (Ivanov et al., 2016). The study included the following methods: theoretical (analysis, synthesis, systematization and generalization); sociological (observation, questionnaires, interviews).

### **Results and Discussions**

There are the following outcomes of the study: 1) subjects of educational monitoring; 2) general tendencies of educational monitoring in institutions of vocational training; 3) monitoring of the realization of the regional component of vocational education.

#### *The essence of educational monitoring*

The subjects of educational monitoring in the vocational education institutions are: the description of the institution, the qualitative structure of applicants, the quality of students' training, requirements for graduates in the regional labor market, qualification of professors, the content of vocational education, care and improvement of students' health, information-methodical and material-technical provision.

The description of institutions of vocational education involves: rating in the system of regional vocational education institutions; rating in the national system of vocational education institutions of the same profile; contingent and the quality of applicants' education (by specialties); contingent, and the number of undergraduates and their applicability by specialties, forms of education; students' elimination and migration.

The qualitative structure of applicants depends on the analysis of educational achievements; sociological survey directed on the identification of students' motivation to get professional education; social and material status of the enrolled applicants (the number of enrolled applicants from low-income, single-parent families, orphans and the disabled).

The quality of students' training includes analysis: of the current progress, testing of the interim and final certification; State exam results; results of final qualifying works' defending; the results of a sociological survey on the quality of graduates' training; the quality of the examinational achievements of graduates' training; the results of professors' sociological survey on the quality of graduates' training.

The requirements for graduates in the regional labor market are connected with the analysis of: graduates' employment results for 3, 6 months and 1 year after graduation; graduates' appeals to the employment service; reviews of employers about the quality of graduates' training.

Professors' qualification takes into account the following things: the number of professors with a degree; experience in an educational institution; age.

The content of vocational training should be reflected in the curriculum, educational programs on specialties.

Questions on care and improvement of students' health involve: students' medical examination; the number of days missed by students because of illness; the number of students who study by individual forms of training, students' attendance of sports clubs.

Information - methodical provision is characterized by the following indices: the availability of the students' textbooks, the number of students' visits of the library; the number of encyclopedic, educational, methodical literature and periodicals used by the students; level of students' provision with computers; publishing activity of the educational institution. Material and technical provision includes equipping of classrooms and laboratories, libraries, sports gyms (gyms, swimming pools, a center of health care and physical therapy); students' dormitory, food, medical care, state, nominal and social grants.

Efficient organization of monitoring in the institution of vocational education is connected with the identification of aims and objectives, using of best monitoring instruments. The efficiency of vocational training based on monitoring is a process of staged stepping of core training results in the planned, realized and achieved stages.

Monitoring at the planning stage includes an estimation of curriculum on the specialties, program-methodical maintenance and educational content. Monitoring at the realization level enables to estimate the level of students' willingness to vocational activity. Monitoring at the achievement stage allows compare the goals planned and realized, to make the necessary adjustment in vocational training's organization.

The educational monitoring will be effective tool of quality management due to focus on the analysis of the organizational aspect of the educational process, conditions for students' development, continuous professional improvement of professors for the timely management of decision-making (Yepaneshnikov et al., 2016).

#### ***Monitoring of the implementation of the educational regional component***

The regional component of vocational education means the educational understanding of socio-economic and cultural position of the regional community (Pugacheva et al., 2016b). The content of the regional component includes the following components: 1) methodical – involving a reflection of a regional component in educational and curricular documents; 2) reflexive – implies the regional component's correction basing on the analysis of the experimental testing's outcomes. The content of a regional component of vocational education defines: 1) all entities' interest of economic and socio-cultural complex in highly qualified experts, which is relevant not only today, but also will be desirable in the future (Terentyeva et al., 2016a); 2) the natural competition of the staff to make demands to the real skill which are reflected in the professional knowledge, abilities, skills and competences; 3) healthy competition of educational institutions (Lunev et al., 2016).; 4) the development of new specialties, with the help of which young staff can attain a strong and worthy future (Masalimova et al., 2016; Pugacheva et al., 2016a; Kalimullin & Islamova, 2016).); 5) efficient youth policies directed on the inclusion of young specialists in market relations basing the achieved education (Masalimova & Berin, 2016; Zamaletdinov et al., 2016); 6) vocational training methods (Gabbrakhmanova, Kalimullina & Ignatovich, 2016; Kamasheva et al., 2016). The survey included 350 teachers, 450 students from vocational education institutions from the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, Russia, the effectiveness of criteria implementation of a regional component of vocational education were identified: students' satisfaction with the educational process; provision with the integrity and continuity of vocational training and retraining process, their constant professional improvement; reducing of specialists' migration due to the retraining and continuous professional development at job places, paying attention to the specifics of the region, the social and cultural situation of the region in the whole. Monitoring of the regional component's realization of vocational education basing the identified criteria enables: 1) to provide the sustainable operation and development of institutions of vocational education in the region; 2) to reduce the pressure on the labor market, ensuring human resources' more efficient use, to ensure concrete demands for the specialists' training in the region; 3) to actualize the content of vocational education; 4) to provide the graduates' employment.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

To increase the efficiency and quality of management of educational institutions necessitates deliberate and systematic monitoring of vocational education institutions' activities. So, to get versatile analytical information for educational monitoring is important. Monitoring includes constant following and watching of the entities of administrative activity, analysis of its environment via measuring and comparison of actual outcomes with predetermined objectives, predicting changes in the state of the subject with the goal to make managerial decisions directed on the improvement the quality of the subject. The outcomes of the study enable to make the following methodical advice on the provision of the efficiency of educational monitoring in educational institutions:

- basic differences of educational monitoring from the traditional methods of measurement of the educational process consist in the fact that its outcomes do not reflect the actual situation passively, but actively influence on the further development of educational institutions, the



creative potential of the professors staff, improving of the level of their professional competency.

- subjects of pedagogical monitoring are connected with their sources (statistics; sociological research; materials for estimation and accreditation reports of institutions; reports of the chairmen of public attestation commissions on specialties; the outcomes of final state certification of graduates on specialties of vocational education institutions; outcomes of competitions, Olympiads for students; materials for estimation of the professors staff; the outcomes of applicants' and students' testing).

- the spheres of educational monitoring include such methods as a method of comparative estimation (comparison with standards of quality of vocational education); internal and external expertise; questionnaires and surveys of students, parents, representatives of industry, institutions, organizations connected with the evaluation of the quality of students' training. Means of estimation's results of the monitoring are the following: tests to evaluate the students' and graduates' knowledge; estimation instruments that stimulate graduates' practical activities; sociological tools of measurement.

- monitoring of regional components of vocational education enables to make the process structurally complete; promotes the conservation, improvement and continuous professional training of the professors staff, and also stimulates innovative activity of entities of vocational educational institutions.

The results of the study enables to allocate the prospects for further research of the problem connected with the prognosis of educational institutions' environment of different types and kinds in the system of vocational education institutions. The paper submissions can be profitable for heads and professors of vocational education institutions; employees of the centers of continuous professional development for training and retraining of personnel in the selection and structuring the contents of continuous professional development of the professors staff.

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## PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF RUSSIAN WOMEN AND MEN COMING FROM THE ORTHODOX ENVIRONMENT

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### Abstract

The article presents analysis of the problem of psychological well-being of personality while taking into account the factor of religiosity of women and men that influences it. It gives a brief description of approaches, existing nowadays, towards understanding the essence of psychological well-being phenomenon. Based on the data available in scientific literature, the main components of psychological well-being of personality are determined. Comparative analysis of some aspects of psychological well-being of women and men coming from the Orthodox and secular environment is presented. Specific empirical material gives an evidence of influence of the person's involvement in religious (Orthodox) environment as regards such aspects of psychological well-being as life comprehension and marriage satisfaction according to the subjects' gender.

**Key words:** psychological well-being, life comprehension, marriage satisfaction, Orthodox environment, women, men.

### Introduction

Currently, we can come across the notion of psychological well-being (PWB) of personality and its individual aspects in the works of many contemporary authors (Argyle, 2003; Semenova, Rosina & Chevachina, 2016; Shevelenkova & Fesenko, 2005; Patzlaff, 2000 and others). In most cases the emphasis is usually made on the connection of PWB with the general level of satisfaction of the person with himself and his own life, with the level of the personality's positive functioning. In other words, PWB is often interpreted as a subjective reality, which by its meaning and content relates primarily to the experience of man's relationship to himself and his life (Shevelenkova & Fesenko, 2005).

**Research methodology**

Given the contradictory nature of currently available data and absence of specific facts regarding PWB of Russian representatives from the religious environment, we have aimed our research at studying some aspects of PWB of married women and men from the Orthodox environment as compared to similar aspects of PWB of their peers from the secular environment.

The aspects selected by us were life comprehension and marriage satisfaction, and to uncover specifics of these aspects «Purpose-in-Life" test (an adapted version of "Purpose-in-Life" test by James Crumbaugh & L. Maholick) and marriage satisfaction questionnaire (Stolin, 2001) were used.

There were 60 participants in our research: 30 subjects from the Orthodox environment (15 men and 15 women) and 30 subjects from the secular environment (15 men and 15 women). The subjects aged from 30 to 50 years.

We'd like to emphasize that we referred to the Orthodox category women and men who regularly take part in the Church sacramental services: Confession, Communion, Extreme Unction, if necessary; who attend Church service both on Sundays and week-days, whenever possible; who read the Gospels and patristic literature; who strive to live spiritual life. All above mentioned criteria have nothing to do with the category of secular people.

**Results**

The first part of our empiric study was devoted to the comparative analysis of overall level and substantive characteristics of life comprehension of middle-aged men and women from the Orthodox and secular environment.

All results obtained in this regard are reflected in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 *Extent of expression of life comprehension by women and men from Orthodox and secular environment*

Subjects	Scales ( $\bar{x} \pm \delta$ / levels)					Overall level
	1	2	3	4	5	
Orthodox men	10,4±1,4 Higher	9,13±2,47 Second.	13,87±1,6 Second.	7,13±1,06 Second.	0,93±0,59 Second.	41,47±7,13
Orthodox women	10,2±2,52 Higher	10,93±2,28 Higher	14,8±2,11 Second.	7,13±0,99 Second.	0,93±0,96 Second.	44±7,86
Secular men	8,73±2,12 Second.	8,87±2,13 Second.	14,4±2,26 Second.	7,07±1,03 Second.	1,6±1,06 Higher	40,67±8,60
Secular women	8,2±2,27 Second.	7,8±3,00 Second.	13,6±1,55 Second.	5,8±1,57 Second.	1,8±1,01 Higher	37,2±9,41

*Note:* Scale 1 –purpose in life; Scale 2 –life process or interest and emotional intensity of life; Scale 3 –life effectiveness or satisfaction with self-realization; Scale 4 – locus of control – I (I – the boss / hostess of life); Scale 5 – locus of control – life or life controllability.

As can be seen in Table 1, in the scale "purpose in life" secular women and men show average scores, which indicates the presence in their lives of goals in the future, that give meaning, direction and time perspective to life. To this end, secular men have slightly higher scores than women, which indicates that the former have somewhat bigger number of purposes in life.

At the same time, Orthodox women and men in this scale show high values which characterize not only a motivated person, but also indicate lack of real ground for their implementation.

The scores in the scale "life process or interest and emotional intensity of life" in all groups of our subjects, except Orthodox women, are average, that is, the majority of our subjects are quite satisfied with their life and appreciate it as interesting, emotionally rich and filled with meaning. As for Orthodox women, this index has been found to be of high value, that is, these subjects turn out to be most satisfied with their lives.

In turn, scores in the scale "life effectiveness or satisfaction with self-realization", as well as in the scale "locus of control - I (I - the boss/ hostess of life)", are within average values in all groups of subjects that accordingly allows to say that all women and men feel effectiveness and comprehension of their lives, and that they imagine themselves as strong personalities with sufficient freedom of choice to build their lives according to their purposes and ideas about life's meaning.

In the scale "locus of control - life or life controllability" the subjects from secular environment demonstrate high scores that stand for their belief in ability to control their own lives, freely make decisions and implement them.

On the contrary, in this scale the subjects from Orthodox environment show average scores that characterize them as people who about equally believe in their ability to exercise control over their own lives and yet believe that human life is beyond conscious control.

As for the overall index of life comprehension, it is within the range of mean values for the majority of our subjects except for Orthodox women for whom this index is within high values.

We may further refer to the data in Table 2, reflecting the final results of the comparative analysis of indices of main components of life comprehension among subjects from Orthodox and secular environments by Student's t-criterion.

Table 2 Reliability of differences as regards life comprehension in different groups of subjects

Groups of Subjects	Scales (Student's t-criterion)					Overall level
	1	2	3	4	5	
Secular and Orthodox men	2,53 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) П.	0,31	0,76	0,16	2,23 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) С.	0,28
Secular and Orthodox women	2,3 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) П.	3,23 ( $p \leq 0,01$ ) П.	1,76	2,77 ( $p \leq 0,01$ ) П.	2,42 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) С.	2,15 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) П.
Secular men and women	0,66	1,13	1,18	2,65 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) М.	0,54	1,05
Orthodox men and women	0,27	2,07 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) Ж.	1,35	0	0	0,92

Note: П. – differences in favor of Orthodox subjects; С. – differences in favor of secular subjects; Ж – differences in favor of women; М. – differences in favor of men.

Thus, on the basis of data presented in Table 2, we found statistically significant differences between the subjects from both Orthodox and secular environment, as well as between women and men. In particular, when comparing subjects from Orthodox and secular environment, significant differences were recorded in the scales "purpose in life" and "locus of control-life" among both women and men, while in the scales "emotional intensity of life", "locus of control - I" and the overall level of life comprehension - only among women. Then all the differences ascertained by us (with the exception of indices on the scale of locus of control - life) proved to

be in favor of subjects from Orthodox environment, which suggests a higher degree of life comprehension in people actively involved in religious environment.

In terms of gender differences, the situation is somewhat different, since statistically significant differences were found only in two cases, namely: in favor of women in the Orthodox group of subjects in the scale of emotional intensity of life and in favor of men in the group of secular subjects on the scale locus of control - I. In other words, as shown in our study, the factor of religious environment has a much greater impact on the indices of life comprehension of mature people, rather than a gender factor, while in the first place involvement in the religious environment influences indices of life comprehension in women.

The second part of our empiric study was devoted to the comparative analysis of the extent of marriage satisfaction of middle-aged women and men from the Orthodox and secular environment.

Table 3 which presents scores of the extent of marriage satisfaction of different groups of subjects, may be referred to.

It may be explained here that for greater clarity of obtained results, pertaining to marriage satisfaction, we have reduced the levels existing in the methodic (unhappy, rather unhappy, transitional, rather happy, and happy) to three, namely: unsatisfying, transitional and satisfying.

Table 3 *Extent of marriage satisfaction of women and men from Orthodox and secular environment*

Subjects	Extent of marriage satisfaction (number of persons / %)		
	Unsatisfying	Transitional	Satisfying
Orthodox men	1 / 6,7	2 / 13,35	12 / 79,95
Orthodox women	1 / 6,7	3 / 20,0	11 / 73,3
Secular men	2 / 13,35	2 / 13,35	11 / 73,3
Secular women	5 / 33,3	3 / 20,0	7 / 46,7

As shown by the data, men and women satisfied with the marriage comprise the majority in all groups of our subjects.

The most disadvantaged group in terms of marriage satisfaction is the group of secular women, while other subjects are approximately equally satisfied with their marriage. We suppose that, on the one hand, this kind of situation can be associated with the presence among many secular women of rather high claims regarding the marital union which do not always meet the realities of their married life, and, on the contrary, with a more tolerant attitude of the Orthodox women who simply can take any family situation for granted. At the same time, on the other hand, it may not be ruled out that in the families of Orthodox Russians, indeed, there is a completely different, more favorable situation of mutual understanding between husband and wife that allows both of them to be completely satisfied with their relations.

These study data allow us to ascertain that in respect of such an aspect of psychological well-being of personality, as marriage satisfaction, the subjects' factor of religiosity is indeed one of the most significant, and this is especially pronounced in women.

### Discussions

As a rule, all currently existing approaches to understanding PWB of personality can be divided into two streams: hedonistic and eudemonistic (Sozontov, 2006; Fesenko, 2005; Shevelenkova & Fesenko, 2005; Shiryayeva, 2008). Hedonistic theories include all those studies where PWB is described mainly in terms of satisfaction - dissatisfaction of the personality, while eudemonistic approach assumes that the main and necessary aspect of PWB is the opportunity for personal growth.

So, one of the most influential concepts that have played a key role in understanding the essence of PWB is the theory of self-determination of R. Ryan & E. Deci (2000), designed mainly in line with the hedonistic approach, which associates a person's well-being with the ability to meet basic psychological needs, which, according to R. Ryan & E. Deci (2000), include the following:

- need for autonomy (perception of one's own behavior as congruent to inner values and desires of the personality in the presence of support and lack of supervision by other people),
- need for competence (the tendency of a person to master his environment and to operate effectively in it in the presence of positive feedback from the environment),
- need for communication with others (desire for proximity with other people) (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Another PWB concept, bringing together hedonistic and eudemonistic approaches, with particular emphasis on the latter, was suggested by C.D. Ryff (1989). She singled out six key components that make up the structure of this phenomenon, namely: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental management, life purpose and personality growth (Shevelenkova & Fesenko, 2005; Ryff, 1989). At the same time, recognizing the importance of meeting the needs for autonomy, competence and positive relations with others, the importance of which was described by the authors of self-determination theory, C.D. Ryff (1989) paid special attention to human aspiration towards self-transformation and real opportunity for self-development, which ultimately provides for personality growth of the individual.

In addition, there is also a view that an important aspect of PWB is that of comprehending by personality of one's own life, availability of life goal and specific actions to be performed for its achievement (Sozontov, 2006).

As for the personality's PWB factors, often religiosity of a person is viewed by researchers as one of the most important of them (Argyle, 2003; Gaponova & Sivkova, 2013). Thus, in particular, some authors found a pronounced positive correlation between the degree of person's involvement in various religious activities (going to church, prayers, etc.) and the level of subjective feeling of well-being (Ellison & Levin, 1998; Witter et al., 1985). Moreover, according to Ellison and the co-authors, the most powerful indicator predicting satisfaction of a person with his life is the power of faith and the feeling of closeness to God (Argyle, 2003). In this regard, we believe that it will be legitimate to consider PWB with respect to the involvement or non-involvement of personality into the religious environment, since the subjective well-being of personality is largely determined by those values that are marked by the subject to himself as a well-being factor, and the religious environment has a significant influence on the formation of value orientations of the individual.

We can assume that the system of values of people integrated or not integrated into the religious environment will be different. Although there is evidence that in spite of the fact whether young girls and boys consider themselves true believers or not, the absolute majority of them are of the prevailing view that people tend to seek in religion a means of comfort and support, and faith in God is regarded by most boys and girls in the context of personal well-being (Knyazeva, Semenova & Chevachina, 2015; Ribakova, Valeeva & Merker, 2016; Kostyunina & Valeeva, 2016; Biktagirova & Valeeva, 2016; Valeeva, Korolyeva & Sakhapova, 2016).

However, if one keeps in mind different types of religiosity: outer ("extrinsic"- externally oriented) and inner ("intrinsic" - internally oriented) (Allport, 1950; Allport & Ross, 1967), then several studies point out a significant difference of correlation of each type of religiosity with motivation and values of personality. Thus, inner religiosity is positively related to empathy, altruism, internal locus of control, mental health in general, complexity of attribution style (Watson et al., 1990), and negatively - to depression (Smith, McCullough & Polll, 2003). Outer religiosity demonstrates an opposite picture.

Special aspect is assigned by the researchers to the study of the relationship of religiosity and mental health. In the study by P. Possel, N.C. Martin & J. Garber (2011) inner religiosity predicted lesser manifestation of depressive symptoms. Belief in sin of internally religious people does not lead to depression (Watson, Howard & Hood, 1988). Among negative psychological conditions, fear of death is important. Inner religiosity in comparison with external, is more effective in dealing with death fear because it ascribes meaning to death (Hui, & Fung, 2009).

The facts are provided (Schumaker, 1992) regarding correlation of internally oriented religiosity with a high level of mental health and a low level of neurotic guilt.

The study of C.G. Ellison & J.S. Levin (1998) confirms positive influence of religion on the factor of personality well-being. It shows that individuals of strong religious faith demonstrate high degree of life satisfaction, personal happiness and experience less grave consequences following traumatic life events. In general, we can talk about a positive contribution of inner religiosity to psychological well-being, and about a negative one - of that of external religiosity.

However, in the article "Psychotherapy, sin, and mental health", A.D. Reisner & P. Lawson (1992) conclude that there cannot be found strong correlation between religiosity and mental health. Religion can promote emotional adequacy, but it can also cause emotional tension depending on self-acceptance or self-alienation of an individual.

In Russian studies certain data on this problem is also equivocal. In particular, the results of correlational analysis of indices of psychological well-being and religious orientation among middle-aged men and women reveal statistically significant relationships: the index of psychological well-being is tied up to the scales of religious orientation: "tendency to seek support and consolation in religion," "tendency to believe in Creator," "attitude to religion as the model of moral norms of behavior" and "presence of religious self-consciousness" (Semenova, 2014).

However, the presence of significant negative correlation between psychological well-being and attitude towards religion as a philosophical concept is noted. For religiously oriented people faith is rather not a philosophical concept, but the unity of feelings, values and experience (Semenova, 2014).

So, a number of studies have shown, in general way, opposite correlation of inner and outer religiosity. On the side of the former there is mental health, internality, tolerance, while the latter "measures well that kind of religion which gives religion bad name" (Trimble, 1997).

#### **Conclusion and recommendations**

So, in the course of our empiric study the subject matter of which were such aspects of PWB of personality of women and men from secular and Orthodox environment as life comprehension and marriage satisfaction, the following was found out:

- the presence of higher scores of life comprehension (except for the scale of locus of control - life) in the subjects from Orthodox environment, which upon the whole allows to consider their self-perception of life more comprehensive than that of the subjects from secular environment;
- the fact of more pronounced interest in life and its emotional intensity in women from the religious background, which also confirms their high satisfaction with life;
- high degree of well-being in terms of marital relations among women and men from religious background as compared to women from secular environment who turned out to be less happy in this respect and least satisfied with their marriage among all our subjects.

Thus, as per the data obtained in our study, it can be asserted that there is a significant difference in women and men from Orthodox and secular environment in such aspects of PWB of personality as life comprehension and marriage satisfaction, since these PWB parameters for the most part are much higher in women and men from religious background. At the same time, taking into account the fact that all of our subjects belonged to Orthodox environment of



the faithful, we can conclude that the Orthodox environment has a positive influence on increasing the level of PWB of middle-aged married women and men.

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## METHODICAL APPROACHES TO ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF DOMESTIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN RUSSIA

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### Abstract

The relevance of researching the issues of analysis and evaluation of domestic tourism development in Russia is caused by the necessity of having objective information on domestic tourism development based on which the field development forecast can be built, important infrastructural and investing decisions can be made. This article is aimed at studying existing approaches to evaluation of domestic tourism development significance in Russia, identifying the discrepancies in official statistics and elaboration of recommendations for improving the systems of analysis and evaluation of domestic tourism development. We used the methods of systematization and generalization, quantitative and qualitative research allowing to review this issue in complex, considering plenty of factors that impact on domestic tourism development. The article contains the analysis of statistical data on results of domestic tourism development and domestic industry status in Russia that are represented by government authorities, tourist business and public tourist organizations. There are offered recommendations for evaluation criteria of domestic tourism and optimization the methods of its statistical calculations.

**Key words:** domestic tourism, Russia, tourism statistics, development perspectives of tourism.

### Introduction

Currently tourism is one of proactively developing fields of economics in the world. At the same time, it is important to have objective statistical data including data on domestic tourism for effective development of tourism industry and its entire necessary infrastructure.

The volume of the touristic flows is one of the most essential indexes of domestic touristic market status. Its dynamics, one of the core indicators of the government politics effectiveness

in the field of domestic tourism, gives the directions for working out the strategy and the tactics to subjects of touristic market (Vinogradova, et al., 2015). Calculations of number of tourists and excursionists in a certain region or city are one of the most problematic issues in methodology of Russian tourism statistics.

Referring to official statistics, we can say that the statistics of inbound and outbound touristic flow has grown into a stable system that shows the statistics of international tourism. Due to this, the representatives of executive authorities, politics, economists and scientists are analyzing the Russian tourism status, revealing the trends and implementing economic forecasts by operating official statistical data. Taking into account all of those, they do not consider the domestic tourism statistics as it has become out of the national statistics to a certain degree (Kulgachev, 2014).

### Methodological framework

Within the research, we used methods of economic-statistical and factorial analysis, economic-mathematical modeling and others. Based on using the theoretical-empirical methods it was detected that one of ambiguously explained approaches in scientific literature is the approach of how to state correctly: 'tourist' or 'touristic' flow? The authors of the article were referring to certain rules when using the term 'tourist' and 'touristic'. The first one was used when:

- this term came along with the first article of federal law 'About basis of tourist activity in Russia'
- this term was an essential feature referred to the tourist
- this term used other authors (representatives of the executive authorities), so it was not possible to use it in any different way according to the rules, stated by linguists.

In all other cases, the term touristic was used.

According to V. G. Gulyaev (2003), the peak of tourism development was in 1989. Monopoly right of touristic activity organization belonged to the three structure-forming enterprises: trade union (central committee of tourism and excursions), youth (bureau of international youth tourism) and international (foreign economic joint-stock company for tourism and innovations). The volume of tourist services in 1989 of central committee that specialized in domestic tourism was 42 million persons and excursionists - 226,1 million persons. To this index can be added a certain number of persons served by the bureau Sputnik (62 million persons), aimed at not only foreign exchange with socialist and progressive units of youth around the world but mainly travelling across the country of young women and men and excursion work.

The results of the research show that after the collapse of the Soviet Union Russian statistical yearbooks have not been giving the official statistical data (Russian statistical yearbook: Statistical digest, 1995; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005) on domestic tourist flow indexes starting from 1992.

Thus, this research was aimed at evaluation of statistical and other data reliability on tourism development and opportunity to use it upon decision making on regional and federal level as well as on the level of separate companies, making decisions about investments into tourism infrastructure development.

### Results

#### *Evaluation of domestic tourism development in Russia*

The research shows that the order of the federal tourism agency from July 18, 2007 No 69 'About establishing the determination order of domestic tourism flow in Russia' does not work in fact (2007). The official statistical information as 'summarized aggregated documented information on quantitative side of massive social and other public processes' is not formed about domestic

tourism in Russia. That means that data on domestic tourist flows provided by Russian official statistics are to a greater level an experts' evaluation (Kulgachev, 2014; Tyurina, 2016; Kosolapov, 2009; Masalimova, Usak & Shaidullina, 2016). So some leaders of subjects in Russia and official authorities data (Aksenov, 2016) reflecting the number of domestic tourists (2013 - 31,7 mln persons (Golodets, 2014) - 41,5 mln persons (Nikolaev, 2015), 2015 - 50 mln trips) are being questioned (Medvedev, 2016).

Here are the official statistics data on domestic tourist flow according to federal tourism agency.

Table 1 *Index of domestic tourism in Russia (Tyurina, 2016).*

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
domestic tourist flow (mln persons) according to federal tourism agency	30,3	32	32	33	35	32	41,5
Number of Russian tourists stayed in public accommodation facilities	31 517	24 917	27 167	29 310	31 798	32 522	33 798

At the same time other official resources gives another figures on domestic tourism development.

Table 2 *The domestic tourist flow indexes in Russia (Tourism in numbers. Statistical digest, 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011;2012;2013;2014; 2015; Tyutyunnik, 2011)*

	2008 г.	2009 г.	2010 г.	2011 г.	2012 г.	2013 г.	2014 г.
Number of served tourists from public accommodation facilities (domestic tourist flow) (mln persons) without microenterprises	31,5	24,9	27,2	29,3	31,8	32,5	33,8
Number of served tourists from public accommodation facilities (domestic tourist flow) (mln persons) with microenterprises	No data	31,7	34,7	37,3	41,1	42,6	44,2
Number of Russian citizens stayed in public accommodation facilities (thousand persons)	31516,8	24916,8	27166,7	29310,2	31798,4	32522,0	33798,5
Dynamics of domestic tourist flow in Russia (mln persons)	28,7	31,7	34,7	36,0	No data	31,7	41,5

The analysis of information given in tables 1 and 2 shows domestic tourist flows estimates polyalternativeness for one and the same period of time given by representatives of the central

tourism authority. Referring to different resources, we can say that in 2009 domestic tourist flows in Russia were accordingly 32 mln persons - representative of federal tourism agency (Tyurina, 2016), 24,9 mln persons - without calculating microenterprises, 31,7 mln persons calculating microenterprises (Tyurina, 2016) and 25 mln persons (according to all-Russian meeting for realization of federal purpose-oriented program 'Development of inbound and outbound tourism in Russia (2011-2018) in Pskov) (Golodets, 2014).

It should be pointed out that during the analysis implemented by the e-newspaper 'RATA-news' (Tyurina, 2016) the basis consists of Russian citizens, tourists stayed in public accommodation facilities without calculating microenterprises. In case of calculating the number of tourists accommodated in microenterprises these indexes of domestic tourism volumes starting from 2010 would be much higher (Tourism in numbers, 2014). Data on accommodation in public facilities including microenterprises began to be published only from 2010, so the first numbers stated the data for 2009. That is why we can suggest that domestic tourist flows in 2009 are determined by central executive tourism authorities including accommodations in microenterprises as 31,7 mln persons. However, on the meeting in August 2014 the volume of domestic tourism in 2009 was stated as 25 mln persons (Golodets, 2014) not including accommodations in microenterprises in order to point out the growth of domestic tourism in the country comparing to 2013.

The references to federal tourism agency given by representatives of executive tourism authorities on domestic tourism indexes in Russia are incorrect. Central executive statistics authority forms official statistical information based on primary statistical data, i.e. processes existing forms of reporting according to official statistical methodology. It does not have any forms of statistical reporting that would reflect the domestic tourist flow status in Russia. Thus, we can discuss the operative information as well as experts' evaluation of domestic tourism status given by professionals in tourism business and central executive tourism authority.

#### *Dynamics of public accommodations facilities and tourist companies development in Russia*

It is obvious that public accommodations facilities has mainly foreign citizens. It is however unknown how many of them are tourists. The question on their statistical calculations also stays unsolved. At the same time, referring to the fact that tourists who has chosen the accommodation in private sector, in tents (wild tourism) or travelling by car are outside of statistical monitoring, we can hypothetically suggest that the above mentioned groups of tourists at some level compensate the indexes of social group of tourists (foreign citizens staying at public accommodations facilities) while determining the general volumes of domestic tourism in Russia. In accordance with the above said the dynamics of domestic tourist flows in Russia from 1992 till 2015 should be analyzed by the number of persons staying at public accommodations facilities calculating the possible quantity of tourists travelling by a private car (caravanning), accommodated in private sector, in tents which is almost equal to the number of foreign citizens staying at public accommodations facilities.

The statistical form 'Data on public accommodation facilities activity does not have such purpose of visit as touristic visit. That is why some methodological issues arise for determination the number of tourists arrived. According to the Russian law a tourist is an individual visiting a country or a place of temporary stay for the period from 24 hours or 6 consecutive month or having at least one night at a country or a place of temporary stay (Federal law 132, 2016). This points to the fact that absolute most clients are tourists.

Here is the dynamics of public accommodation facilities and tourist companies in Russia.

Table 3 *The number of public accommodation facilities and tourist companies in Russia (Social-economic indexes in Russia, 1991 – 2014; Federal service of state statistics, 2015; Rosstat, 2015)*

	2007 г.	2008 г.	2009 г.	2010 г.	2011 г.	2012 г.	2013 г.	2014 г.
Number of public accommodation facilities	10436	11258	12388	12585	13062	14019	14583	15590
Number of rooms in public accommodation facilities (thousand rooms)	1190,2	1247,2	1248,1	1263,2	1294,4	1345,0	1386,8	1573,3
Number of hotels and similar places of stay	5917	6774	7410	7866	8416	9316	9869	10714
Number of resort organizations and recreation facilities	4519	4484	4978	3886	3853	3785	3630	3776
Number of tourist companies	6639	6477	6897	9133	10266	10733	11324	11614

As it is seen from table 3 the first period of 2000-s (up to 2003) has a further decrease in number of public accommodation facilities to 8517. From 2004, that number is growing as well as the number of rooms at the expense of hotel enterprises.

Investors due to set political and economic stability and predictability of further development in the country have begun to actively contribute the assets into hospitality business.

Nevertheless, the number of resort organizations remains almost at the same level (2000 - 4867, 2009 - 4978). The reduction of resort facilities happened in 2010. Not everyone could endure the consequences of the economic crisis in 2008-2009. More than a thousand of such enterprises stopped their activity in 2010 (2009 - 4078, 2010 - 3886).

Taking into account the fact that the number of persons stayed at public accommodation facilities has grown from 22 737 thousand persons in 1999 (Social-economic indexes in Russia in 1991 - 2014? 2015) to 31 690,3 thousand persons in 2009 (Tourism in numbers, 2010) domestic tourism in Russia started its further development.

The trend of further growth of material and technical base of hospitality industry in 2010-2014 in Russia can be explained by significant efforts of mainly government structures. Russia obtained the right to host some most major world events: Universiade (Kazan, 2013), several world cups in certain sports including track-and-field athletics (Moscow, 2013), political and economic forums. The most important was the XXII Olympic Games in Sochi in 2014. For

accommodation of sportsmen and guests of the Olympic Games 42 objects were built that allowed to accommodate more than 25 000 persons at once. Federal purpose-oriented program 'The development of inbound and outbound tourism in Russia' was enacted for the first time being financed from federal budget (planned 96 billion rbl). All above-mentioned and other measures had positive impact on building and planning new hospitality industry objects. The total number of public accommodation facilities has grown for 23,9% in 5 years from 12585 in 2010 to 15590 in 2014 as well as rooms for one-off accommodation from 1 263,2 thousand to 1 573,3 thousand.

Logically speaking, if the indexes of inbound tourism stay approximately at the same level (2010 - 2 134 thousand foreign citizens, 2011 - 2 336 thousand, 2012 - 2 570 thousand, 2013 - 665 thousand, 2014 - 2 583 thousand) and the number of citizens staying at public accommodation facilities grows, then, obviously, the indexes of domestic tourism will grow steadily. It appears that the growth of domestic tourism in Russia from 2010 to 2014 has reached 27,2 % from 34 746 thousand to 44 218 thousand domestic tourists (stayed at public accommodation facilities) (Tourism in numbers, 2014).

#### *The development of domestic tourism in Russia from 2014*

Special attention should be drawn to statistical monitoring analysis of domestic industry activity in 2014 and 2015. For some years, the volumes of domestic tourism have been growing. At the same time, the growth was insignificant. The fundamental saltation of domestic tourism indexes happened in 2014. The number of persons stayed at public accommodation facilities has grown for 3,76% (from 42 mln in 2013 (Federal service of state statistics website, 2015) to 44,2 mln in 2014 (Tourism in numbers. 2015). According to experts estimate of authority representatives the domestic tourism growth has reached 27.7% (from 32,5 mln (Golodets, 2014) domestic tourists to 41,5 mln) (Nikolaev, 2015).

The increase of domestic tourists (the criterion - number of trips) has reached 8,5 mln from 41,5 mln in 2014 (Nikolaev, 2015) up to 50 mln in 2015 (Medvedev, 2016) that is 20,5% according the central tourism authority representatives in 2015. The number of persons stayed at public accommodation facilities has grown for 11,5% from 44,219 mln in 2014 (Federal service of state statistics website Database section «Tourism», 2015) up to 49,284 mln in 2015 (Russiatourism, 2017). It should be also taken into consideration that 5,627 mln persons out of general number of individuals stayed at public accommodation facilities are foreigners (Russiatourism, 2017). The organizers made their contribution into the increase of domestic tourism as well. So the number of Russian tourists, sent on trips across Russia by tourist companies has grown in 2015 to 2,6 mln persons compared to 2014 and 1,974 mln (Federal service of state statistics website, 2015; Surinov, 2016).

The research allowed the authors of the article to reveal several factors that led to the rapid growth of domestic tourism in 2010-2015:

- Government activity, connected to the implementation of federal purpose-oriented program 'The development of inbound and outbound tourism in Russia (2011-2018);
- Hosting major world-level events that resulted in introducing new hotels matching world standards (Winter Olympics in Sochi, Universiade in Kazan and others) improving tourist infrastructure and increased the appeal of above-mentioned destinations;
- Formation of domestic tourist package product made by domestic tour operators, that was not offered before.

However, the main factor that influenced on rapid development of domestic tourism is considered to be the introduction of sanctions.



As suggested by the authors of the article one of the factors of such a significant increase is the growth in number of public accommodation facilities for 28,5% in Russia only in 2015 (Russia in Numbers, 2016).

If in 2014 the federal executive statistics authority showed the availability of 15 590 accommodation facilities in Russia (10 714 hotels and 4 876 specialized accommodation facilities), in 2015 this number has reached 20 136 facilities (13 958 hotels and 6 178 specialized accommodation facilities) (Rosstat 2015).

### **Discussions**

The critical analysis presented by the authors of the article about statistical data on domestic tourism development is different from the information given by Russian official statistics and federal tourist agency due to some unsolved issues of methodological nature on the domestic tourists calculation rules.

At the same time, the federal tourist agency acknowledges these issues and it has already raised the question about improving the process of statistical calculations in tourism and suggested some solutions. However, there are no real improvements as seen from the given material of the article.

The authors of the article has repeatedly raised the question on the necessity of making decisions and implementation on federal level in the field of changing the approach to the calculations of domestic tourism indexes (Kulgachev, 2014), and also the usage of this data for domestic tourism development including for preparing human resources for hospitality and tourism industry (Dmitrieva et al., 2015; Zaitseva et al., 2016).

Thereby we believe it is expedient to continue further research of the issue on calculation methodology imperfection and existing difference in domestic tourism official statistics data.

### **Conclusion**

According to our study, we received the following conclusions:

1. The comparison of domestic tourism indexes of the early 1990-s and 2015 is not as much significant. Due to the fact that the beginning period of Russian timing was accompanied by political and economic issues it led to the change in statistical monitoring tourism activity methodology, where domestic tourism 'disappeared'. Today the evaluation of its status is mostly expert that is given by the central executive tourism authority representatives rather than official statistical data.

Correlation of the domestic tourism indexes in contemporary Russia to the level in 1989 is not as much correct. In 1989 more than 286,7 mln persons stayed in Soviet Union (RSFSR - 147,4 mln persons) and in Russia - 146,5447 mln in 2015 (Surinov, 2016). At the same time the subjects of statistical calculations has room to grow in statistical monitoring organizations for activity of both domestic tourists and excursionists.

2. If we start from existing statistical data and use 'the number of persons staying at the public accommodation facilities' as a criterion for the analysis of domestic tourism status then we will not be able to make a unique conclusion on domestic tourist flow genesis for the period under review. This is connected to the following circumstances: the absence of statistical data on the number of persons staying in hotels (only specialized accommodation facilities have the exact number) before 1999 and also the absence of calculations of citizens staying at one- or two-day stay establishments (that were proactively functioning at the beginning of 1990-s) in official statistical information.

Comparing the numbers of persons staying at public accommodation facilities starting from the period of crisis in 1990-s up to 2015 the indexes of domestic tourism (persons staying at public accommodation facilities) has a tendency of significant growth: from 19 mln 778 thousand in 1998 up to 49,248 mln in 2015 (Russiatourism, 2017).

It should be pointed out that the essential changes took place in the structure of public accommodation facilities. In 1991 there were 4664 hotels (Russian statistical yearbook, 1997), that makes 38% of general number of facilities (12 249) and 7 585 specialized accommodation facilities (62%) (Russian statistical yearbook, 1995) In 2005 the hotels made 69,3% (13 958 out of general number of public accommodation facilities (20 136) and the number of specialized accommodation facilities dropped to 30,7% (6 178) (Rosstat, 2015). The significant increase of public accommodation facilities (from 15 590 in 2014 to 20 136 in 2015) was reached in 2015 due to optimization of statistical calculations as well.

3. The attention to the domestic tourist flow was reinstated from official authorities in 2011 when at the board meeting of ministers of sport, tourism and youth politics of Russia (Moscow, December 13, 2011) the figures on Russian domestic tourism were announced (2006-2010) (Tyutyunnik, 2011). Referring to these expert authority estimates we can suggest that Russian domestic tourism has a straight increase from 26,6 mln in 2007 (Tyutyunnik, 2011). to 50 mln in 2015 (Medvedev, 2016).

4. The tourism organizers (tour operators and agents) did not make any efforts on domestic tourism development due to its low profitability, tourist infrastructure state in places of public recreation, the level of service, issues on organization of work with carriers. The number of persons sent to tours across Russia has grown from 994,4 thousand persons in 2000 to 1 mln 974 thousand in 2014. In 2010-2014 this number remained the same from 1,7 mln to 1,974 mln that makes only 5% of domestic tourist flow. At the same time in 2015 the increase in number of persons sent on trips across Russia for 31,7% (2,6 mln tourists) was monitored.

Referring to the results of our study, we can make a conclusion that the analysis of tourist activity and the tourist industry state led by government authorities, tourism business and public tourist organizations is not possible without a united statistical calculation system in the field of tourist industry including domestic tourism. Thereby the official statistical data on domestic tourism state is demanded to a greater level. It is necessary to determine the criteria of domestic tourism evaluation and to optimize the statistical calculation methods on their basis.

### **Recommendations**

As far as it is seen central executive tourism authorities cannot implement one of the components of presidential decree No Pr-814 July 30, 2013 'government statistical monitoring improvement and wide range of tourist flows qualitative indexes introduction' to the full as it is impossible to analyze or to forecast the tourism development in Russia without official statistical data on domestic tourism state (OP 1814, 2013). The necessity of implementation of indexes reflecting domestic tourist flows into the system of tourism activity statistical monitoring aimed at official statistical data formation remains demanded. That is why the results of the research, conducted by the authors can be useful for government authorities when working out a complex of measures for improving the tourism statistical calculations and also actualization of existing programs for regional tourism development.

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## ON THE DESIGNING OF CURRICULUM FOR FLEXIBLE VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF UNDERGRADUATES AT ENGINEERING UNIVERSITIES

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### Abstract

The objectives of the study are to determine how to: design flexible training of students at universities, and enable their training in accordance with the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standards (FSES), Professional Standards (PS) and the labor market. The study analyzed the content of vocational training of students on 12 bachelor's programs, 5 master's programs, and 1 combined (bachelor's+master's) 6-year program according to the Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Vocational Education of the Third Generation (FSES). The main results of the study include the scientific basis and practical development of the ways to design flexible curriculum of vocational training of students at universities that is relevant to the requirements of FSES, and bearing in mind both the requirements of the Professional Standards (PS) and the labor market. The significance of the results lies in: introducing new FSES to educational practice of universities and their correspondence to PS along with the requirements of the regional enterprises and the labor market, when designing the flexible content of curricula; in the rational selection and structuring of syllabi, involved in developing the necessary skills and knowledge of students; in the establishing of optimal sequence of learning topics and the relationship between them; in establishing flexible educational and methodical maintenance of educational process at universities, including optimal forms, methods and technologies of teaching students; in the development of flexible assessment tools for the interim and final testing, taking into account the requirements of both industry and employers. According to experts' criteria, higher quality of flexible curriculum, aimed at

teaching students in high school, ensures a higher level of graduates' readiness to the professional activities by means of greater occupational mobility and popularity in demand on the labor market.

**Keywords:** designing, flexible content, vocational training, requirements, standard, employer, university.

### Introduction

One of the most important factors of the Russia's economy growth, and, simultaneously, one of the most possible way to overcome the economic recession, is to train highly qualified specialists. In our days, human factor, along with human capital, is one of the most decisive factors in the development of modern production together with ensuring its competitiveness both in domestic and international markets. Graduates of technical colleges and universities have to be popular in demand by modern production enterprises, as well as to be competitive in the labor market. The requirements of various economy branches to their future employees are determined in the Professional Standards (PS).

The development of vocational training in Russia has been transferred, in our days, to the local governments. The needs of regional production and the regional economy largely determine the activities of educational institutions along with the employment of their graduates. Requirements of regional economy are often volatile and are specific to each region, but they play an important role in providing a practice-oriented vocational training, along with job opportunities of graduates, and their competitiveness in a labor market of a region. In addition to the employment, regional enterprises provide internship to university students in accordance with Russian law, and also participate in the training of specialists.

Based on the requirements of the economy branches, the Federal State Educational Standards (FSSES) are being developed in which the structure of educational programs of specialists' training is presented. The structure of bachelor's and master's educational programs, as a rule, consists of two parts: the major one, which is mandatory, and the elective one, which is formed by a university itself. In the elective part of a program, the requirements of the region for training, and, especially, of an educational institution, are taken into consideration. Nevertheless, FSSES curricula for bachelor's and master's degree lack the content of their training. While the designing the curricula is done by universities on their own.

Designing, along with teaching, is one of the core activities, done by university teaching staff nowadays. It is closely related to: developing curricula and programs, educational and methodological materials, teaching materials, and giving lectures. Designing of curricula nowadays is widely represented in pedagogical works (Baydenko, 2012; Voronina and Korchagin, 2004; Kaigorodova, 2016; Korchagin, 2003, 1999, 1996; Korchagin and Bikchentaeva, 2001, 2002; Lisitsyna, Lyamin, Shekhonin, 2013; Safin, Korchagin, Vildanov, Abitov, 2012; Sinkina, 2014).

The above-mentioned facts have determined the topicality and **objectives** of the study: to design, and, theoretically justify and test flexible content of elective part of bachelor's and master's programs.

The scheme of the elective part of educational programs was tested in the bachelor's program named "Vocational Training (in various branches of the economy)" - adopted by Ministry of education and science of the Russian Federation, 2015.

The study used the following methods: observation; analysis of laws, methodical documentation and pedagogical literature; methods of planning the experiment; pedagogical experiment; the method of expert evaluation of educational program content.

### Results and Discussion

The designing of vocational training programs rests upon the content of future professional activities to which they are prepared. Therefore, the designing process, on the one hand, should reflect the structure of vocational training content, presented in the form of scientific knowledge and skills, being of prognostic significance; and, on the other hand, reflect the structure of a specialist's professional activity, presented as a set of activities, work functions and practical specialist's knowledge and skills.

The content of student's vocational training at engineering universities includes a large set of disciplines, covering both, aspects of training a specialist, and structured educational program of a university. This is due to the fact that learning content as an object of designing, requires a holistic view on the future of professional activity, expressed in the form of drawings, graphs, charts, computer software, industrial devices, technological regulations, combining scientific and technical thinking. Therefore, each subject, included in the curriculum, has its own purpose.

Given the complexity of a graduate's professional activity, it should be noted that the main ability is to *do* professional activity - i.e. the ability to apply their knowledge when solving professional and production tasks.

The task of designing an integral content, in the context of two levels of higher education (bachelor's and master's degree), is one of the main issues within the system of continuous education. To solve this problem, one should determine the role of each subject in the future graduate's professional activity, and how these subjects are interconnected.

Our analysis of bachelor's and master's degree programs, taught at civil engineering universities, suggests that within the context of the same major, continuity and systematization principles are not implemented both in bachelor's and master's degree programs. It does not allow students to conceive and understand the logic of knowledge and skills acquisition as well as to conceive the importance of this knowledge and skills for their future professional activities.

Constant updating of techniques and technologies and all kinds of professional activity of a specialist at the workplace should be adequately reflected: in the content of vocational training, in the educational program, and curriculum of a major. It follows thence that the content of undergraduates' training should be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of production, primarily regional one, because graduates are going to live and work in this region. It should be aimed at competitive and developing enterprises - i.e. high-tech and knowledge-based regional production businesses. It should educate flexibility in knowledge and skills, the skills of self-guided learning and self-improvement, to enable them to be more competent in their fields of activity and to be competitive on a regional labor market.

Thus, there is an urgent need to design and implement a flexible, practice-oriented training of students at universities. University professors will face the challenge of designing flexible content that will be oriented toward a specific result - i.e. toward the formation of skills to solve tasks, depending on types of vocational activity, specified by FSES, and perform duties that are described in the PS, so that, after graduation, alumni should be in demand and be competitive on the labor market.

In order to do this, one needs to start designing with the determining of strategic objectives of students' vocational training, and then, bearing in mind these objectives, to design a program, aimed at achieving them. While determining the strategic objectives, one should consider the customers' requirements that commissions specialists' training - and the customers are: the government, the economy, an employer and a student him/herself. According to these strategic objectives, while designing the content of an educational program, it is necessary to consider all the elements of the educational process for the formation of students' knowledge and skills of their major, along with the abilities to use them (Korchagin and Safin, 2016).

When designing the content of the educational program one should analyze labor functions of an employee and their content - i.e. transfer the content of a specialist's activity to the content of his training. One should have in mind that content of a training may not completely reflect content of the entire profession, but determine only part of it, relating to the normative or the most typical activities. Moreover, any professional activity is of an integrative nature, it is connected to the knowledge and skills from various fields of science, technology, and production. Integrative and interdisciplinary character, as well as solidity and practice-orientation, should be taken into account, while designing the content of an educational program.

In the light of the study objectives, the above-mentioned theoretical propositions, characteristics of object types and functions of professional activity, we have designed a flexible bachelor program content named "Vocational Training (in various branches of the economy)". As a law framework to design the program content we considered such documents as: Professional Standard "Teacher of Vocational Training, Vocational Education and Secondary Vocational Education" (adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, 2015), characteristics of the professional activity of graduates, requirements to the results of acquiring the program, content of vocational training principles.

The designing process includes several stages, each stage, in turn, consisted of actions algorithm with their structurally-informative and methodical provision (Table 1).

Table 1 *Stages of designing flexible educational program*

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**Designing of students' vocational training flexible content at the university includes the following stages:**

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***Stage 1. Development of the pedagogic model of flexible learning content.***

- 1.1. Requirements analysis in FSES, while teaching the program named "Vocational Training (in various branches of the economy)" (FSES code: 44.03.04)
  - 1.2. Analysis of labor functions of the PS.
  - 1.3. Identifying the requirements for a graduate by the labor market and enterprises in the region.
  - 1.4. Determining strategic objectives in designing of training content.
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***Stage 2. Development of the pedagogic model of flexible learning content.***

- 2.1. Building a hierarchy of objectives, target analysis of actions, required to solve the most basic kinds of activity tasks of a specialist.
  - 2.2. Determining the role of academic disciplines in the structure of the training content.
  - 2.3. Identification, within the structure of each trained discipline, of the content that is required to perform the basic kinds of activity tasks of a specialist.
  - 2.4. Selection of detected content, its structuring and organization.
  - 2.5. Forming each discipline's content in a logical sequence within the specified scope and sections.
  - 2.6. Determining disciplines arrangement in the curriculum in a logical sequence, determining their place and role in training structure, and establishing of linkages between disciplines.
  - 2.7. Creating a scheme of flexible content within the context of an educational program.
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***Stage 3. Quality assurance of the scheme.***

- 3.1. The determining of criteria and indicators for assessing the scheme's quality.
  - 3.2. Conducting an expert evaluation of the scheme's quality.
  - 3.3. Adjustment of the scheme on the basis of its peer review results.
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3.4. The decision-making on the implementation of the scheme of the educational process.

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These stages of designing flexible content of educational programs, aimed at teaching bachelors and masters at engineering universities, allow one to:

- introduce new FSES to educational practice of technical colleges and universities; form flexible educational programs; identify the combination of subjects, involved in the formation of labor functions of specialists; clearly determine the role and place of each discipline in solving problems for various types of professional activities;
- ensure correspondence of FSES and PS, when designing flexible content educational program at universities;
- select, structure and optimize the learning material, involved in forming students' necessary skills and knowledge; set sequence of studying topics, and the relationship between them;
- form a flexible learning content based on changing requirements of enterprises in the region and its labor market;
- rationally distribute teaching hours, given to the study of academic disciplines;
- create flexible educational and methodical maintenance of educational process at university; choose the relevant content, the best forms, methods, and technologies of teaching students;
- develop flexible content of assessment pool for the interim and final test, taking into account the requirements of an industry and employers.

The quality assurance of the program with flexible content is carried out by the expert estimation method - by the diagnostic record, based on the eligibility criteria of the program content to labor functions of a specialist (Korchagin, Safin, Bikchentaeva et al., 2004; Suchkov, Safin, Korchagin, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

The results of designing flexible content of educational programs in technical universities on the example of the program named "Vocational training (in various branches of the economy)" at Kazan State University of Architecture and Engineering have indicated the high efficiency of the scheme. Firstly, training content, presented in the scheme, complies with the requirements of FSES and allows one to prepare graduates for the challenges, identified by their main activities as employees. Secondly, developed program includes a set of knowledge and skills that enable graduates to perform duties in compliance with PS and regional requirements of specialists training. Thirdly, due to the inner relationship of the content, and forms and methods of teaching; on the basis of the developed program teaching technologies are aimed at their practical orientation and strengthening the motivation of students. Fourthly, educational and methodological provision of educational process and related training and the program documentation are improved.

Expert evaluation of the developed scheme indicated the highest quality of flexible content in the program named "Vocational Training (in various branches of an economy)". And the highest quality mark was given due to: firstly, the structure and composition of the academic disciplines in a logical sequence in which students acquire skills and knowledge, needed in their future professional activities at various level of requirements - both industry and regional ones; secondly, the rational selection, systematization and structuring of topics and sections of academic disciplines; thirdly, the substantiation of structure and content of the programs and their highest practical relevance.

The implementation of designed training content helps one to ensure higher level of graduates' preparedness to the profession by means of their professional mobility and higher demand from employers and the labor market.

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## STRUCTURE OF SOCIOCULTURAL REPRODUCTION AND ITS DYNAMICS

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### Abstrac

The article discusses development of views on content of sociocultural reproduction. Based on a wide range of sources, the authors have developed the framework for sociocultural reproduction. A structural analysis is a toll for authors to identify a typology of sociocultural reproduction and trace its elemental development dynamics. Based on a functional analysis for a structure of contemporary sociocultural reproduction, they point out to a key role of education in general and vocational education and training in particular. For further successful development of the education system, the authors propose to make its theoretically cultural analysis in the context of sociocultural reproduction.

**Keywords:** sociocultural reproduction, cultural reproduction, reproduction types, socialization, education, vocational education and training.

### Introduction

For the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, a particular interest in problems of education was inherent. It is caused by scientific and technical, technological, social and cultural changes that said about a qualitatively new nature of sociocultural dynamics in the economically developed countries. In terms of constant, rapid, and hardly predictable changes, there are gaps between the young generation adjusting to the available social reality in its own way, and older generations, a function of whom as sociocultural experiencers is often in the lowest demand. This does not only specify relevance of problems in education as a mechanism to transfer and develop sociocultural relations, but also keeps current the analysis of the educational process as a form for a transformation of these relationships.

At the same time, in the research field of educational problems it is necessary to mention some gaps. A historically rich tradition of philosophical and methodological analysis for education in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was enriched with many Western and national works on sociology and culture studies. However, the conceptualization level of problems in education could not be considered well formed. This does not contribute in overcoming the fragmented and inconsistent nature inherent to the considerable part of empirical research and it complicates development planning for educational systems both regionally and nationwide.

### Methodological framework

#### *Development of ideas*

Sociocultural reproduction is one of the main processes underlying the social life availability and development. A considerable contribution in its general studies was made by classics of sociology, such as P. Bourdieu (1987), J. Huizinga (1922), K. Jaspers (1953), B.K. Malinowski (1944), J. Ortega y Gasset (2005), T. Parsons (1951), P. Sztompka (1933) and M. Weber (2002). Their views had not only been congruent, but often in a direct conflict: theory of socioeconomic formations by K. Marx (2010) and theory of social action by M. Weber (Weber, 2002); theory of social space by P. Bourdieu (1987) and theory of social changes by P. Sztompka (1933). Thus, it is impossible today to explore the mentioned phenomenon without the methodologic idea saying that in case of any attitude towards Marxist doctrine, 'it is impossible to understand the present-day society if you have not understood the functioning mechanism of the economic system, and it is impossible to understand evolution of the economic system when you do not take into consideration the activity theory' (Aron, 1967).

According to Weber, religious and ethical attitudes 'influence a nature and a technique of doing business, its motivation, while these or those types of management make changes to religious and ethical principles' (Zborovskiy, 2003).

In terms of the Malinowski's functional analysis, 'culture is essentially a toolkit, with which an individual has an opportunity to cope better with specific problems (s)he faces in the environment to meet his or her needs' (Malinowski, 1944).

According to Parsons, any social action 'is a process in the actor/case system that (process) has a motivational value for an actor or – in case of a community – for individuals who make it (Parsons, 1951).

Bourdieu's logics suggests that 'the social space has been designed in such the way that actors who have similar or adjacent positions are in similar conditions, subject to similar dependencies and they are very likely to have similar reference points and interests, consequently, do similar practices' (Bourdieu, 1987).

As P. Sztompka (1933) has shown, historical changes 'do not only cover actions and practice, nature and consciousness, but also communications between all of them, ways with which they join together generating social dynamics with their actions' (Sztompka, 1993).

At last, as for social prognostics, one should not underestimate Ortega y Gasset (2005) and J. Huizinga (1922) proposals to adjust the European cultural policy. They included three, in our opinion, still relevant and significant points: development of ways to introduce social responsibility among the elite towards the public. Establishment of the holistic outlook paradigm, education as a basis for such responsibility, and promotion of indigenous cultural values.

#### *Sociocultural reproduction typology*

Content, typology, mechanisms, and methods of sociocultural reproduction were explored by such Russian researchers, as Ju.V. Ivanova (2005), V.M. Mezhuev (2006), V.I. Pantin (2009), T.V. Shchepanskaya (2009), and G.E. Yakovenko (2008). All the mentioned authors established the contemporary general scientific idea of sociocultural reproduction, introducing their own aspects. Without their papers considered, any continuation of research on sociocultural reproduction becomes useless.

Interactions between traditions and innovations in sociocultural reproduction were explained by M. Weber (2002), J.G. Herder (2004), B.K. Malinowski (1944), R.K. Merton (1973) and P. Sztompka (1933) as well as our contemporaries A.Ya. Flier (2000), Ju.V. Ivanova (2005), etc.

In papers by contemporary researchers, there are the following definitions (and visions) for social reproduction: '... social reproduction in general assumes continuous reconstruction of

essential elements in the social structure, material and spiritual base of its subsistence and individuals as such in their biological and social roles. At the same time, reproduction of an ethnos as a sociocultural community has its differences from reproduction of other social groups' (Denisova, 2000).

'Spiritual reproduction reflects two coexisting processes in present conditions, a continuity of traditional values reflexed by the history-related consciousness of the young, and establishing of new liberal identities inherent to the today's society. Probably, establishing the new pattern for the Russian national identity will be a consequence of these processes' further development' (Chuprova, 2003).

### *Definition of sociocultural reproduction.*

According to various sources, social reproduction is a process (including biological reproduction and socialization) with which societies replicate their social institutions and social structure. Usually, in particular in relation to modern societies, it is held that this process is followed by elements of social transformation and social reproduction (types of social communities). Besides, social reproduction assumes purposeful activities of people and the society to copy their life (society and public life of an individual), for example, reproduction of members of the society from their birth to their complete socialization, reproduction of the system of social relations in the course of production of goods, reproduction of the system of social relations in research, ideological, and political domains, etc. (Yadov, 2009).

We should not ignore another definition: social reproduction is a process of evolution in the system of social relations in the form of their cyclic renewal; this process makes true the tendencies towards changes in the social system inherent to a specific stage of social development, reconstruction of existing elements of the social structure and relationships between them (basic social reproduction), and appearance of new elements and relationships (expanded social reproduction) (Yadov, 2009).

The definition of social reproduction of the individual is quite interesting as a consequence of social reproduction of the population living in a certain area. Herewith, in social reproduction of the population making a given social and area community such leading components are identified, as demographic, occupational-skill, ethnic, cultural, spiritual, and ideological reproduction, reproduction of the social organization and institutes (historical past, ethnic characteristics, features of culture, such as language, traditions, and beliefs), historically developed job specialization, features of social and settlement structure, etc.) (Shkaratan, 2009).

Not limited to physical reproduction of people, social reproduction as a function of the social and territorial system assumes copying a set of certain social qualities necessary for a normal participation of the population in the public life. The most important aspect of social reproduction in terms of the society is reproduction of the social structure. A social and demographic component of this process at the area level is a demographic renewal social structure components, including social mobility. The occupational-skill component of social structure reproduction defines a nature of interclass differentiation and interclass integration within the process of social development.

### **Results**

Therefore, sociocultural reproduction in our case is a system to transfer the up-to-date set of accrued social, spiritual, and technological experiences from cultural development and consolidation of its bearers. The family, social, and area communities, professional associations, the information system, educational structures, and structures of spiritual production (religions, arts, archives, museums, etc.) act as main institutes for socialization. Depending on a history, outlook, and ideology-related type of culture, as a basic tool to transfer social experience, one of

the abovementioned is highlighted. For example, for the traditional society, this is the family, the post-industrial society has the system of vocational education and training. At the same time, it is necessary to understand that vocational education and training, a focus of which depends on a set of crisis points in genesis of the modern society, nevertheless assumes cross functional education as a process of crises overcoming is connected to a process of preserving bases of cultural self-identification in the globalized world. It is impossible without fundamental knowledge in humanities.

Subjects, objects, institutions with all their functions and, at last, conditions of adjustment and inculturation in the development process of the systems for a transfer of sociocultural experience are historically and socially dependent. The evolution of mechanisms for sociocultural reproduction requires a special attention and will be considered below. However, even now, based on the abovementioned, we can with more or less precision define the structure, content and levels of sociocultural reproduction. Graphically, its structure might be given as shown in Fig. 1.

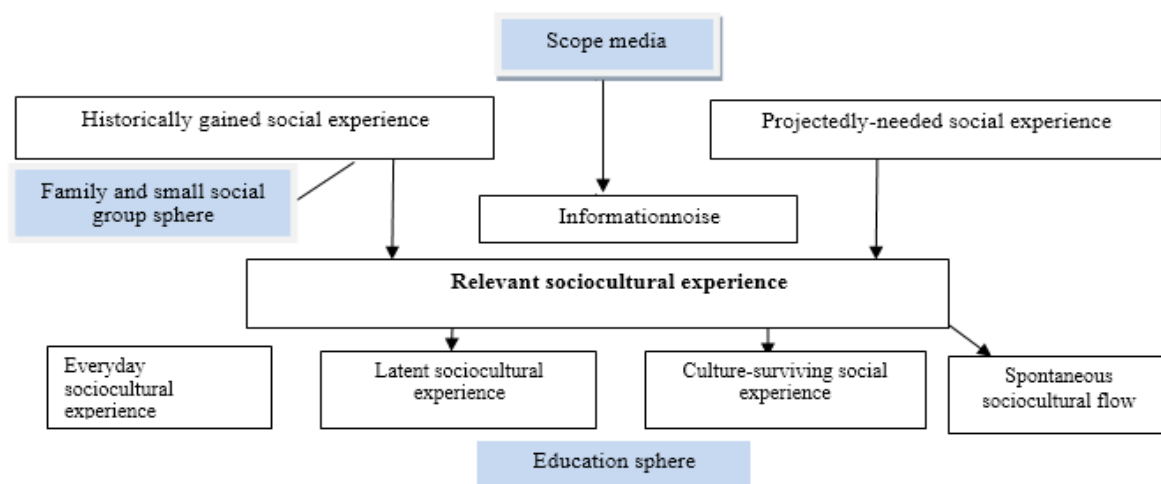


Fig. 1. Structure of sociocultural reproduction: phenomenological level

The system of relationships between the elements of sociocultural reproduction is such that it actually does not have capacities for changes. There are not changes to the system of relationships in question, but the content and importance of its elements. For example, the information noise which is conditionally identified by us in all the sociocultural experience (including folklore forms), is always in place, but it is in the information society that in terms of content and tools it has conditionally got considerable opportunities to influence sociocultural reproduction. The structure of sociocultural reproduction has still included historically-acrued and projectedly-needed new sociocultural experience, which together generate the phenomenon of content for the relevant culture. Later, cells of the identified relevant sociocultural experience are divided into corresponding spheres of their tooling backup, where, as shown in Fig. 1, education dominates.

As for Figure 2, which at the phenomenological level presents a content of sociocultural reproduction, it should be said that such component with in relevant sociocultural experience as cognitive, is today almost completely put by culture in the education sector. The last is capable to control and direct in the quite successful way two other components, value-mental and operational. The last related to the fact that a slow-down of family relations at the level of economic interaction and, at the same time, an increased accrual pace for the cognitive element level when the operational element is elaborated, make experience of previous generations technologically unsuitable for new generations. Moreover, this unsuitability leads to doubts

whether any experience including value-mental one gained by previous generations is overall suitable for the living. The education system in many aspects tries to fill in this gap at least with solid experience and capacity, if not successfully.

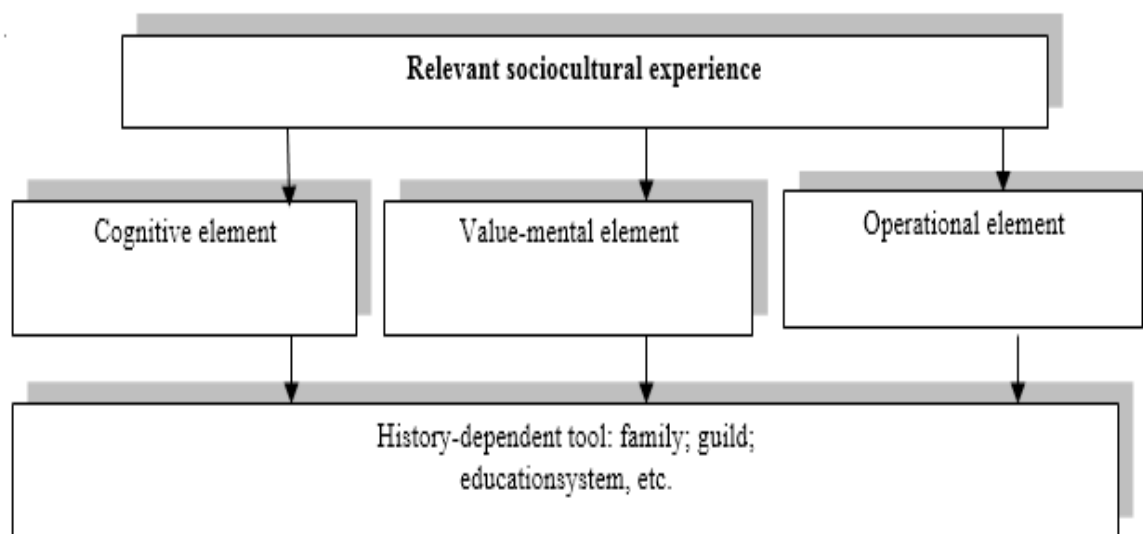


Fig. 2. Content of sociocultural reproduction: phenomenological level

Due to changes to social development, the family has been increasingly put aside from the transfer of cultural principles. Changes to a structure of the mosaic cultural environment and stratum-family interaction play a significant role here. Therefore, value-mental reference points of the present-day individual are increasingly transferred by the education system. In Russia, this has been fixed with the latest-generation standards for general and higher education. The same standards, methodologically competence-based ones, with the competence-based approach as a quintessence of the activity-based or operational approach, stipulate that today for an individual to function in culture the action has come to the front instead of knowledge about a tool for it. Today it is more important to know how to use a gadget, than how it is arranged and works.

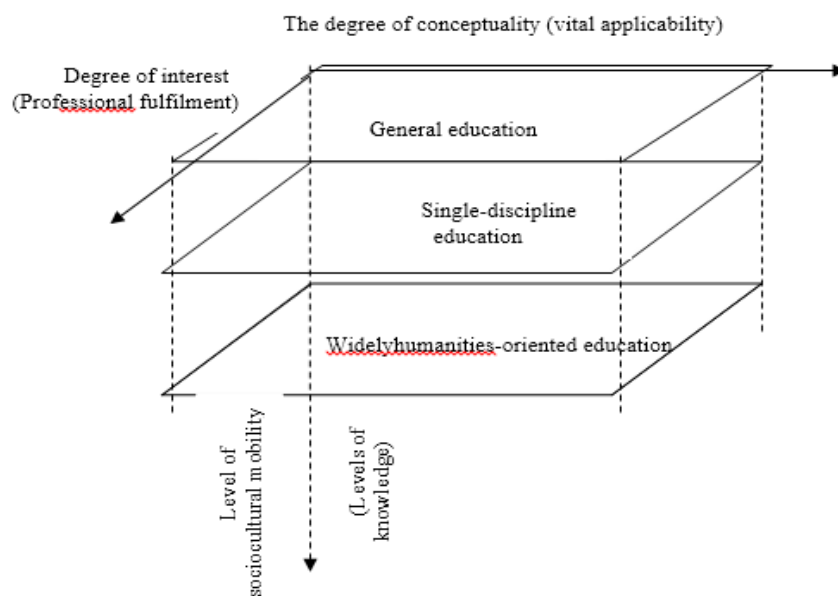


Fig. 3. Levels of sociocultural reproduction

Education plays a special role in time of qualitative changes to the social system. As a social phenomenon that reproduces the human being and that is relatively independent, it can act as a resource for social development. At the same time, behaviour patterns and systems of values reproduced by education in an individual, in case of their conflict with an actual condition and tendencies in social development, sharply reduce a capacity of the social system to self-organization and present the individual with a need to develop spontaneously the ways of adjustment and self-realization.

### Discussions

Social reproduction might be described as a main direction in human activities, their focus on preservation, reconstruction, restoration, and development of established living conditions, social relationships, culture, its meanings, the reproduction activity itself, organized communities, and the environment. Reproduction always acts as an activity that is architectonic tension vector-oriented with the vector defining a reproduction type. Broken architectonic tension leads to disorganized reproduction, decreases its ability to overcome entropy processes in the society. This finally threatens with a catastrophe. The reproduction logical construct depends on overcoming of poles in the dual opposition of any form, firstly, person/society, conditions/means, means/purposes, social relationships/culture, etc. In sociocultural reproduction, there has recently appeared another opposition, culture/education. Modern education in its content is more and more transforming into an agent of globalization processes. A core of any culture is knowledge keeping the value-mental principles, i.e. humanities knowledge. However, in terms of unsustainable and too volatile world's labour market, education in the humanities is getting less in-demanded. The culture as a specific regional and national phenomenon has been losing a basis for self-reproduction.

There are two main types of reproduction. The static, simple type is aimed at preserving the traditional culture, social relationships, the efficiency level of reproduction activities. Intensive reproduction is aimed at development and a progress of all significant parameters in the society, such as culture, social relationships, efficiency, etc. It is also possible to point out to the



destructive type of reproduction described with an inability to overcome social entropy, accruing disorganization, and sliding down towards the catastrophe. The most important task for the first types of reproduction is an ambition to prevent its destructive transformation.

In works on the culture theory Flier makes a division between the concept of social reproduction and the concept of reproduction of culture (Flier, 2000). For him, social reproduction is based on such a feature of the human nature thanks to which sociocultural information, knowledge, skills, behavioural and mental stereotypes, images, estimates, value paradigms, even features of ethnic and social orientation are not genetically transferred from parents to children, but each generation is trained from the very beginning. Culture is not biologically inherited. It is learned in the life. He interprets reproduction of culture as one of the most important cultural processes. Social reproduction of the society and reproduction of its culture are concepts, in essence, identical in their social functions. The society is not just a group of people, but a team gathered together with the system of the common cultural features. At the same time, it is impossible to reproduce this group in the next generation, without those common cultural features (that joined their fathers) transferred to children. In the same way, however, it is impossible to reproduce this culture out of people if we have not train the next generation of members in this society.

The only exception for the mentioned rule is a situation when the society as a bearer of a certain culture, for some reasons physically died, but as a donor it had managed to transfer its culture (or its essential part) to another recipient society. Such cases are frequent in the history, at least, at the level of a partial transfer of cultural features. For example, the Roman Empire – Byzantium; Byzantium – Russia, etc. Cases of 100% transplantation of culture into the soil of another population are unknown.

Another example of transferred culture ‘without people’ includes its museumification, archaeological and other reconstructions. However, with all the achievements of experts in these areas, there is actually no question of any consistent representation of dead culture. After all, culture assumes, first, alive people, ‘playing this game’ (Flier, 2000).

The category of reproduction was used in due time by K. Marx to describe preservation and renewal of production conditions and its subject with social, professional, and psychophysiological qualities required for this purpose: keeping an existing method of production and a model of social relations in a certain society. Capitalism considers it a result of continuous and expanded reproduction of capital and associates with preserving the existing economical and social relations with the help of ideology (Marx, 2001). Obviously, social reproduction in general assumes continuous reconstruction of essential elements of the social structure in the society, material and spiritual bases of its genesis, and individuals as such in their biological and social qualities. At the same time, reproduction of a sociocultural community has its own differences from reproduction of other social groups. Unlike other social groups’ signs, ethnicity is, as a rule, more deeply and fully accepted by an individual.

When we consider sociocultural reproduction, first, there is a need to define what is exactly reproduced (or is to be reproduced) among the other ethnic, social, and cultural characteristics. By analogy with researches of ethnic reproduction, we might identify its several components. Anthropologists mention that the most important and indisputable characteristic of ethnos is its consciousness (identity). In the most general view, we can define it as ‘a feeling of belonging to this or that ethnos expressed in individual’s self-attribution to the given ethnic group’ (Kozlov, 1994). A transfer of this characteristic between generations is considered so important that ‘it is a kind of the ‘last boundary’ of kept ethnicity as in the historical development, their language, lands, and even cultural traditions might be lost. The image of ethnic ‘we’ does not pale while ethnic consciousness is kept.

The member of the Academy of Sciences Yu.V. Bromley (1983) in his fundamental works has shown that ethnic consciousness at the community level also has objectified forms: language, regulations, values, rituals, aesthetic ideas, expressed in national arts and crafts, painting, and music. Reproduction of these forms socializes new generations within the sign system and

cultural symbolism of the ethnos. The young accept, make internal the ethnic picture of the world, form the historical layer of consciousness in learning ethnic history, folklore, national heroes, etc. Thus, this is the way to establish individual ethnic identity.

It is also necessary to consider the fact that a resultant quality of sociocultural reality is a historical form of its genesis. This conclusion seems axiomatic and basic and needs an explained concept of historicism as such as general public and scientists in humanities in general and philosophy in particular often interpret historicism as a continuous variability of the genesis form of the system, its content, and functioning. Meanwhile, this is only an external manifestation of historicism.

The historical form of the system genesis assumes, first, regularity of its changes, their inherent motivation, with all significance of the environment influences on metamorphoses that happen in the system. The historical form of genesis is, secondly, a development of the system, a movement from its lowest to its top forms, more elaborated and perfect from the standpoint of the system's relationships with the environment and its own life support. The historical form of genesis expresses, third, an objective focus of the process irrespective of a degree to which this focus is understood within the system itself. A summarizing definition for these features of the historical movement is the concept of self-development as if the change might happen under the influence of both internal, and external reasons, then development is only a consequence of one internal process determination.

Even having recognized an influence of the solar energy or other space forces on the humankind life, following Chizhevsky or Gumilev, it is impossible to explain its development with this influence. First, because this energy cannot be selective, preferring Europe or Asia, Russia or Italy, whereas in different regions of the globe, different countries and even locations of one country, there are synchronous processes, absolutely different in terms of their content, paces, and the ratio between an individual energy and the energy of crowds. Secondly, development as a naturally unrolling process, unlike a simple change of statuses of this system, assumes its self-development, that is changes generated by immanent driving forces.

At the same time, it means that the idea of cultural development as a basic reflection of society development declared in due time is also insolvent as it depends on changes to the economic order. However, the discrepancies that had been in place in that case between this idea and facts were explained with so-called relative independence of development related to the spiritual life, art, and culture, saying that the matter was to have a development prospective, if, certainly, the movement considered by us was really such, related to the internally dependent process. As far as the content of culture is not identical to the content of the society, whatever considerable its influence on it was, undoubtedly stronger, more direct and continuous than that of the space and even the earth climate, geography, anthropology, and the cultural history should be studied as its self-development, though taking into account all the external impacts. The cultural history is essentially a history of sociocultural reproduction.

Nevertheless, K. Marx refers to the society with its economical and political structures, and not about the culture, development of which begins at the material level with hand and steam mills invented, and comes to the end at the level of spiritual and artistic activities. Sociodynamics as an approach to comprehension of cultural reproduction helps to understand how production relations, proprietary forms, establishment of the class structure of the society, its modifications, etc. have an impact that in all the cases is external for culture and incapable to become a determining force in its development. From this two conclusions follow. First, culture does not develop, but only changes influenced by these forces external for it (whether social or space), thereby dividing methodological principles of the local civilizations theory. Or, second, we need to treat the cultural history as self-development of the elaborated multidimensional system in the dynamic natural and social environment, and, respectively, look for driving forces of this process in itself, i.e. sociocultural reproduction. It should be also said that operational activities of people as activities done by human beings, unlike animals' behaviour, is consciously purposeful following a perfect value-oriented project that precedes an action.

### Conclusion

With the developed traditions in research of education as a social phenomenon, its social determination, specific educational systems, and problems of education's influence on other spheres in the social life, there is almost no attention of researchers to procedural specifics of general education as a basis to reproduce sociocultural relations. Moreover, the term of the teaching process itself widely used in the academic literature has no separate status as a category and is mostly applied in its narrow academical understanding as a synonym for the learning and teaching process.

In their initial stage, there are theoretical studies on sociocultural classifications of educational systems, a search for regularities in their dynamics, opportunities, conditions, and borders for control over education as the most important institute to reproduce the personality and the society. The problem of educational system design has not been sufficiently developed. At the theoretical level, researchers have almost ignored the educational process quality as a criterion of its purposes' implementation and their dependence on specifics of sociocultural relationships. Keeping all the above mentioned in mind, there is a reasonable need in a theoretically culturological analysis of education against sociocultural reproduction.

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## ROLE OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN THE STUDENT'S MORAL DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

The actual reason of the moral development problem is that there is no grounded theory of the student's moral development experience in the ethical integrity. This problem hasn't been theoretically studied enough. Vitrally important for everyone concepts as "morality", "moral development" are not outlined in the content of public education glossaries; as well as in the curriculum of educational institutions. School and University Educational Programs are focused mainly on the development of the student's brain power, moral values are replaced by Art and cultural values, essence of relations.

Extracurricular activities possess a certain set of opportunities in the student's moral formation as it is a) integrated in the contents, technologies providing mutual enrichment of moral standards of the subject; b) issued by the use of humanitarian technologies, initiation of a reflection of own subject activity on the basis of responsibility, conscience, honesty, mutual understanding, mercy; c) promoted inclusion of substantial aspects of moral development of the personality at the level of the subjects mastered by the student.

The revealed opportunities allow us to improve the student's moral development process taking into account requirements of modern science and practice.

**Keywords:** extracurricular activities, moral development

### Introduction

The importance of research is caused by current trends of social development which are defined by cardinal changes in cultural, social and economic life of Kazakhstan and Russia. The problem of modern student's moral development demands systematical philosophy, creation of such a model which can allow building a holistic pedagogical picture of the phenomenon studied. In the course of reforming specialists' training and education system it is necessary to renew humanistic and universal educational priorities, to overcome strong verbal "teacher and student" web of relationships, to unite professional training and moral personality development integrally.

In science there are theoretical prerequisites creating conditions for solutions search of the studied problem.

The significant contribution to development of concepts about the inner-moral sphere of the personality was made by Russian philosophers (N. A. Berdyaev, L. P. Buyeva, V. I. Vernadsky, E. V. Ilyenkov, I. A. Ilyin, M. M. Mamardashvili, V. S. Solovyov); pedagogues (K. N. Venttsel, T. I. Vlasova, V. M. Pustovalov, T. G. Rusakova, V. I. Slobodchikov). In V. M. Bekhterev, P. P. Blonsky, V. V. Zenkovsky, P.F. Kapterev, N. I. Pirogov, K. D. Ushinsky, S. T. Shatsky's works inner-moral formation of the personality explained from the point of view of the person's appointment, a humanization, inner-moral unity.

The psychological features of youthful age stimulating moral formation of the personality (I. S. Kohn, E. Shpranger, E. Eriksson, Terry Hyland) are investigated. Influence on development of modern psychology and pedagogical thought in general and formation of ideas of the moral sphere of the personality in particular was rendered by humanistic ideas of the western psychology (John Whiting, J. Mark Halstead, Mark A. Pike, Hobbes, Rousseau, McLaughlin and Halstead, E. Fromm, J. Gilford, T. Rito, K. Rogers, A. Maslou, I. Croitoru) and the Russian moral psychology (B. S. Bratus, A. I. Zelichenko, V. P. Zichenko, E. I. Isaev, V. D. Shadrikov). The pedagogical aspect of morality is opened in John Hospers, Wilfred Sellars, G. Pitcher, H.L.A. Hart Law, N. M. Borytko, L. S. Vygotsky, S. I. Gessen, V. A. Karakovsky, L. M. Luzina, I. S. Maryenko, A. I. Shemshurina's works. Theoretical problems of the personality's spiritual and moral development are analyzed in Wright, A. Etzioni A., L. I. Borovikov, T. A. Ilyina, I. I. Kalny, L. I. Malenkova, O. I. Motkova's works are devoted to research of indicators of O. S. Bogdanova, E. V. Kvyatkovsky, A. V. Mudrik, V. A. Cherkasov, T. A. Fomin, Sh. Sh. Khayrullin's works. A. M. Baybakov, the personality's moral qualities formation; potential of traditions in moral formation of the pupil is studied (S. N. Danshov). Pedagogical conditions of effective training of the teacher for moral education of the pupil are revealed: culturally focused (L. V. Sibileva), personally focused (Winston, J., T. P. Griboyedova), value-oriented (Wilson, J. B., Williams, N. and Sugarman, I. Tatarkina), practically focused (Nick Clough and Cathie Holden, Holden, C. and Clough N., V. A. Belyaeva).

During research it became obvious that questions of the moral formation of the personality have to be considered in a foreshortening of the available theoretical resource in the field of psychology and pedagogics. In this regard conventional it is possible to consider works B. G. Ananyeva, V. P. Bezdukhov, A. A. Bodalyov, L. I. Bozovic, L. Kolberg, T. K. Poznyakova, N. P. Shityakova, P. M. Jacobson.

Works of prominent scientists in the field of pedagogics characterized an activity role in development of the personality (V. V. Davydov, E. S. Zair Beck, L. V. Zankov, I. A. Kolesnikova, A. N. Ksenofontova, S. A. Raschyotina, A. P. Tryapitsyna, N. V. Chekaleva, G. I. Schukina). Extracurricular activities are reviewed in the researches connected with studying of the educational environment (A. M. Anokhin, E. P. Belozertsev, G. B. Kornetov, Yu. S. Manuylov, T. V. Meng, V. A. Yasvin), out-of-class activity (Blackburn, V. I. Popov).

Noting productivity of the mentioned researches, it is necessary to admit that in the pedagogical theory the problem of the student's moral formation in extracurricular activities is not comprehended up to the end as it wasn't a subject of independent research in pedagogics.

**Research hypothesis:** the student's moral development in extracurricular activities as the purpose formation process, the principles, contents of morals and its values, based on the structurally functional indicators in its invariant and variable components developed according to State Educational Standards of new generation demands justification of the pedagogical conditions providing efficiency of indicators realization:

- providing to the student the possibility of a choice of the philosophical, cultural, psychological and pedagogical information satisfying cognitive interest and need for the inner-moral formation;

- use of modern humanitarian technologies which bring the student to understanding of that knowledge of rules of moral proves a moral choice, and values "light up this choice" (V. P. Bezdukhov);

- supplement of extracurricular activities of higher education institution axiological meanings that expands possibility of student's participation in the pedagogical solution and social situations of the inner-moral contents.

The purpose, object, subject and hypothesis of research caused need of the solution of the following tasks:

1. To open the content of the concept " the inner-moral formation of the student".
2. To reveal possibilities of extracurricular activities in the inner-moral formation of the student.
3. To prove and experimentally to check the pedagogical conditions providing efficiency of realization of structurally functional model of the inner-moral formation of the student.
4. To develop scientific and methodical ensuring of the studied process.

### Materials and Methods

Theoretical implication of the study:

- expediency of application of valuable and semantic, personal and activity approaches as the methodological basis of the studied problem that allows to specify theoretical and methodical regulations on relevance of the student's inner-moral education, use of extracurricular activities potential existing in pedagogics there where we regard the integration of natural-science and humanitarian knowledge as proved;

- the principles of the inner-moral formation of the student's identity in extracurricular activities are defined and proved (subjectivity, a humanistic orientation, mutual understanding, coherence of traditions and innovations), following to which requirements will allow to develop concepts of processes of personal qualities formation in the conditions of development of the disciplined society;

- the intra personal mechanism is revealed which is the cornerstone of the personality's inner-moral formation and including assessment of the situation, understanding of contradictions, fight of motives, a purpose choice, orientation in values (personally and socially significant), implementation of the achievement plan of the purpose which can be used in development of theoretical and methodical bases of psychology and pedagogical research.

Practical implication of the study:

- the tools of psychology and pedagogical diagnostics of extracurricular activities are created as a factor of inner-moral formation of the student's identity, including the criteria, indicators and-level characteristics of their development, diagnostic techniques providing objectivity, permanence, complexity of control and an assessment of model realization;

- methodological and technological support of the studied process is developed: program of a special course for students of the pedagogical specialties "Organizational and Pedagogical Conditions of the Student's Moral Formation ", test tasks.

Research was conducted in three stages.

The first – analytical and diagnostic – the stage included definition of methodological base of research, degree of study of a problem in Kazakh, Russian, foreign literature and student teaching, the analysis of the major provisions of legislative normative documents, specification of key positions of research, the conceptual and categorical device, contradictions, the formulation of a problem, purpose, object, a subject, tasks, hypotheses. Main methods of research: the analysis of theoretical sources, purposeful pedagogical supervision, the questionnaire, testing stating experiment.

On the second – design modeling – a stage, the forming experiment during which the system of work on inner-moral formation of the student located and approved was made, fixing and

primary analysis of the received facts were carried out. The research hypothesis was specified; the obtained data were analyzed and interpreted. Main methods of research: modeling, theoretical analysis and synthesis of information, questionnaire, testing, skilled and experimental work, methods of mathematical statistics.

The third – summarizing and analytical – the stage is characterized by the final analysis of the results received during skilled and experimental work, their systematization, generalization, a formulation of conclusions of research, registration of research in the form of the thesis. The used methods: mathematical data processing, tabular and chart interpretation of the received results, the comparative analysis.

### **Results**

Productivity was defined on the basis of results comparison received on the stating and forming stages of skilled and experimental work. The motivational and valuable criterion of spiritual and moral formation of the student was studied by means of a technique of motivation identification (A. K. Markov), V. A. Yadov's techniques "Valuable orientations" and N. E. Shchurkova "A technique of studying of an inner world of the school student". The last list of values for ranging was partially changed according to the content of this criterion, but the key of data processing is kept. Cognitive criterion – by means of a technique of the incomplete offer and a method of the conceptual dictionary. Activity – by means of the analysis of situations of reflexive behavior, diaries of practical training, axiobiography, the emphatic abilities test by A. Boiko, questionnaires of students' professional and personal definition orientation, questionnaire "Self-assessment of a professional potential".

As a result of structurally functional model realization of the student's moral formation in extracurricular activities the changes in experimental groups were fixed in a cognitive criterion, which comprise an accurate students' concept understanding of "moral formation", harmony of cultural wealth and moral behavior, organizational principles of the student's moral environment, ways of moral self-improvement.

Changes in motivational and valuable criterion of the moral formation are established: steady positive motives, aspiration to spiritual moral improvement were shown at 74,7% of students (in comparison with 19,5% at the beginning of experiment). Such values as "freedom", "responsibility", "work", "education", "conscience", "mercy", contacted in ranging respectively the 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 positions.

Students active participating in a social and pedagogical practice has been an indicator of positive changes in the activity test for us. We purposefully supervised students' actions in international and university actions. International actions as The East – West festival, annual international camp "Sosed'i", competitions of a literary translation, scientific and practical conferences: "Russia – Kazakhstan: history and today's world"; "Youth and cooperation ideals"; The Issyk-kul forum and University actions as a Philosophical Roundtable, Socratic conversations, reflections over the offered problem, debatable meetings, competition of presentations, the publication of creative works of students, carrying out Week of foreign languages, literatures, arts, mathematics, creation of the faculty sites).

Solving situations of reflexive behavior and removing their problematical character, students of experimental groups carried out a categorization of the situation demanding exarticulation of the inner-moral moment more successfully; judgment of the maintenance of a situation and definition of the leading idea; assessment of the content of actions of subjects and definition of motives of acts; allocation of the values taking the form of motive of an act; modeling of actions according to the content of the inner-moral ethical standard.

Results of skilled and experimental work are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Dynamics of the student's moral formation



in extracurricular activities

Group	Stage of experiment	Level					
		valuable		conscious		critical	
		quantity	%	quantity	%	quantity	%
Experimental Group1 29 students	beginning	2	6,9	11	37,9	16	55,2
	end	9	31,0	17	58,6	3	10,3
Experimental Group 2 29 students	beginning	1	3,4	13	44,8	15	51,7
	end	10	34,5	14	48,3	5	17,2
Control Group 29 students	beginning	3	10,3	11	37,9	15	51,7
	end	4	13,8	12	41,4	13	44,8

To prove reliability of distinctions between percentage shares of selections control and experimental groups, the multipurpose criterion (angular transformation) of Fischer was applied. The received empirical values of criterion are in a zone of the statistical importance; the effect is expressed in experimental groups (value of criterion 2,3 – 2,5; critical value 1,64) that corresponds to the high level of the statistical importance.

### Discussion

Inner world and morality is a peculiar control system of human activity, including the large number of subjective and objective factors: from one side it is a student's will-power, purposefulness, capabilities, necessities to spiritual activity, from other side is public opinion, system of values, political, socio-economic terms of society, system of education and nature of socialization. The inner plugs in itself internal and external, innate and acquired features. Moral values play a great role in the inner values structure as a unity of moral consciousness and moral practice. The last confirms position about the indivisibility in the personality's inner-moral life activity."

In psychology and pedagogical literature the concept "opportunities" is considered by researchers in the category "potential" (B. G. Ananyev, A. V. Fomin, W. Stern). In total the concept of potential as B. G. Ananyev considers, "isn't reduced to the sum of opportunities, reserves and abilities of the person, though includes them" (Ananyev, 2001). Potential as the dynamic property of the personality initially inherent in her, represents "the certain force allowing the person to develop, show and expand internally the abilities" (Rubenshtein, 2003). I. V. Bayer considers that in the substantial plan potential can be opened as "the developing system of the creative, spiritual and moral, esthetic and intellectual characteristics making a basis of the personality" (Baier, Semenov, Stepanov, 2001). Skilled and experimental work confirmed that possibilities of extracurricular activities in the student's inner-moral formation depend on their personal potentials (motives, requirements, interests, activity).

In O. V. Treskina's research the main characteristics of the inner-moral potential of the student, among which are revealed and described: valuable orientations; the life experience realized on the basis of a valuable reflection; moral qualities (empathy, responsibility, tactfulness, etc.) ; altruistic motivation of activity; tendency to the inner-moral improvement (Treskina, 2007). According to these characteristics the author allocated components of the inner-moral potential of the student: valuable and reflexive, interpersonal, motivational and activity and self-development. Being shown in extracurricular activities, they allow to realize more fully problems of educational process due to use of educational potential of the studied subject

matters, rational use of free time and leisure of the student (the days off and the periods of vacation – for satisfaction of physical, spiritual and social needs for the personality's inner-moral formation), broad involvement of students in self-administrative activity for the purpose of diagnostics of their valuable orientation: responsibility, freedom of choice, respect of Another, honor and advantage, good and mutual understanding; improvement of the content of process the inner-moral formation of the student on the basis of use of an originality of culture, the nature, public life of the region.

Identification of opportunities of extracurricular activities as a factor of the student's inner-moral formation was carried out by us taking into account the following conceptual provisions:

1. Definition of structure and content of the concepts "factor", "extracurricular activities".
2. Identification of the factors promoting the studied process and the factors complicating it.
3. A choice of the adequate contents and the technologies answering the purpose of the studied process.
4. The accounting of processes of modernization in education, transition to a humanistic paradigm.

In scientific literature theories of the factors influencing development of the personality which number treat were approved: biological (specific and psychological features of the personality); environment (macro - and microenvironment); education; activity of the personality (Marx, Engels, 1978; Il'in, 1993) (tab. 2).

Now education is considered as the most important factor of the personality's formation, development of its inner-moral sphere. In modern understanding of the inner-moral development it is understood as stimulation, activization of the inner-moral potential of everyone trained. Being subjective and individual, spiritual entity is always under the influence of a variety of objective factors. The nature of the influence of subjective and objective factors on the subject depends on the level and the "quality" of the spirituality.

Table 2  
Factors influencing on the student's moral development

Categories of factors		Action manifestation factors (in something, somewhere)
Biological factors	Inclinations of students abilities, creative, cognitive, emotional process, character	In preferences, habits, in the valuable orientations
Environment: national and cultural, ethnocultural, social and economic environment of countries, region, municipality	Sociocultural development of countries, cultures of the region, higher education institution; cultural traditions; conditions for continuous education	Culture of pedagogical activity, culture of family, business, interethnic relations; participation in municipal, regional, international campaigns, conferences, etc.

Education	Culture of a family; means of mass media; personality of teacher, nature of interaction of the personality, society and the states	Family, school, higher education institution, establishments of additional and continuous education
Personality Activity	Commitment, Informative and public activity	

The solution of the problem of the student's inner-moral formation of higher education institution demanded identification of opportunities of extracurricular activities as the factor which is positively influencing this process. For the first time extracurricular activities as the phenomenon reflecting active participation of pupils in professionally focused occupations which are carried out after obligatory studies according to own interests and tendencies in the conditions of pedagogical assistance were viewed by A. Ya. Zhurkina, S. V. Saltseva.

We consider extracurricular activities in close connection with the inner-moral formation of the personality. The concepts staticizing inclusion of the subject in activity as the main way of formation of personal qualities, including inner-moral (K. A. Abulkhanov-Slavskaya, A. G. Asmolov, E. V. Bondarevskaya, I. A. Zimnyaya, V. P. Zinchenko, A. N. Leontyev, S. L. Rubenstein, I. S. Yakimanskaya), interests, ideals, motives (L. I. Bozovic, L. M. Mitina) form the basis; the dominating relation to the world, people, to itself (V. N. Myasishchev, P. M. Jacobson).

Extracurricular activities possess all intrinsic properties of activity: a goal-setting (the purpose is set taking into account objective circumstances, defines all subsequent process made by the subject), concreteness (enters into the world of subjects, emotions, feelings, values, the relations, experiences); intelligence (fills with personal sense); reformative character (allows to see results of the participation in activity, including spiritual and moral formation of the personality). Therefore in our research extracurricular activities are presented as the phenomenon, multivariable on the purposes and the subject's opportunities expanding borders for spiritual and moral formation of the personality.

The wide coverage of extracurricular activities demanded from us introduction of the concept «the moral environment" (E. N. Titarenko) as a structural element of spatial formation. The moral environment or space is considered as the moral interactions extent which are daily appearing at the student in various moral forms and has personal, activity, social measurement (Titarenko, 1974).

The personal moral space includes spiritual and moral features of concrete identity (moral potential, requirements, knowledge, feelings, experiences, ideals, the relations, estimates). This sphere of moral space is closely connected with the "I" concept of the student.

The moral space activity represents practical realization in study, work, communication, creativity, being a link between the personality and society.

The sphere of social moral space is formed by all public phenomena surrounding the student during his various activities (family institutes, education, production, science, religion, ideology, morals and art).

Student's age is the favorable period for the moral development.

Firstly, it is for youth characteristic to analyze own thoughts, motives, acts, the relations, values (N. F. Dobrynin, H. Remshmidt).

Secondly, the central mental process is an outlook formation, consciousness of the personality that is shown in desire of self-expression, aspiration to express the identity (I. V. Dubrovina, I. S. Kohn, A. V. Mudrik).

Thirdly, researchers allocate to one of youth new growths development of reflexive abilities to situations of the moral contents (G. I. Ermakov).

However the present situation affects motives of students, ways of their activity. Scientists speak about heterogeneity of student's youth on their activity orientation. For instance, Z. N. Prisyagina allocates the following types of students: the lumpen- student who alienates himself both from study, and from public life for which the main thing – temporarily to sit out in higher education institution from unemployment, from army, etc., then possibly to prolong the youth, to gain somehow the diploma, etc.; the student - "businessman" whose main goal is money and is as much as possible; the student optimist focused on the future; the student toiler who isn't losing interest in study under no circumstances; the skeptic student who doesn't believe in changes, "wrapped in the cover", living the world; the student disappointed in all that occurs round him; the confused student that is who lost for a while a point of support in life; the reconciled student, tolerant to all events; the student anarchist, whose main valuable orientation – outlaws, the love of freedom who isn't knowing when to stop; the student egoist, the pragmatist which is externally often following rules of decency but ready any minute to crush under itself people around if business concerns it personally, his family, its future, etc.; the student aggressor who is obviously standing on anti-humane positions (in this case he can be the member of the criminal group) (Prisyagina, 1995).

E.P. Belozertsev and L.M. Ilyazova are pointed to functions of extracurricular activities:

- Function of self-determination and self-realization.

Extracurricular educational activities are based on absolute voluntariness of participation and partnership of the student, an activity freedom of choice without coercion and possibility of such choice, a free exit from activity without consequences. Here the violence situation is excluded before taking part in extracurricular activities, the student has opportunity to reflex the opportunities and interests, so his activity will become more intelligent and productive. Everyone can build extracurricular activities according to the interests.

- Leisure function.

Extracurricular activities allow combining such kinds of activity as rest, entertainment and creativity. On the one hand, in the out-of-class educational environment active recreation which represents the physical and cultural activity which isn't causing exhaustion is carried out; the fatigue and stress is removed, physical and inward forces of the student are restored. On the other hand, the out-of-class educational environment carries out compensatory function, filling monotony of educational everyday life. From the activity in the out-of-class educational environment students and teachers feel pleasure. At the same time in the out-of-class educational environment also the creative potential of the student reveals.

- Gnostic function.

Extracurricular activities meet lacks in knowledge, form a complete picture of the world.

- Social function.

Extracurricular activities definitely reproduce various phenomena of social life in society and in the world, promote adaptation of the personality in it.

- Emotional and valuable function.

Thanks to extracurricular activities the student gains experience of the emotional and valuable relation to the world of things and people, experience of communication, interaction, opens himself to the world with which it is internally interconnected.

The listed functions and potentialities of extracurricular activities explain its advantage before the classroom environment.

In traditional educational process the scope of extracurricular activities is used insufficiently, it is continuation of the classroom educational environment, carries out the duplicating functions. In humanistic educational process the out-of-class reflexive and educational environment is created as an additional powerful source of development of the personality, and those tasks are

difficult and can't be solved within an educational program (training of a reflection and formation of pedagogical activity culture) and owing to out-of-class activity. Therefore, speaking about the reflexive and educational environment, we actually mean the out-of-class environment filled with cultural meanings, possessing huge creative potential and free from violence.

We revealed the following opportunities of extracurricular activities in the inner- moral formation of the student:

- it promotes development of those qualities which difficult or can't be developed in the classroom environment (creative, organizing, emphatic abilities, culture of thinking);
- it develops motives of the inner-moral formation. The student, joining in diverse types of extracurricular activities, not only "enters" the professional activity, but also enters "a new situation of formation" (L. S. Vygotsky), rises by new steps of the spiritual improvement (Vygotsky, 2010);
- it allows to imitate the main spheres of pedagogical work of the teacher.

Specifics of the personality's inner-moral formation in extracurricular activities are defined by nature of activity in this environment. The main skills of the cultural, reflexive, valuably caused pedagogical activity are born in out-of-class space, free from dictatorship, allowing to improvise. N. P. Anikeeva, A. B. Dobrovich and V. A. Karakovsky, considering pedagogical aspect of games, pointed to their importance for improvement of extracurricular activities. As in skilled and experimental work we used game as one of methods of spiritual and moral formation of the personality, we will stop on her features. Human game, according to D. B. Elkonin – is such activity in which social human relations outside the conditions of directly utilitarian activity are recreated. It includes in the structure all basic elements of activity – the purpose uniting participants, a community of motives, coherence; role behavior of participants with the corresponding distribution between them separate functions; management for the purpose of coordination of individual actions of players (Elkonin, 1999).

Extracurricular activities in a game form allow carrying out pedagogical activity, to imitate possible situations, and also promote orientation in various information, to search of individual style of activity, the optimum organization of pedagogical process (search of the pedagogical decision).

Imitating game helps to transfer the main sense of game actions to real life, is a development tool of various parties of the personality (responsibility, a freedom of choice, an initiative, respect of the other personality, ability to interact with him or her, reflections); learning tool of the pedagogical phenomenon. In imitating models three functions are crossed: knowledge of pedagogical reality, formation of valuable orientation, intensive development of the personality and diagnostics of adoption of pedagogical decisions. Therefore, a framework of extracurricular activities allows to enter the student into pedagogical activity.

We will note that as the leading task of the Pedagogical University teacher not impact on the identity of the student, his consciousness by means of promotion of pedagogical requirements acts, in our case – it is ways and ways of creation of nonlearning space, a way and ways of its development and cultural transformation for the student's inner-moral formation. As a result in extracurricular activities the inner-moral formation of both participants – the student and the teacher proceeds. Correctly built extracurricular activities start working itself, become active. This situation is characterized best of all by L. S. Vygotsky: "... educational process is already tripartite active: the teacher is active, the pupil is active, and the environment concluded between them is active" (Vygotsky, 2010).

Opportunities, conditions, ways of activity, the subject and subject relations become parameters of new (reflexive) extracurricular activities (L. B. Sokolova). In a reflection about extracurricular activities the teacher leaves "absorption by the profession", looks at it from a position of other person, takes a position over it for judgment about it (Sokolova, 2003).

Federal state educational standards of new generation provide to stir up along with sports, art and esthetic, scientific and informative, military patriotic, socially useful and design activity extracurricular activities according to programs of social and spiritual and moral formation of the personality, namely:

- 1) Approbation by the student of social knowledge (about public norms, a society organization, on socially approved and not approved behavior forms), primary understanding of social reality and everyday life;
- 2) receiving by the student of emotional experience and positive relation to basic values of society (people, family, Motherland, nature, world, knowledge, work, culture), valuable attitude towards social reality in general;
- 3) receiving independent public action by the student of experience outside a higher educational institution.

Now in pedagogics the importance of individual and personal approach in spiritual and moral formation of students, formation of ability of the personality to vital self-determination, self-education, spiritual self-development is focused.

The social role gives the chance to build the personal composition of the social and valuable and inner-moral relations including the attitude of the person towards itself, other people to culture values, society, the nature. The personal composition of the social and valuable and spiritual and moral relations defines "egoism", identity of the personality, her originality. Quantitative and qualitative degree of personal composition of the social and valuable and the inner-moral relations of the subject is necessary demands diagnosing as characterizes process of the inner-moral formation.

S. Sh. Pashayev pays special attention to the student's environment, finds in it the features connected with age, specifics of informative process activity, and also with the level of pre-university preparation dominates. These features, according to the author, make a basis of the moral culture of students understood in the form of rather steady education which characterizes the reached level of development (Pashayev, 1984). For us this statement has conceptual value in the solution of the studied problem. In paragraph 1.1 we proved that the moral makes a spirituality core: system of ethical knowledge, moral belief, norms of professional ethics, ability to regulate behavior and communication with the help of the moral principles. Listed it is possible to consider indicators of the inner-moral formation of the identity of the student which are realized in all structure of his activity that once again points to their integrating and general character. Spiritual and moral formation of the personality doesn't exist as a certain autonomous process of extracurricular activities. It is always specifically connected with this activity as it is beyond the educational process proceeding in higher education institution and set of spaces of the inner-moral formation includes (personal and activity) itself.

O. S. Bogdanova's idea about a situation of a choice opened the whole direction in the theory and practice of the inner-moral personality formation (Bogdanova, 1975). Substantial bases of designing of the inner-moral activity are under construction by means of a links specification: the teacher – a problem situation – the student as the subject of interaction, an exchange of activity the teacher – the student; the student – Another. Subject and object and the subject - subject communications in spiritual and moral activity directly influence formation of a position of the student in extracurricular activities.

Operational bases of designing of extracurricular activities of students are defined by the analysis of educational cognitive activity and communication. The inner-moral activity is considered by us as an aspect of other kinds of activity and as rather independent kind of activity, decisive means of formation and development of the personality. Keeping all main properties inherent in it as to the general phenomenon of activity, it has the features caused by that inner-moral activities for the nature are integrative. Therefore, considering the inner-moral activity in the form of educational cognitive activity and communication, we open the

mechanism of their interrelation, a ratio, and also process of their integration. The inner-moral activity and educational cognitive activity correspond as the purpose and means.

Now conventional is also that fact that revival and improvement of the inner-moral formation as self-valuable part of extracurricular activities is one of the leading directions.

In our opinion, it is necessary to create optimum pedagogical conditions in extracurricular activities for the inner-moral formation of the student. We will point to the main directions of the organization of extracurricular activities:

- Consolidation of the relations of teachers and student cooperation;
- Creation of the interuniversity centers of student's extracurricular activities development;
- Revival of the regional youth scientific and technical production centers, the centers of information urged to promote realization of spiritual and moral potential of the student;
- Development of leisure, club activity as special sphere of activity of the student and functioning of youth subculture;
- Improvement of network functioning of social psychological assistance services to the student in establishments of professional education;
- Studying and distribution of experience of the public organizations and establishments of professional education which are productively using in education spiritual and moral potential, possibilities of social, cultural, historical traditions of the region.

Joining the student to the process of the inner-moral search creates prerequisites for definition of own vital mission and creation of an individual trajectory of a vital and professional way, its understanding by it as the way conducting to understanding of the internal spiritual and moral essence, finding of harmony with itself and world around. This search isn't limited to processes of an internal sense formation; it provides an exit in external space of the personality, emergence of need for creative activity.

So, the world of the inner-moral values needs to be included in process of spiritual and moral formation of the student.

Inner-moral values are regarded by researchers in two aspects: as objectively existing and as subjective (personal, individual). Communication between objectively existing and subjective inner-moral values is established through concept of sense. The sense, by V. Sagatovsky's definition, is accessory of individual consciousness; this special, individual, prejudice of the person to objectively existing moral values, the steady regulator of its activity and behavior, a basis for development of the individual attitude towards that reality in the context of which life of the person proceeds (Sagatovsky, 1979).

The sense can't be introduced from the outside; it is developed by the person in the course of sense creative activity. As the basis of the inner-moral development of the person is made by search of meaning of life, his inner-moral life represents in essence development of own meanings, own understanding of objectively existing the inner-moral values. It makes sense information (understanding of essence of the world and itself) and emotional (the relation to the world and itself) components.

The nature of the individual meanings of influence, on the one hand, the personal and the individual characteristics of the subject sense creative activities, on the other - cultural-historical time and space in which the proceeds of its existence. Therefore in work the characteristic of the content of moral consciousness and behavior is carried out, their structural elements are allocated and analyzed. The moral consciousness including social (objective) and personal (subjective) aspects looks as the system of estimates reflecting reality through a prism of approvals and condemnations is expressed in judgment of ethical standards, values, an assessment of the phenomena of surrounding reality, moral empathy.

Moral behavior – set of forms of daily behavior of the person in which moral values, the orientations of the individual caused by work of his moral consciousness find external expression. The consciousness defines the maintenance of acts, and the behavior opens it. The

central components of behavior are: the act (including action or inaction), the purpose, means of its achievement, a commission condition, results of action, an assessment, a self-assessment. The moral behavior of the personality has the following sequence: a life situation – experience – judgment of a situation and motives – a choice and decision-making – incentive – an act.

In interaction the moral consciousness and behavior define the maintenance of the inner-moral values of the personality (social group), level of its inner-moral culture. The inner-moral values of youth are defined as the system of values created subject in process - the object relations (youth – society), system in which in indissoluble unity and interrelation are presented: knowledge of universal and moral values; belief in their realization in human relations; the behavior directed on an embodiment of this knowledge and belief in practical activities.

Inner practical activities in their essence are productive. It can be considered as a kind of inner production, and then the concept of inner production is almost identical to concept of spiritual activity in general. According to P. I. Smirnov, "there are a lot of types of inner activity. The Inner World is only one" (Smirnov, 2007). The Inner World has three beginnings: informative, moral and esthetic. The good, beauty and truth are internally connected, they have to coincide as are directing to one purpose – to finding by the person of original life. The habitual behavior is formed by repeatedly repeated actions. It is stable, allows the person in identical, similar conditions to work always as it is necessary.

The moral behavior is characterized not only by act, but also by a system of moral habits. They along with moral belief and feelings log in internal regulators of behavior. The moral habit – is ability and ability to make action not only without control, special on that, but also owing to the developed need for this activity. Still D. Lock noted that in education the major role is played by formation of moral habits. "It isn't necessary to burden memory of children at all with rules and instructions which are immediately forgotten and is much more useful to exercise them in actions, desirable from the point of view of true morality" (Rogers, 1986).

S. L. Rubenstein noted that "when a person systematically induce to arrive definitely (moral), the outlook, morals as if settle and are enshrined in its character in the form of habits – habitual ways of behavior" (Rubinshtein, 2003).

Habit to the behavior determined by deeply acquired ethical standards – an indicator of stability of moral motive. Formation of a moral habit needs to be carried out on the basis of positive motivation of behavior of students. Conclusions of scientists: moral habits become stronger in activity, and in higher education institution special work on education of certain habits of behavior is necessary. Extracurricular activities as our skilled and experimental work showed, possess in this plan great opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

In our approach the moral behavior is characterized by that it at everyone is defined by a conscious choice of these or those actions according to cultural wealth. The behavior is moral if the student weighs, thinks over the actions, and chooses the unique, right way of the problem solution facing it. Strong internal conviction corresponds sure behavior. Harmony of thoughts and affairs is a guarantee of moral behavior in any situation, at emergence of new and unexpected problems.

An ideal takes an absolutely special place in the complex structure of the moral values. It is one of types of moral values and at the same time acts as its highest form. The special role of an ideal in an inner world of the personality is explained by its nature, functions, and specifics of communication with reality. We believe inner-moral formation – is process in which the subject aspires to an ideal:

a) as a public ideal values – the abstract idea of attributes developed by public consciousness, containing in it due in various spheres of public life act. Such values act and as universal, "eternal" (truth, beauty, justice), and as concrete historical (the patriarch, equality, democracy);



b) value appears in an objective form in the form of the works of material and spiritual culture or human acts which are a concrete subject embodiment of public valuable ideals (esthetic, ethical, political, legal, etc.) that does values cognizable;

c) social values, refracting through a prism of individual activity, enter into psychological structure of the personality in the form of the personal, spiritual and moral values which are one of sources of motivation of her behavior.

The personal ideal as essence of ideas of the person of happiness and meaning of life, satisfaction with life, will mobilize the person for achievement of goals. It directs thought of the person to awareness of necessary harmony, coordination of personal and public interests.

Values in the course of an interiorization become valuable orientations, i.e. personal ideals and vital installations of the person. A. V. Kiryakova allocates three phases considering formation of orientations:

- It connects the first phase with entry of the personality into the world of values, into the world of the valuable relations;

- The second phase – with judgment of a worthiness that is connected with reevaluation of values, with formation own "I";

- The third phase – with formation of own scale of values, system of valuable orientations, design of the attitudes of the personality towards reality (Kiryakova, 1996).

So, extracurricular activities, meeting lacks in knowledge, forms a complete picture of the world, definitely reproduces various phenomena of social life in society and in the world, promotes adaptation of the personality in it. Thanks to extracurricular activities the student gains experience of the emotional and valuable relation to the world of things and people, experience of communication, interaction, opens himself to the world with which it is internally interconnected. In extracurricular activities all factors are integrated (the biological – specific and psychological features of inclinations and abilities of students); environment (cultural, educational environment of university, variety of forms and methods of educational work); activity of the personality). Therefore extracurricular activities positively influence on the process of the student's moral formation.

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## SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AS A MANAGEMENT ENTITY OF STUDENTS' TRAINING

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### Abstract

The major outcomes of the research are to define the general directions for social partnership between the University and production, to identify mechanisms of industrial and educational management of students' training, consisting of a backbone, market-oriented and academic components. The importance of these outcomes is that the defined directions for social partnership between the University and industrial enterprises contributes to the increase in the number of graduates trained in compliance with the orders of the employer, meets the students' needs in training, improves the level of graduates' qualifications. Determined mechanism of industrial and educational management of students' training enables to ensure the labor market with needed amounts of competitive specialists, to develop students' willingness to adapt rapidly to modern high-tech industrial innovation.

**Keywords:** social partnership, production, mechanisms for management of students' training, regionalization of vocational education.

### Introduction

The study is relevant due to the status of technical education as a general factor in sustainable development of society, competitiveness and national security. Vocational education is aimed to meet, on the one hand, the students' needs in knowledge, abilities and skills, on the other – society's needs in the training of highly qualified specialists: competent, initiative, enterprising, competitive, Highly skilled, communicative, knowing foreign languages, ready to work hard from the very first working day, possessing the ability to analyze complex situations and responsible decisions, possessing business communication skills, easily adapting to changes and quickly mastering new techniques and technology of modern high-tech industry, owning innovative technologies, interested in the continuous improvement of the level of education and qualifications (Meletsinek, 2007). The socio-economic reality demands from the system of vocational training specialists, who immediately, without the adaptation period and the internship can qualitatively implement specific professional duties. The quality of vocational training is the main tool to overcome a variety of social and economic challenges which define the development of the country (Subetto, 2002). The main provision for realization of demands of society in highly skilled engineers is the interaction between the economy, labor market and

institutions of vocational training. This is reflected in the social partnership between universities and industrial enterprises, which are directed on teachers' constant vocational training, updating of universities' material resources, students' and teachers' motivational and stimulation tools, employment of graduates (Lunev et al., 2016; Aleksandrov, Zakharova & Nikolaev, 2015; Erdyneeva et al., 2016; Nikolaev, Baranova & Petunova, 2016). There is a discrepancy between the need to develop social partnership between the institutions of vocational educational and industrial enterprises aimed at highly qualified specialists' training that are competitive and mobile at the labor market and the absence of guidelines for the conducting of social partnership between the University and production (Morgunov et al., 2001). This general discrepancy is defined by a contradiction between: a) the society modernization, the wish to construct efficient social interaction in vocational educational system and the sluggish formation of social institutions which could manifest these interactions in the system of vocational education (Loschilova, 2014; Drovnikov et al., 2016); b) educational policy, which is directed on the highly qualified engineers' training, and poor research and practical support to manage future technical specialists' training in contemporary social and economic environment (Saurenco, 2009). All mentioned above makes relevant the aim of the study - to develop guidelines for the management of students' vocational training in conditions of social partnership between University and production.

#### **Methodology**

The guiding principle to the research is the participatory enabling to consider a social partnership between the University and production as a cooperative process based on a transparent sharing of interests, responsibilities to train highly qualified, competitive and mobile specialists. (Oleshkov & Uvarov, 2006).

A social partnership between university and production is an entirely new interaction of the university, the municipal and public authorities, employers, students and their parents. The aim of partners' interrelation is the realization of all participants' interest in the process of training for highly qualified graduates who are in demand on the labor market. In Russia, the formation of social partnership between universities and production is one of the strategic objectives for the formation of vocational training services (Lunev, Pugacheva & Stukolova, 2014a; Erdyneeva et al., 2016). Relying on a participatory principle, the fundamentals of social partnership between the University and production are defined: the parties' equal rights; democracy, enabling all parties to be initiative, to confirm their status; normative provision of the parties' activities; voluntary adoption of duties by the parties and their mandatory fulfillment (Kamasheva et al., 2016). The study included the following methods: theoretical (generalization and systematization, analysis and synthesis,); sociological (interviews, questionnaires, observation).

#### **Results**

The major outcomes of this research include: 1) the fundamental vectors of social partnership between University and industrial enterprises; 2) the instruments of production and educational management of students' training in vocational institutions; 3) experimental testing of the efficiency of the tools for production and educational management of students' training in vocational institutions.

#### ***The major vectors of social partnership between University and production***

Managerial principles of vocational education in Russia are based on the demands of public educational and professional standards and specialist qualification characteristics (Lednev, 1989). Historically, from 1917 to 2000 the state acted as a single employer and fully managed the labor market. And even most of market segments of social and labor interrelations (free selection of the capabilities' usage to labor, freedom in employment and dismissal of staff, the money form of salary) were strictly controlled by administration. The real development of the entities of the labor market began in the Russian economy since the early 1990s and included employers and the state, the economically independent owners, as well as awareness and realization of tendencies directed on providing reproduction terms. The right of labor abilities' controlling was given for the employees, the contracts was legalized, self-employment and

secondary employment were applied widely, and independence to define the number of employees to establish wages was attained. Industrial enterprises demanded workers readiness to work hard with the very first day after graduation. Such training needed customers' participation in the development of knowledge, abilities and skills as social partners of Technical University. (Akhmetov et al., 2016). Social partnership in institutions of vocational education is understood as a collaboration process between the institution and industrial enterprise with distribution of roles, interests, responsibilities to train highly qualified, competitive engineers. (Terentyeva et al., 2016a). The vectors of social partnership between the educational institution and production are identified:

1) organizational – managerial involving the identification of the quantity of students to study, paying attention to the requirements of labor market; graduates' guaranteed employment; taking part of enterprises' staff in the conducting of recommendations for students applying the industrial material base; industrial representatives' taking part in the activities of the election committee; students' purposeful training for definite enterprises with graduates' employment; conducting of industrial practice applying the equipment, used in the contemporary segment of production; students' industrial practice at job-places; employees' professional training in the educational institution; preparing of Trustees' council, industrial Councils on Social Partnership; the organization of regional methodical councils inviting members from educational institution, employers, expert associations, employment services, regional, industrial and educational authorities, in order to develop the content of vocational education and improve corporate democratic interrelations between the social partners;

2) research and methodical consisting in formation of research and methodical help, determining the content and structure of future professionals' industrial practice; employers' taking part in the formation and survey of educational and curricular papers; identification of forms and methods for training with the industrial representatives' inviting; organizing for students lessons by them ("guest lecturers"); constructing of mechanism for estimation of the efficiency of specialists' training by independent expert commissions; employers' certification of students; employers' participation in vocational skills competitions, youth scientific conferences; conducting of teachers' continuous training at the enterprise for learning the latest equipment and technology (Zamaletdinov et al., 2016);

3.) information-analytical implying informing of the teaching staff on the labor market to identify the structure of specialties, trades and the amounts of staff training.

Social partnership between the educational institutions and production results to the enhancement in the graduates' quantity prepared in compliance with the employer's demands; employment of students luckily finished their study and enhancement of their financial level; the meeting of employers' and students' training needs, improvement of the skills' level of graduates, as well as the objectivity of the estimation of the quality and availability of vocational educational services (Terentyeva et al., 2016b).

#### *The instruments for industrial and educational management of students' training*

Not only the institutions of vocational education as it was while traditional managerial system but the enterprise also impacts the student in the process of his vocational training as there is an interrelations with the engineering and technical personnel, the dealing with material and technical resources at industrial practices. The tool of industrial and educational management of students' training is oriented on the enhancement of the effectiveness of technical education and involves the following constituent parts:

the first constituent part is the system-forming component. It contributes to the development of social partnership system between the educational institution and production, which involves the following features: 1) the preference to the integrity (system), that is not the parts make an integrity (system), but the integrity gives rise to the existence of the constituent parts; 2) non-additive character - irreducibility of peculiarities of the system to the sum of the features of its parts and non-deducibility of features of an integral system from the parts' peculiarities; 3) the complicated nature of the structure of the system, which is explained by the quantity of levels of system's managerial hierarchy; majority of relations; the complicated nature of the behavior and

peculiarities' non-additive character; the volume of information necessary for management; 4) vertical integration of the system, that is, the quantity of hierarchical levels and the degree of their interrelations; the extent of impact of the entity's control on the object; 5) horizontal integration of the system - the quantity of interrelations between the subsystems of the same level, their interdependence; 6) hierarchical character of the system in which each constituent part can be explained as a subsystem; 7) openness of the system, that is, the frequency of informational exchanges with the environment; volume of external systems interrelating with the system; the extent of impact of other systems on the system; system interaction with other systems; 8) purposefulness of the system, which implies the "tree of targets"; 9) priority of effectiveness of different subsystems that provides the survival of the system; 10) the emergence, that is the targets of the system parts may differ from the goals of the system; 11) the continuity of the operating and formation of the system because of the discrepancies in different directions of activity, the majority of forms and methods of functioning, formation; 12) the inertia of the system, i.e. the pace of changes of the system's entrance parameters in response to changes of exit parameters; 13) the innovative character of the system's activity based on different innovations, constant formation; 14) the marketing direction, that is, a complex of activities on development of innovation portfolio, resource preservation and complex formation oriented on the needs of the labor market; 15) functionality, which is in identification of the features of the managerial entities, the division of roles; 16) the determination of standards to manage subsystems (training, fostering, professional skills' formation, etc.); 17) complicated nature, in which there is a necessity to pay attention to the organizational, economic, social, psychological, environmental, technical and other (e.g., gender) managerial components and their interactions; 18) integrative character, i.e., study and enhancement of the interrelations between the managerial entities; formation of co-management and self-government; 19) legislative regulation of the operations, rights, duties, efficiency of standards, cost, time, aspects of students' vocational training in the regulations (orders, provisions, instructions, standards); 20) educational support to help students in the formation of their abilities, creativeness; 21) paying attention to the particular situation to choose suitable managerial methods (Ivanov et al., 2016).

The second constituent part is the marketing-directed. This part involves the conducting of marketing studies of the regional labor market, monitoring the efficiency of vocational training and adaptation of university graduates; constructing of a regional bank of social partners in terms of the trained professions; the participation of employers and other social partners in the formation of occupational demands, knowledge, occupational abilities' and skills' procedures of verification, (Lunev, Pugachova, Stukolova, 2014b);

The third constituent part is educational. The part ensures the conducting of educational process in compliance with the demands of employers to the graduates' qualification; certification of qualification features of graduates with taking part of the social partners; modern logistics of the educating process; enhancement of students' motivation for training, development of the occupation (specialty); enhancement of research and professional level of teachers; development of civil status of students (Petrova et al., 2016; Chistopolskaya et al., 2016).

### ***Experimental verification of efficiency of the tool for industrial and educational management of students' vocational training***

The experiment lasted from 2010 till 2016 in ascertaining, forming and controlling stages. The experimental part included 350 teachers, 640 students from Kazan National Research Technical University named after A.N. Tupolev-KAI (Kazan, Russia) and 75 members of production, which identified the criteria of effectiveness for social partnership between Technical University and production. The purpose of ascertaining phase was to define the structure and effectiveness of the traditional managerial system of students' training. In the formative phase the analysis was made of the regional labor market; regulatory provisions for the consolidation between educational institution and the social partners were formed; forms of social partnership were identified; employers were included in the conducting of training process, the formation of



occupational demands, verification measurements of vocational knowledge, abilities, skills and competences. The aim of the control stage was to verify the effectiveness of instruments for industrial and educational management of students' training for specialty 150202 "Welding Equipment and Technology." To estimate the performance of specialists' training a complex objective was formed that involved: theoretical, practical, vocational parts. The theoretical part involved tasks on 10 academic disciplines, developing vocational knowledge on specialty. Practical part was to produce the machine components in compliance with the drawing given by the complexity for the 2-nd and for the 3-d category of specialist. Vocational part included two parts: the formation of technological process of manual producing of components; fulfillment of the same process with the using of modern computer-aided design systems. For every part the rating scales were prepared objectively estimating the fulfillment of objectives and the total score. The complex task was examined in Kazan Motor Industrial Association and Kazan Aviation Industrial Association named after S.P. Gorbunov and attained good opinion. In the result of objectives' fulfillment the vocational training levels were determined: high, average and low. Table 1 shows the outcomes of students' professional training.

**Table 1.** The outcomes of students' vocational training on the specialty 150202 "Equipment and technology of welding production" (in persons)

Year	The necessary for labor market	Trained	Employed	The efficiency of training		
				high	average	low
2016	170	170	170	130	40	-
2015	170	170	170	140	30	-
2014	150	150	150	150	-	-
2010	250	240	240	140	90	20

The outcomes in Table 1 demonstrate that over the past three years, within the social partnership between educational institution and production the effectiveness of students' vocational training is enhanced. The outcomes in Table 2 demonstrate that all graduates are demanded and are employed.

**Table 2.** Holding in the enterprise of graduates on the specialty 150202 "Equipment and technology of welding production" (in persons)

Year	Employed	By profession	Working hours by the specialty			
			1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	More than 3 years
2016	170	170	-	-	-	170
2015	170	170	-	-	20	150
2014	150	150	10	20	120	-
2010	240	240	160	50	20	10

Table 2 demonstrates that, in the environment of social partnership between the educational institution and production its graduates are working in compliance with the specialty for more than three years.

While the survey of 350 teachers, 640 students, 75 members of production, efficiency criteria of social partnership between the educational institution and production were defined: the extent of realization of the contractual duties for highly qualified specialists' training, who are competitive at the labor market; the level of social and vocational adaptation of graduates in the enterprise.

#### Discussions

The content and conducting of social partnership between the educational institution and production is the issue of many researches. In the papers of A.I. Subetto (2002) the content and conduction of social partnership between the educational institution and production are studied in the view of the efficiency of vocational training. In compliance with A.I. Subetto (2002) the efficiency of vocational training is a system of knowledge, potential, interrelationships,

textbooks, methods, tools, instruments to provide its availability for all social strata. The significance of A.I. Subetto (2002) was the established interrelationship of the instrument of the rising efficiency of the reproduction of social intelligence and the effectiveness of management as the necessary ones to the law of progressive formation of the efficiency of human, educational systems. But A.I. Subetto (2002) did not identify the current demands for the content of vocational education in the context of social partnership between the educational institutions and production. Research of N.A. Selezneva (2002) outlines but do not open student-centered direction of vocational education. The works of Yu.V. Gorin, A.D. Nelyudov & B.L. Svistunov (2010), N. Lenskaya (2015), E.V. Protas (2013) investigate the instruments of the formation of integrated educational curricula for specialists' training in terms of social partnership. But, the works of these scientists do not determine the essence of social partnership between the educational institutions and production. The papers of V.M. Zhurakovskiy (1997), A.A. Kirsanov (2001), D.V. Chernilevskiy (2002) define the interrelationship of vocational training and science. But vocational training in the studies of these authors, is explained by the external determination, the main entities (teachers, students, employers) do not take part in choosing and structuring of the content of vocational training. Thus, the idea of social partnership between the educational institutions and production has not been fully studied. All the above mentioned actualized the target of the research.

### Conclusion

Conducting of social partnership between the educational institutions and production, in terms of organizational and managerial, research and methodical, information-analytical aspects, enables to: 1) delegate to production the responsibilities for defining the needs for specialists and planning their training and retraining; 2) enhance connections of the educational institutions with the labor market via the participation of employers and other social partners in the formation of qualification requirements, knowledge, vocational abilities' and skills' assessment procedures; 3) enhance the role of production in the training of competences that satisfy the particular requirements of production; 4) invite social partners in the management, control and estimation of the activities of educational institutions via their licensing and certification measurements; 5) contribute to universities' self-management, economic instruments of management, the realization of results' estimative ways.

Industrial and educational controlling instruments are directed on providing of the most efficient training of students at minimal time and cost, and ensures the following features: 1) providing of the labor market with the required number of competitive, mobile and highly qualified engineers; 2) contributing to students' socialization, with their self-determination, active life activity position, fast adaptation to innovation in contemporary high-tech production. The study outcomes enable allocating of perspectives for further study of the issues that are connected with the formation of forms, means and ways of social partnership between the educational institutions and production. The paper Submissions can be profitable for university heads and professors; Staff of continuous professional education and retraining centers in the selection and structuring of the content for continuous professional education of the teaching staff in universities.

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## INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ROADS OF COGNITIVE ACTIVITY OF STUDENTS

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### Abstract

The study is relevant due to the shift to the knowledge economy and the necessity to develop students' roads of cognitive activity. The paper is aimed at identifying the forms of students' cognitive activity and functions of individual ways for their development. The leading approach to the study is educational creativeness, ensuring teachers' communicative and creative orientation, formation of capability to search for new methods to issues' solving. The study included 225 teachers, 375 students who took part in the criteria defining for the efficiency of individual educational roads. The major outcomes of the study are to determine forms of cognitive activity (situational, starting, creative, implementing), the functions of individual roads for their development (content, target, competence). The importance of the obtained results is that the defined forms of cognitive activity lead to the choice of adequate ways for their educational activities to enhance students' entity status and to individualize their educational roads. The identified functions of individual educational roads develop students' creative capacity; improve their personal and professional skills which are necessary in conditions of modern economy.

**Keywords:** cognitive activity, individual educational roads, educational creativeness.

### Introduction

The study is relevant due to the shift to the knowledge economy and the necessity to develop students' roads of cognitive activity. Knowledge Economy defines the knowledge and human capital. Besides the concept "economy based on knowledge", the categories: "a society based on knowledge», «the knowledge-based society» or "knowledge society» are widely spread. The proceedings of the World Science Forum, conducted by UNESCO and the International Council for Science in November 2003 in Budapest, identify by the following way it: "A society based on knowledge, - an innovative society based on lifelong learning concept. It combines engineers, technicians, researchers, scientists, as well as institutions engaged in the process of high-tech goods' and services' development and production. It creates a national innovation and production system, which integrates an international network on development, production, delivering, preservation, and use of knowledge. Knowledge is applied by individuals to

enhance possibilities in cultural and material aspects, and for sustainable development of a society » (Knowledge-based society. Budapest, 2003).

The shift to the knowledge economy makes relevant the issue of development of students' informative activities (Akhmetov et al., 2016). It is evident that the educational process can be considered as a system of perception, memory, storage, reproduction and interpretation of the obtained knowledge. The formation of cognitive activity can be implemented simultaneously in all aspects of the system, but can be manifested at any of them (Osmolovskaya, 2006). There are intensive and extensive guiding principles of cognitive activity's formation (Popkov & Korzhuev, 2007). Both principles are based on the same purpose - to develop an educated, socially active, and capable of self-development, moral and creative person (Pugacheva et al., 2016). But the approaches to attain the aim of these principles differ. Extensive principle is implemented due to the enhancement in the number of educational disciplines, involving growing the volume of knowledge given to students. Intensive principle is based on the development of the subjective, personally interested student's status and includes changing of the very structure of the curriculum and pedagogical methods' improvement (Kulyutkin, 1984). It is considered that the intensive principle to the formation of students' cognitive activity is the most efficient. Intensive principle includes the educational creativeness, forms of students' cognitive activity and choice of relevant ways and techniques of their training activities (Vergasov, 1985). These circumstances have resulted to the aim of the study - to determine the forms of students' cognitive activity and to define the individual educational paths' functions.

### **Methodology**

The main approach to the study is educational creativeness, ensuring teachers' communicative and creative orientation, formation of their capability to search for new ways to the issues' solving. Educational creativeness is characterized by the fact that and the subject and the entity of professional activity at the same time is the personality of the student (Bukhvalov, 1993). All other forms of creative activity are below the educational creativeness by their complexity and responsibility accurately due to the fact that during the educational activity the development and formation of personality takes place. Modern research literature explains the educational creativeness as a process of educational issues' solution in changing environment (Kan-Kalik & Nikandrov, 1990). The educational process of creativeness of the teacher is considered as an activity oriented on a constant educational issues' solution in changing environment, during which the teacher develops and uses in the communication the organic and optimum, for this individual, non-standardized educational solutions, which are mediated by the peculiarities of the subject-subject educational influence (Zagvyazinsky, 1987). Using the complex of standard and non-standard solutions of issues, the teacher, as well as any researchers constructs the activities in compliance with the common heuristic search rules: analysis of educational situations, projecting of the outcomes in compliance with the original data, the analysis of available resources which are necessary to checkup the hypothesis and attain the desired outcomes, estimation of the data, the formulation of new issues (Yepaneshnikov et al., 2016). It is recognized in education that training cannot be uncreative due to the fact that there are unique students, cases, teachers, and any educational solution must arise from these always non-standard aspects (Kaloshina, 1983). Students' informative activity develops implying educational creativeness, which is manifested in the use of efficient use of solutions of educational issues, the high quality of its realization, the combination of art and science, in the individualization of educational impact and capability to communicate, due to the criteria of pedagogical tact. The study used the following techniques: theoretical (generalization and systematization, analysis and synthesis,); sociological (interviews, questionnaires, observation, and expert estimation).

### **Results**

The study's main outcomes are: 1) the forms of cognitive activity of students; 2) the functions of individual educational roads; 3) experimental work to verify the efficiency of individual educational roads.

### ***Forms of cognitive activity***

There are four forms of cognitive activity: situational, starting, creative and implementing. In the starting form of cognitive activity the student is passive, responds weakly to the requirements of the teacher, but is involved in the activities under the teacher's influence. The student has underdeveloped emotional, intellectual and behavioral abilities and skills for learning. His position can be described as the position of an object in the interaction. Teacher's tactics in this case is based on the formation of the climate for training, which removes the student's sense of stiffness, fear. Most often these students are "neglected" by the teacher. "Scrolling" their past failures, these students decrease their ability of a constructive approach to the new learning task, so it is significant to remove their memories of negative experience. The main reception is the so-called "emotional strokes" - appeal to the students by name, kind, affectionate tone, and the like. Working with this group of students requires from the teacher patience so one should not expect their immediate inclusion in activity, since it can be enhanced gradually. One should not offer the training tasks that need a quick transition from one activity to another. Such students should be given additional time to think about the answer, because it is difficult for them to improvise. One should not shoot down such students during the response by asking unexpected questions and giving tricky tasks. Working with these students their transfer in the interaction from the expressed object position into the predominantly subjective position is extremely important. This is possible due to the special atmosphere of lessons oriented on the psychological emancipation and emotional inclusion of students in a common activity. In this case, a bridge is constructed: the state of transparency, comfort, removal of fear of joint work, a readiness to work in cooperation with the teacher or other students (Astakhova, 2000).

Common indices of situational form of cognitive activity are an expression of interest and activity only in definite cases (interesting content of educational material, unusual teaching techniques). This is due to emotional excitability, often unsupported skills and abilities to work independently. Such students are easily engaged in new kinds of activity, but in case of difficulties can easily lose interest in training. Students of this kind of cognitive activity can give quick and correct answers, but only occasionally. Tactics of training interaction with these students is the permanent reinforcement of their active state in training activity. Teacher can help them removing the intellectual fatigue, if necessary, to resist a strong-willed apathy, to stimulate their interest in training process. There are several types of activation exercises: "delayed guessing" (at the beginning of the lesson the teacher suggests students a riddle, the guessing of which will be revealed during the explaining of training material); "survey-crossword" (students complete a crossword puzzle on the topic of the lesson, which was prepared in advance by the teacher or his assistants) "aerobatics" (a situation where part of the concepts of the crossword "prepares" a new topic). It is revealed that to the students of this type of cognitive activity are inherent haste and incompleteness of actions, so it is significant for them to have the possibility to apply a response plan based on the reference signals and prepare algorithms of a training action, some tables. For such students it is easier to memorize and apply the schemes, which they prepare themselves or with a teacher. So, the teacher's strategy of actions consists in dealing with situational active students which denotes not only help them to deal with learning activities, but also to provide the emotional and intellectual environment throughout the training. Then the student feels satisfaction and inspiration in the course of implementation. Feeling of success he wishes to repeat and demonstrates certain intellectual and volitional efforts. If following lessons do not deceive his anticipations, then preconditions for the transition to an active type of knowledge will takes place (Kulyutkin, 1984).

Students of implementing type of cognitive activity are readily involved in activity. The main positive traits of these students are the stability and constancy. But sometimes they also have their own troubles. For their assiduity and diligence they are often called "learners by heart" and these students need in careful attention of the teacher too. Sometimes they are fed up if the material under study is quite simple and they are bored. This type of students is habituated to limit them by the learning task and do not want or wean to look for non-standard solving. They understand that the teacher's approval can be obtained not for something "over and above the

original", but simply for the quality work that does not need search for additional material else. To stimulate the students of this type is problematic, but possible if use heuristic situations that are created on the lecture. For example, a "problematic dialogue" when discussing the topic proposed by the teacher, students forecast its solution, "brainstorming", involving collection of a bank of ideas, their analysis, presentation and further selection of ideas. During presenting ideas, new solutions are created, which are immediately used in the discussions of the problem. Special role situations can be suggested: students can take the role of "expert" and estimate the oral and written responses of other students (Lozovaya & Trotsko, 1989).

Creative type is characterized by high cognitive activity of entity position of students. These students have an unconventional way of thinking, bright imagination and a unique focus to the world. Besides, they often create problems in the educational activity, which is based on the sequence, logic and thoroughness. For example, the teacher suggests solving any problem, and then waits step by step explanation of mental actions. But this type of students cannot always explain it, because their explanations often go beyond all logic. The activity of the teacher in this type of cognitive activity is to form students' need for creativity, wish for self-actualization and self-expression. To achieve it the techniques that activate the students' creativity, develop their imagination, creative thinking and intuition are used. (Petrova et al., 2016).

Individual educational path is an individual way of formation of students' creative potential, their personal and professional skills which are necessary in conditions of modern economy (Kliminskaya, 2014). 1.1. It is revealed that the individual educational paths implement the following functions:

1) target - based allow the student independently or jointly with the teacher to set a target of education, define the stages to achieve it, identify the pace of progress, choose adequate forms, means and methods (Turkina, 2006). This peculiarity enables to find a training material, conduct such forms of cooperation that will result to the student's own initiative, the expression and the development of personality. In practice, the realization of this function is demonstrated in the special training curriculum preparation. The constituent parts of such a curriculum are: the targets, tasks, stages, forms and methods of training, content of training (compulsory subjects, elective courses, self-study), control system and assessment of the outcomes (Terentyeva, Pugacheva & Lunev, 2015).

2) Content- based enables to form knowledge, abilities, skills, values, understand the world and oneself in this world (Uvarova & Maksimchenko, 2012). This peculiarity contributes to students' adapting to the current social and economic situation and leads to creation of educational environment, ensuring students with opportunities and selection of choice. In practice, the realization of this function is demonstrated in conducting of the natural or artificially created socio-cultural environment of students, involving various kinds of techniques and educational content that can ensure them with efficient activities.

3) Competence-based ensures assimilation of training, social, professional experience (Andreev, 2005). This function provides the development of students' willingness to self-actualization, career constructing. In practice, the realization of this function is connected with the selection of kinds, techniques and means of training, conducting of assessment system for the assimilation of knowledge and competences' development. All work carried out by students are made in the form of reports and accumulated in individual achievements folder (portfolio), which in addition includes the characteristics, the outcomes of examinations and tests. Portfolio contains the volume of work fulfilled, the level of development of competences, diligence and students' self-estimation (Pugacheva, Lunev & Stukolova, 2014).

#### ***Experimental verification of the efficiency of individual educational road***

The experiment involved 225 teachers, 375 students from Kazan State Architectural University, who defined of criteria of individual educational roads' performance. Experimental verification was conducted from 2013 to 2016 in ascertaining, forming and controlling stages. At the ascertaining stage individual educational roads' realization was defined: 1) Diagnostic - preparatory stage for a successful learning environment's creation. The leading role belongs to the teacher who helps students navigate in the learning material and to choose the optimal form



for activity with the students and they obtain basic knowledge, abilities and skills. 2) target-setting assumes the active interaction of the student and teacher. The student constructs an individual road in the kind of a graph demonstrating the wished level of disciplines' development after finishing the course, but not below the level inherent in the state training standards. Also the outcomes are projected, time frame is defined, and algorithm of independent work and forms of cooperation with a mentor are chosen. 3) Motivating – when the student works with a teacher, attending classes, doing reports on the work for a definite period of time work. Depending on the outcomes, the teacher adjusts the training road. As a motivational instrument such methods as the preparation or presentation of a report can be used, participation at the conference, taking part in multidisciplinary projects, contesting in the competition, exemption from routine tests or consultations, offset slice across multiple disciplines can be used. 4) Informative -a stage of coherent self-implementation of individual educational road by carrying out individual tasks applying different resources. Cooperation with the teacher takes the form of group sessions of interrelation character (projects, simulation of professional communicative situations, role-playing, and case studies). 5) Estimation - evaluation of tasks and the degree of individual educational road's realization is carried out as by the teacher and so by the student that promotes the formation of self-assessment and adequate perception of personal attainments. At this stage the typical mistakes are revealed, the reasons of errors and progress are analyzed.

At the control stage the implementation criteria of individual educational roads were defined: 1) knowledge- development of subject knowledge, general cultural and professional competences; 2) the activity- mastering of skills a) analytical (the ability to analyze their cognitive activity and the outcomes of cognitive activity fulfilled on its base), b) projective (skill of target setting and decision making to realize problems of self-development, find methods and means to solve them), c) organizational ( ability to organize active and independent cognitive activity), g), communicative (the ability to cooperate with teachers and fellow students in the process of training activities); 3) motivational - cognitive interest, learning needs (orientation on the assimilation of new knowledge, learning the methods of self-knowledge); 4) reflexive (self-estimation, self-assessment and self-adjustment in the exercise of cognitive activity; consciousness of the situation and the setting (reformulation) of objectives, moving from the stereotypical type of action, inadequate to the situation, to the mastering and searching for new methods).

### **Discussions**

Analysis of the literature on the study demonstrates that the issue of students' informative activity and the development of individual educational roads are the subject of many researchers. Besides, none of these studies are interrelated issues. All researchers present them separately, in isolation from each other. The issue of the formation of cognitive activity is one of the priorities in education. Informative activity of students is considered, firstly, as a condition of development of necessity in knowledge, development of skills of intellectual activity, independence, ensuring the depth and strength of knowledge (Astakhova, 2000; Popkov & Korzhuev, 2007; Manesheva, 2010). Second, cognitive activity is studied as a dynamic process of educational interrelation of the student with the subject of cognition oriented on the assimilation of the experience of social culture and the expansion of personal values' system (Vergasov, 1985; Egorshin & Pryanichkov, 2002; Davydova, 2005; Stroganova, 2011). Individual educational road of students is explained as an individual style of training activity, the sequence of educational steps, connected with the level of the student, abilities, interests, implemented and coordinated by a teacher (Surtaeva, 1998; Labunskaya, 2002; Kemerova, 2010, Goncharova & Chumicheva 2012; Zaitsev, 2013; Zeer & Symanyuk 2014, Gert, 2014). We suppose that cognitive activity is a type of training activity, which implies a definite level of independence of students in all of its structural components from the issue establishment to monitoring, self-monitoring and adjustment, with the transition from the fulfillment of the simplest types of work to more complicated and having research nature. The importance of individual educational road is that the use of this training format contributes to mastering of

skills, values that give rise to motivation for the formation of cognitive activity. Building of individual educational road is a multi-dimensional process that can provide the formation of student's autonomy and initiative, the ability to the fullest implementation of personal and training potential in the educational process. The student formulates the targets of the forthcoming activities, establishment of priorities in the organization of activities and realizes self-estimation of personal progress.

#### **Conclusion**

It is revealed that the decisive role in the knowledge economy belongs to knowledge and the production of knowledge is a source of progress. Investments in knowledge are increasing quicker than investment in fixed assets. This actualizes the society's demand for the cognitive development of students' activity. Four major types of cognitive activity of students are found: the starting, situational, implementing and creative. Determined types of cognitive activity, enables to say that the division of students into the gifted and "the other" is not correct. Every student has a right to manifest themselves in the process of cognitive activity. The implementation of this right is reasoned by the kind of student cognitive activity. Kinds of cognitive activity result to the selection of adequate ways for their training activities to enhance students' entity position and to pass to the individualization of educational roads. It is revealed that the effectiveness of the formation of students' cognitive activity grows, in situation of ensuring the building of individual educational roads. The functions of individual educational roads are revealed (target, content, competence), which result to the formation of creative potential of students, their personal and professional skills which are necessary in conditions of modern economy.

The study outcomes enable to allocate prospects for further study of the issue that are connected with the formation of training and methodological support of building of individual educational roads. Paper Submissions can be profitable for university professors; staff of continuous professional training and retraining centers in the selection and structuring of the content for continuous professional training of the teaching staff of the universities.

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## ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS COMPETENCE FORMATION

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### Abstract

The main idea of the study is evaluation of teacher's professional culture and competence as integrity of methodological and methodical parts that create subjects' interaction, resulting to the improvement and enhancement of success in research and educational activity. 575 teachers of university participated in the experiment the result of which was the identification of the function of high school teacher's competence. As the ideal academic environment for development of teacher's competence the following constituent parts are identified: self-prognosis and self-analysis of research and educational activities, the development of reflexive abilities, research and educational cooperation with other teachers). The outcomes presented are very important due to the fact that educational conditions ensure formation of educational thinking, devotion, reflection, develop skills for creativeness, targeting in educational sphere.

**Keyword:** teacher's competence, academic environment, high school teacher, research and educational cooperation, pedagogical thinking.

### Introduction

The importance of culture-developing role of academic environment is allocated due to the growing requirement of society to the high school teachers' professional culture and competence. Effectiveness of the development of university educational environment, its developing and educating opportunities largely depend on the teachers' personality. In this regard, a new paradigm - personality-oriented paradigm in education is approved which implies that student's individual psychological and status features in the training process are taken into consideration as much as possible (Entwistle, 1981). Educational content, the variety of academic curricula, training forms and methods, organization of the educational environment and other factors are taken into account to solve these challenges. These circumstances fundamentally change the interrelations between the teachers and students. A new paradigm oriented on the personality puts forward new requirements for university teachers, their professional culture and competence (Lunev & Pugacheva, 2013). The Great Russian educator of XIX century K.D. Ushinsky (1908) notes that education by combining different knowledge on personality can synthesize it from different spheres and formulate

educational theory how to educate personality, because only a person himself can educate other person. And the most significant aspect in this regard is the development of high school teacher's professional culture, because this process is not limited by the boundaries of professional educational system. This process is far beyond it and is continued within the self-development of the high school teacher (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1991). The fact that culture is a measuring device of human development is evident for all, because it shows not only and not so much the volume of accumulated values of social life activity of people throughout their history as the way in which people is connected with them. That is why culture forms human behavior and the way of thinking and it is influenced by all aspects of human activity and life (Bibler, 1989). Culture embodies not only education - the broadness and depth of human knowledge, as well as manners, intelligence - the ability of thoughts clear expression, careful listening, right counter-movements making, behavioral dignity in accordance with circumstances, etc. The man creates his culture himself and professional culture can be expressed as a special form of culture that be reflected in the personal individual experience at professional activity (Iljenkov, 1991).

Teacher's professional culture is more individual phenomenon than social, as it expresses not only educational state of society, but also teacher's personal features. Professional culture is an important fundamental factor of any specialist's professional competence, especially of a high school teacher. It is evident that the success of the student's personality development is influenced by the level of teacher's professional culture and competence (Gessen, 1995). The paper is aimed at defining the psychological and pedagogical conditions of formation of high school teacher's professional culture and competence.

### **Research methodology**

The leading methodological principle to the study is the axiological aspect of the problem which enables to take into consideration high school teacher' competence as a set of research and educational values that result to subject-subject interrelation, directed on the improvement and enhancement of effectiveness of research and educational activity of the teacher. Axiological consideration of the problem enables to outline the subjective and objective constituent parts in the teacher's competence.

The subjective aspect is colored by dynamism is connected with the improvement of teacher's individuality. The objective component is correlated with mobility connected with changes in teacher's research and educational activity (Akhmetov et al., 2016). Taking into account the axiological aspect, the following research and educational values can be identified: research, innovation, being interested in individuality, and respect for his or her originality, integrated "I - concept", self-realization in communicative creativity, humanization of interpersonal relations (Terentyeva, Pugacheva & Lunev, 2015). Axiological phenomenon enabled to formulate the conceptual idea of: development of teacher's professional culture and competence are associated with the development of reflexive processes that have an influence on a teachers' ability to integrate the research and educational values in their professional activity.

The study includes the following methods: theoretical (generalization and systematization, analysis and synthesis); sociological (observation, questionnaires and interviews).

### **Results**

The main outcomes of the study are the following: 1) academic environment for the formation of university teacher's professional culture and competence (self-prognosis and self-analysis of research and educational activities, the development of reflexive abilities, research and educational cooperation with other teachers); 2) their effectiveness's experimental verification.

### ***Academic environment for formation of high school teacher's professional culture and competence***

The first term is a self-prognosis and self-analysis of achievements in research and educational activities. Teachers' abilities, their potential creativeness are important for study (Friedman & Kulagina, 1991). Realization of these terms in educational practice, ensures the conducting of special training with the use of testing methods for teacher skills' development to pedagogical thinking and measuring of focus (an interest in the students and the overall results of the

activity, responsibility), motivational aspect of the teacher's individuality (optimism, devotion) the level of professional progress (activity, initiative, enthusiasm, ability to self-improvement). It is established that the pedagogical thinking involves case studies with theoretical knowledge and acquiring on this basis of an adequate solutions that ensures self-analysis of achievements in research and educational activities. Significance of pedagogical thinking is that it needs transition from standard-descriptive kind to creative kind of problem solutions in dynamic, unexpected, ambiguous and multi-dimensional situations (Kashapov, 2000). This involves identification by the teacher of peculiarities of research and educational activity which are not hidden in the course of comparing and classification of different cases, identification in them of cause-effect interrelations. The "teacher's licensing"- educational business game was held during the training, participants of which were subdivided into three groups: teachers who wanted to be licensed; assessment commission members; observers. In the course of the game, members of the assessment commission visited the "open door lessons" of teachers, participated in the situations and estimated the teachers' competence with the help of the proposed diagnostic tests. Teachers who wanted to be licensed estimated themselves and observers watched the activity of the assessment commission, discussed the correctness of its decisions made. It is established in the course of realization of the first term that it is necessary to understand teacher's competence as an integral personal formation, rather than individual characteristics of the person. In this situation, the formation of teacher's competence will be effective. Teacher's competence will contribute to the efficient students' socialization (Petrova et al., 2016).

The second term is the formation of reflexive abilities. Reflection is the thinking process of the personality which is occurring in consciousness, self-cognition. Reflective ability is understood as knowledge of the personality about himself in definite cases or particular periods of time, the clearness of others' attitude, the development of knowledge about the changes that may happen (Davydov, Neverkovich & Samoukina, 1999). Knowing oneself as individuality, as a unique integrity and uniqueness of the aggregate of qualities, a person may, in relation to other people, allocate social groups and humanity. In the process of self-estimation the person can find himself in the mirror of social norms and values within a certain social cultural group (Zavyazkin, 1998). Self-cognition is not possible without the knowledge of the culture and its interiorization. But it wouldn't be correct to believe that person first need to know about the culture, and then one-self. These processes occur at the same time, comparing cultural values and their reflection in people and in the person himself. Teacher's reflective abilities provide the formation of subject-subject interrelation in the process of research and educational activity. Realization of this term in real practice ensures special training, during which the teachers are supposed to rank the educational and reflective features of their activities on four components of self-consciousness: ideal "I", real "I" reflexive "I" and a retrospective "I" (Berne, 1986). Educational characteristics involve the ability to act within the content of educational material; to investigate the state of students' activity to determine their real opportunities; to select and apply some combination of training forms; to be directed on the student as actively developing entity of the educational process in educational objectives' setting; to forecast the consequences of educational solutions; promptly to make educational decisions, followed by a reflexive analysis; to "set distance" (Rubtsov, 1998). Reflexive features combine abilities to listen and objectively manage the communication process with students; improve the "sensitivity of perception of oneself and students"; use the method of self-hypnosis and self-care in crisis periods of professional activity; inspire and persuade; refer to the students' difficulties seriously; active empathic hearing; adequate expression in communication; take responsibility in behavior (Fetiskin, Kozlov & Manuilov, 2002). Peculiarities' selection which was ranked was carried out to define attitudes to different styles of research and educational activity (permissive, facilitative, authoritarian).

The third term is research and educational cooperation with other teachers. Cooperation - is one of the kinds of interrelations, the participants of which carry out mutual implementation of a purpose which has become a common aim and make solutions of common challenges. Research

and educational cooperation can be divided into the following kinds: the number of participants; subject criteria; episodic, short-term, intermittent, continuous time; the systematic and chaotic criteria of organization; voluntary and involuntary degrees of freedom; role-playing, total functions; horizontal and vertical subordination criteria; active and passive subjective factor. There are psychological barriers which affect the process of cooperation: 1) re-estimation of details and their values, which often take precedence over the fundamental points; 2) feeling of someone other's mistake; 3) breaking the psychological distance; 4) the effect of contrast concepts, that is human habit to notice only negative sides in one partner, resulting in pre-formed negative attitude, regardless the partner's behavior; 5) complex of differences, i.e. sustainable human non-acceptance of all that disagrees with one's tastes, ideas, beliefs; 6) wish to take out - the human habit to send negative emotions to an available subject.

It is found that the effectiveness of research and teaching cooperation is improved within the compatibility of group partners and interpersonal attraction. The group compatibility is explained by: 1) psychological compatibility (similar characteristic features of partners, consistency in carrying out definite kinds of activity, joint work); 2) emotional compatibility (mutual sympathy of partners, the high level of informal affection, well-functioning communication); 3) role-compatibility (consistency of functional-role anticipations of partners); 4) the reference compatibility (common value attitudes of partners. Most vivid expression of this phenomenon - "We, our, us. etc.").

There are practical advices to optimize interpersonal attraction: 1) let the people feel that they are unique. Of course, no one can "overdo" in all circumstances. If the partner understands the lies, hardly after that relationship it will be better. With the positive development of the relationship partner wish to think that the formula "no one is irreplaceable," cannot be treated to him perfectly. 2) better to allow people feeling "native" man. Partners more quickly realize who in this system of relationship "native" one is. It is important to feel corporate solidarity because it results in that the alien person becomes someone who is "native". 3) let people feel their importance. It is known that it is possible to instill a sense of pride in their profession. 4) it is necessary to be patient to listeners, since for each person his own problems, mental worries or joy mean much more than anybody else. 5) the sweetest and most significant word in the human voice is the sound of his own name. Everything else is "spinning" around the person himself, and he is the center of everything. It is better in dialogue with him therefore to pronounce his name. 6) it is important to smile. Everybody knows that the partner with an angry expression of the face does not contribute to success in any business. Nevertheless we persistently frown, realizing that stern expression is indicative of our determination, efficiency, although it is not correct. But even the negative decision should be drawn by a smile so that the partner would not suspect of bad will, and realize that there was simply no other way out; 7) it is advisable to use compliments. But it is difficult to do without knowing the partner, his peculiarities, better never resort to insults, screaming and stuff, but excessive praise and a blatant lie can seriously destroy business relationships.

Fulfillment of this term in practice contributes to the organization of special training with the aim to master the research and educational methods of cooperation: an appeal to the partner's interests which are important for cooperation; recognition of values and social and psychological support of the partner; different and objective suggestions for partner; an appeal to competent, authoritative intermediary; empathy; mutual complementary behavior of cooperation partners, etc. (Carnegie, 2008). It is found that the formation of research and educational cooperation is one of the peculiarities of university management (Kamasheva et al., 2016), as well as a tool of anti-corruption policies (Zamaletdinov et al., 2016).

***Experimental verification of the effectiveness of academic environment for formation of high school teacher's professional culture and competence***

Experimental verification carried out from 2014 to 2016 included 575 high school teachers of Kazan. Experimental verification took place in three phases: the ascertaining, controlling and forming.

The ascertaining phase involved the survey of teachers' opinion on the content of their professional culture competence, the overwhelming majority of which (89.0 %) considered that professional culture is a part of common culture. Most respondents, however, to the question of what is the teacher's professional culture did not give an answer (81.0 %) To this question the answer was given by some of them (24.0 %) and in their definition of the teacher's professional culture they included the following aspects: pedagogical knowledge applicable in practice (25.0 %), communicative abilities with students (8.0 %), self-control (8.0 %), and pedagogical expedient behavior (5.0 %).

The forming phase, paying attention to the results of the survey, contained a special curriculum on the organization of academic environment which was formed and realized for development of high school teachers' professional culture and competence. Taking into account the first term (self-prognosis and self-analysis of research and educational activity) the following things were organized: 1) special trainings; 2) business game; 3) counseling: group and individual. As for the second term (reflexive abilities' formation) the pedagogical lecture "High school teacher's competence" and special training sessions were conducted. The topic of one of the trainings is "Professional culture of the personality of the teacher. The training environment was limited by such boundaries: "the entity of research and educational activity", "subject of research and educational activity", "structure of research and educational activities." The training enabled to identify professional and significant qualities of the teacher (observation, memory types, creative thinking, environmental imagination, attentiveness, emotional stability, determination, endurance, flexibility, perseverance, devotion, discipline, self-control, and others). All these features were divided into groups, which justified four main teachers' professional types, "good-natured", "intellectual", "organizer" and "home." The third term (research and educational cooperation with other teachers) included: 1) round tables "The methods of personal and business conversation", "Group solutions of logic tasks"; 2) research-methodical seminar "Technology of establishing contacts and familiarization", "Organization of group discussions", "Estimation of a number of personality qualities and analysis of the behavior of the partner."

The control stage involved roundtables which enabled identifying functions of high school teachers' professional culture and competence: 1) Gnostic, implying the adequate understanding of research and educational activity; 2) integrative, ensuring integration of research and educational knowledge, abilities and skills of research and teaching activity; 3) organizational, contributing to teacher's effective planning of activities and their outcomes' forecasting; 4) communicative, which is manifested in the ability to build effective relationships with students and other teachers; 5) orienting, which is manifested in philosophical principles' development.

### **Discussions**

There is a definite system of knowledge in modern science, necessary and sufficient for the solutions' making to study the problem. Several areas of study are revealed which concern the formation of professional culture and competence of the high school teacher. The first aspect is characterized by the formation of teacher's profession-gram, which is identified by the content of theoretical knowledge of the teacher, the list of educational abilities and skills, the role of professional culture and competence (Blaga & Shabek, 1991; Gromkova, 1993 Zeer 2003; Lunev et al., 2016). In the studies of the reseachers of this direction the teacher's professional culture and competence is reduced to creative and professional activity, development and improvement of personal traits, individual qualities, as thinking, speech, memory, etc.

The second direction of researchers describes the structure of research and educational activity; reveal the educational aspect of the formation of high school teacher's professional culture and competence (Bondarevskaya, 1995; Fontana, 1986). This direction describes the teacher's professional culture as the accumulation by mankind of information about education, psychological processes which influence in the whole on all human life activity, including professional side.



The third direction of researchers is connected with the organization of teachers' training to enhance educational skills on the basis of improvement of the level of professional culture and competence (Babarshev, 1999; Noss, 2003; Sergeeva, 2002).

The fourth direction of researchers examines the teacher's professional culture and competence as a component to ensure the quality of educational services.

Despite the multifaceted nature and extensiveness of studies on the problem of the formation of professional culture and competence of the high school teacher, it is not understood as an integral personal development. It is believed that the teacher's professional culture and competence is the main factor in research and educational activities, defining position in science and pedagogical communication.

### **Conclusion**

The present stage of development of university education is characterized by the role of the teacher's professional culture and competence which is greatly increased. Professional culture is the basis of research and educational activity of the teacher, contributing not only to explaining and justifying theoretically educational facts and processes, but also determining scientifically justified methods of students' training, educating and development. Formation of professional culture and competence of the high school teacher is reasoned by the external (social and professional demands for teacher's personality) and internal (personal traits and characteristics that define teacher's willingness to research and educational activity) aspects. The efficiency of formation of high school teacher's professional culture and competence is improved, in conditions of organization of such academic environment including: self-prognosis and self-analysis of research and educational activities' achievements, the formation of reflexive abilities, research and educational cooperation with other teachers. Self-prognosis and self-analysis of research and educational activities' achievements ensures skills' formation: consistent comprehending the situation; taking into account the factors impacting the outcome; responding the changes of environmental cases; distinguishing knowledge from facts. Formation of reflexive abilities is connected with the inherent features of the research and educational activity. Formation of reflexive abilities ensures direction on the implementation of a given structure of research and educational activities; formation of abilities and skills to realize the inner world of the person, to think from the perspective of the student; development of willingness to define and analyze experienced professional difficulties and actualizing their personal meaning. Research and educational cooperation with other teachers creates skills of teaching improvisation (the ability quickly to find educational decisions and fulfill them; the ability to unite improvisation and planned; the ability to make the best educational solutions under time pressure, the ability flexibly to restructure educational aims and objectives as changing educational situation) target-setting in research and educational activity (ability to specify objectives, formulate actions and plans).

The study outcomes enables allocating of prospects for further research of the issues which are connected with the formation of methods of professional culture and competence of the high school teacher.

Paper submissions may be profitable for university heads and high school teachers, staff of continuous professional training and retraining centers for the selection and structuring of the content for continuous professional development of the high school teaching staff.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN LEARNING OF SAFE BEHAVIORAL MECHANISMS

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### Abstract

The study is relevant due to the values' reassessment and a new understanding of security problems in modern society resulting to the fact that security has acquired a complex structure, involving the security of the individual in the process of life and professional activity, natural environmental protection, national and global security. In this regard the paper is aimed at development of practical recommendations for university students in learning the mechanisms of safe behavior. The study involved 350 teachers, 450 students defining the criteria of efficient mechanisms for safe behavior. The main outcomes of the study is the formation of mechanisms to resist the negative information and psychological impacts (cognitive, emotional, behavioral) and mechanisms of self-protection implemented in the unconscious, the subconscious, the conscious levels. The importance of the obtained results consist in the fact that the formed mechanisms to resist negative information and psychological impacts contribute to the efficiency of behavior, achieved by specially organized activity to counter the threats and dangers and provide personal safety. Mechanisms of self-care ensure protection of the individual from the internal psychological discomfort or external psychological impacts; provide the formation and development of adequate information and a constructive basis of life activity.

**Keywords:** protection of the person, safe behavior, informational and psychological self-defense.

### Introduction

The study is relevant due to reassessment of values and a new understanding of security issues in modern society. Security has acquired a complex structure, consisting of the security of the individual in the process of life and professional activity, protection of natural environment, national and global security. Dictionaries describe the concept of "security" as a phenomenon which is connected not so much "with the lack of threat" but as a condition of human feelings and emotions. In the Great Dictionary of Russian language the security is defined as the absence

of threat and danger, safety (Kuznetsov, 2000), and the risk as the threat of disaster, unhappiness and catastrophe (Kuznetsov, 2000). So, for human the security is understood primarily as a sense of security from different kinds of threats. Security is one of the fundamental needs of the individual (Lunev & Pugacheva, 2014). Like physiological needs, A.G. Maslow (1959) believes, that wish may also dominate in the body. Desires may usurp the right to conduct behavior, subordinating all the possibilities of the body, aiming them to attain security, and in this case one can rightfully consider the body as a tool for providing security. And as in the case of physiological urge, one can say that the receptors, effectors, intelligence, memory, and all the others of individual's abilities are transformed in a given environment into the tool for security ensuring. As in the case of a hungry man, the main goal not only defines the perception of the individual, but also defines its philosophy of the future, philosophy of values. For such a person there is no more strong necessity than the need for security (sometimes even physiological needs, if they are satisfied, are regarded as minor, inconsequential). If this state gets extreme force, then we can say that the man thinks only about care, security: stability; protection; freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos; Law and order (Maslow, 1959). American psychologist K. Horney (1991) also notes that safety as one of the fundamental needs of the individual. K. Horney (1991) considers that to achieve security in the world the person uses one of the three fundamental strategies of interrelation with other people: direction on the people, from the people and against the people, where every strategy like the optimization of interpersonal interaction to achieve a sense of security in the world surrounded. Thus the effect of the strategy is to decrease the more or less acceptable life. Besides, every of them are accompanied by a definite fundamental focus in interaction with other personalities (Horney, 1991). The danger of terrorism requires a new look at security as a state of vital interests' defense of the individual, society and state from internal and external danger. Personality has become the main aim of security and direction for activity of state and public institutions, citizens (Tsygankov, 2010). But the person must be aware of the necessity for security, and to position itself as its entity, clearly predict the consequences of his or her acts (Tsyrdya & Ursul, 2016). The paper is aimed at development of practical advice for university students' learning of mechanisms of safe behavior.

### **Methodology**

Safety is a fundamental vital human need (Murray, 2007). The necessity of the individual to be secured is associated with the hazard and risk in the course of its life and professional activity. The threat of a danger for human is fear as emotional process of a definite subjective experience of the case in which calmness is under some threat. The danger is a casual nature of activity involving the uncertainty of its result and the possible unfavorable consequences in situation of fail (Schneier, 2003). So, the person can feel security on the basis of subjective cognitive and emotional estimation of the case as potentially uncertain and dangerous. (Horney, 2000). This evaluation is based on the natural signals of threat (danger, pain, loneliness) and the outcomes of a special form of learning (social borrowing). Development the mechanisms of safe behavior enables to be active in a dangerous world, and ensures security of the individual (Petrova et al., 2016). Man is an active social entity and all its vital activity is conscious. N.A. Abul Khanova-Slavskaya (1980), A.N. Leontjev (1975), A.V. Petrovsky & M.G. Yaroshevsky (2001) note that every human activity as the entity's activity involves those or other mental processes and is managed by them. Actually, the person acts as a regulator of its mental abilities and consciousness defines its quality (Pugacheva et al., 2016). That is why, it is believed that personal-activity-based approach serves like methodological base for the study of human protection issues. A set of methods was applied in the study process: theoretical (generalization and systematization, analysis and synthesis,), sociological (observation, questionnaires, interviews, expert estimation).

### **Results**

The main outcomes of this study consist of: 1) the individual's resisting mechanisms against negative information and psychological influence; 2) mechanisms for self-defense; 3) criteria for efficient development of the mechanisms of safe behavior.

## *Individual's resisting mechanisms against negative information and psychological cognitive, emotional and behavioral impacts*

Cognitive mechanisms involve: attention concentration, self-hypnosis, conscious self-control, informational integration, ideomotor training, self-monitoring, self-perception, self-awareness, the formation of sanus-genetic thinking, removing of the "lack of information», attitudes' change (Lunev & Pugacheva, 2014). Emotional mechanisms include: positive reassessment, creating of sensory images, search for support, muscular self-control, self-disclosure, autogenic training (Lunev & Pugacheva, 2013). Behavioral mechanisms are the following: confrontation, alienation, cooperation, competition, compromise, acceptability, avoidance, role play, de-individualization, self-individualization, self-presentation, social borrowing, self-identification (Lunev, Pugacheva & Stukolova, 2014).

It is supposed that the identity's mechanisms to resist the negative information and psychological influences result to the efficiency of coping with behavior of the individual in cases of negative information impacts. Person's "coping" with difficult life situations attracted the attention of science in the second half of the twentieth century. Primarily, the phenomenon of "coping behavior" was used in the psychology of stress and was identified as the sum of the cognitive and behavioral efforts expended by the individual to mitigate the impact of stress (Wasserman et al., 2009). Nowadays, the phenomenon of "coping behavior" has become a meta-subject. It is believed that coping behavior can be considered as a response. The response is understood as individual behavioral feature that describes the ways of human interrelation with the complex of situations, manifested either in the form of psychological security from unfavorable practice, either in the form of constructive activity of the person, directed on problems' solution. Response is a mediate part between stressful cases that occur, and their consequences, for example, in the form of psychological distress, anxiety, somatic disorders following protective behavior or characteristic for coping behavior delight and joy of happy problem solutions.

It is assumed that coping behavior is a deliberate change in the individual psycho-physiological functions and neuropsychological state as a whole, which is attained due to the organized mental activity, mediating choice of mechanisms to resist the negative influences of information and the acquisition of adequate information and a rude base of the personality's life and professional activity. Experts, considering the essence of coping behavior, use the phenomenon "coping strategies". By some theories of coping behavior basic strategies involve: search for social support; problem-solving; shunning. Experts on conflicts allocate three sides in which there is implementation of coping strategies: cognitive; emotional; behavioral. Kinds of behavioral coping strategies are based on their degree of adaptive capacity: adaptive, relatively adaptive and maladaptive. It is considered that if the coping behavior is the individual conscious strategies to resist the stress in accordance with their significance in the life and professional activity of the individual and psychological abilities of the individual, then the coping strategy is a set of emotional, cognitive, behavioral kinds of personality's activities aimed at resisting the threats and dangers and providing personal security.

## *Mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection, realized in the unconscious, the subconscious, the conscious level*

It is considered that the mechanisms for information-psychological self-protection are composed of structural and functional structure, providing defense of the individual from the internal psychological discomfort or external psychological influences, resulting to the preservation of psychological homeostasis and stability, causing the development and functioning of adequate information and a rude base of life and professional activity (Kara-Murza, 2008). These mechanisms are realized on three psychological levels. First is the unconscious level, which prevents a person from the negative emotional overload and involves instinctive reflex mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection. There are retro-mechanisms - retreat, self-closing, regression, stunning at this level (Nepomnyaschaya, 2001). Second is the a subconscious level, which secures the person from the perception of traumatic information, manipulative information influences, which result to a steady direction on coping

behavior and involves unconscious generalized mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection. There are mode-mechanisms at this level (from the Latin *modus* - image, view, measure, way) - repression, suppression, asceticism, escaping into virtual reality, nihilism, lock (Posokhova & Solovjev, 2008). Third is the the conscious level, providing the creation of strong-willed programs of information-psychological self-protection, and involves self-secure automatism (sets of stereotypically occurring mechanisms of information-psychological self-defense in typical situations - aggression, desacralization, projection, idealization, humor, emotional burnout, transformation, depreciation) developed in the course of information activities, and logical-semantic mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection (identification, inversion, rationalization, role play, intellectualization, introjections, compensation). So, based on the psychological levels of realization of information-psychological mechanisms of self-protection, retro-mechanisms are defined (the unconscious level), modus-mechanisms (sub-conscious level) and volitional mechanisms (the conscious level) (Konopkin, 2008).

### *Criteria for efficient development of the mechanisms of safe behavior*

The criteria have been identified by written survey of 350 teachers, 450 students from Kazan State Architectural University. The survey revealed the teachers' and students' attitude to self-management in safe behavior. It revealed that 81% of teachers define the self-government in safe behavior as the capability to provide confidence and stability and the protection from the threats and dangers. 79% of the students define the self-government of safe behavior as self-protection abilities and skills from different risks and threats. According to the students, this is manifested in: activity in the enterprise that ensures its employees with social guarantees; trying to make savings for "rainy day"; the availability of various kinds of insurance (medical, pension insurance, insurance against job loss or disability). Teachers' and students' survey demonstrates the criteria for efficient mechanisms of self-government of safe behavior: the ability to estimate the situation as potentially dangerous, knowledge of the mechanisms of self-government in safe behavior; capability to use mechanisms of self-government in safe behavior; the desire to be safe, to avoid risks.

### **Discussions**

Studies which are dedicated to the issue of self-government of safe behavior contain the information that description of protection implies a basic human need and in this aspect it is given in the works of A.H. Maslow (1959), K. Horney (1991), H.L. Murray (2007). In the studies of B. Schneier (2003), a process of risk perception is studied; in the studies of G.G. Verbina (2013), N.S. Yefimova (2010) the phenomenon of "psychological protection of the person" is scientifically justified. Mechanisms of protection in social conflicts are studied in the works of G.V. Grachov (1998), A.V. Manoilo, (2003) F.N. Tsyrdya & A.D. Ursul (2016). The content of information-psychological security of the person, as a condition of care of his or her mind from the action of diverse information aspects that hamper social behavior of the person is revealed in the studies of V.S. Grekhnev (2006), G.B. Parshukova (2006), L.A. Pronina (2008). In the works of O.A. Konopkin (2005) the description of psychic self-regulation is presented, as the independent making of interrelated solutions, the realization of the consolidated sequence (Konopkin, 2005; Konopkin, 2008). Studies of L.I. Antsyferova (1994) consider the dynamics of consciousness and actions of personality in difficult life situations as the outcome of mental processing by the individual of evils of life from their own standpoint, only partially accepted "theory" of the world. The essence of coping-behavior is the subject of investigations of a whole group of researchers (Folkman, Schaefer & Lazarus, 1979; Lasarus & Folkman, 1984; Moss & Schaefer, 1986; Ebata & Moos, 1991; Bouchard, Guillemette & Landry-Leger, 2004; Brown, Westbrook & Challagalla, 2005; Lasarus, 2006; Ivanov & Garanyan, 2010). Analysis of the studies of the above mentioned researchers demonstrate that in the sphere of protection among instincts a significant role belongs to the attitude to the situation. In extreme circumstances, the necessity for protection acts as an active force, prompting the body to mobilize all resources to cope with the danger. Besides, the mechanisms of self-government of safe behavior are not generalized; interrelationship between the individual attitudes to the security and willingness

development to safe life and professional activity, destroying of threats or its decreasing to an acceptable level are not developed.

### Conclusion

It is established that the protection of the person, as a possibility to live, without exposing themselves to various threats and danger, is highly estimated in human society. This results to the direction of the individual on personal protection as a public good, which is a combination of material and spiritual values. It is revealed that the mechanisms of self-government of safe behavior involve mechanisms to resist the negative information and psychological influence and mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection. Mechanisms for individual's resisting the negative information and psychological impacts integrate psychological mechanisms of self-regulation, promoting the effectiveness of coping behavior as purposeful change in individual psycho-physiological functions and neuropsychological condition as a whole, which is attained by a specially organized mental activity, mediated by the choice of methods for secure of consciousness from the negative information impacts and formation of adequate information and a rude base of life and professional activity. Mechanisms of information-psychological self-care include: (1) retro-mechanisms defending from negative emotional overload and activating instinctive reflex mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection; 2) mode-mechanisms that defend against the acceptance of traumatic information, manipulative information influences, resulting to a steady direction on coping behavior and activating generalized unconscious mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection 3) volitional mechanisms, activating self-care automatisms and logical-semantic mechanisms.

It is revealed that the mechanisms to resist the negative information and psychological influences and mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection are dialectically connected. The interrelation is defined by their functions in the process of self-government of safe behavior. Mechanisms for resisting negative information and psychological impacts fulfill a compensatory function. Mechanisms of information-psychological self-protection play a de-compensatory function. Coping behavior is applied as a strategy for actions of the individual, directed on addressing the situation of psychological danger. This results to two responses: to threats and dangers: problem-directed (problem-oriented) (a rational analysis of the problems connected with the creation and realization of a plan to solve it, the application of coping strategies) and subjectively directed (emotion-oriented) (emotional reaction to a situation that is not followed by concrete actions, the use of mechanisms of information -psychological self-protection). Preference in response depends on the particular threat or danger.

Within the results one can determine a number of scientific problems for identity's protection management that demand further solution: the impact of individual-typological characteristics of the person on the protection of their behavior; selection and structuring of educational material on safe behavior.

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ALLEN

## PEDAGOGICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR STUDENTS' TOLERANT BEHAVIOR DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

The study allocates the relevance of the issue necessitating students' knowledge of humanistic values for their integration with society. The paper aims at the development of students' tolerant behavioral instruments. The leading approach to the study is the activity-based, contributing to students' involving in the chain of activities that give rise to their being conscious of the sense of tolerance and oriented on development of tolerant behavioral abilities. 350 teachers and 475 students participated in the experiment, the participation of which enabled to define knowledge, motivation and activity-based criteria and gave the description to the levels of students' optimal, efficient and acceptable tolerant behavior. The study's significant outcomes was to develop the pedagogical instruments for students' tolerant behavior development: the creation of a special activity-based space, personal development of tolerant behavior of students, organizing of situations of progress in constructing and realization strategies for sustainable interrelation based on religious, cultural and ethnic differences, the use of implicit tools; stability of intergroup tolerant behavior. The obtained outcomes' importance is that the defined instruments ensure: 1) the development of cognitive aspects on tolerant behavior and orientation on tolerance; 2) development of the evaluative orientation to the honor and dignity of the individual, the rights and freedoms of individual and citizen, mutual understanding and interrelation with environment; 3) formation of abilities and skills of tolerant behavioral in different situations.

**Keywords:** tolerance, the activity-based approach, tolerant behavior, education of students.

### Introduction

The study allocates the relevance of the issue necessitating students' knowledge of humanistic values for their integration with society. Humanistic values contributing to engaging in dialogue with society make up the content of tolerant behavioral qualities (Maslovskaya, 2009). She considers that tolerance is consistent integrity of individual abilities and qualities, providing the development of orientation on the social norms' accumulation and realization for mutual understanding and interrelation with the environment and the development of willingness for recognizing, sustainability and aware activities on the base of social partnership and consensus. The structure of the tolerant behavior involves the following constituent parts:

1) subjectivity, expressing the qualities' integrity, focus, personality's values and mediating interpretation of tolerance as a quality of the individual, personal ability (Skvortsov, 1997); 2) sociability, reflected in norms of social and sustainable behavior and enabling to consider tolerance as a social pattern (Zinoviev, 1998); 3) educability, ensuring by a process of purposeful impact on the individual to develop an active-efficient state of acceptance, as of the environment, and so themselves, and enabling to consider tolerance as willingness, personal focus (Zolotukhin, 1999). Tolerant behavior is not only an integrity of different qualities (subjectivity, sociability, educability), but the integrated dynamic system, which is the synergetic unity of qualities, orientations, attitudes, values, active-effective states of the individual, abilities and social patterns, to direct a common idea of humanism and freedom. Between the components of tolerant behavior different structural and casual and as well as other dependencies are developed which enable to allocate the sense-developing side of the conception of tolerant behavior, as tolerance (Korableva, 2013). Allocation of education as a important public good and targeting process of training and education, realized in the interests of the person, the family, society and the state is one of the main reasons of the educational community's interest in the issues of tolerant behavior (Pugacheva, Lunev & Stukolova, 2014). The paper is aimed at identifying the pedagogical instruments of students' tolerant behavior development.

### **Methodology**

The leading approach to the study is the activity-based, contributing to students' involving in the chain of activities that give rise to their being conscious of the sense of tolerance and oriented on development of tolerant behavioral abilities. The concept of "activity" is close to the concept "event" which became widespread after the publication of the famous scientific work of Heidegger "Being and Time" (Haidigger, 2013). The meaning of "being" Heidegger defines by explaining the meaning of the questioner, that is, human beings, identified as "being here", "here-being", "pure availability to appropriate concepts" and described by the initial being, belonging to the being (Gritsanov, 1998). Besides, the being becomes acceptable only due to the human presence, which is characterized by finite time, "existent being" (Haidigger, 2013). The fourth chapter of the study "Being and Time"- "Being-in-the-world as an event and being self" Heidegger devotes to the fact that being is co-existence with others. Heidegger considers that the event is an existential-ontological orientation, some way of being. Heidegger does not limit the event spatially and timely, it is neither incident nor the case, not every-day event which is limited spatially and timely, and determined with the totality, closeness, rigidly specified by internal and external boundaries. Heidegger describes the event as a source of life and time, "the leading word of one's thinking" (Haidigger, 2013). It is believed that the event - is multifaceted and can be considered as a component of qualitative process, the social system's aspect, the condition for external interrelations, fact of reality, social determinants. The event's essence may involve a dialectical interrelation of these values, which are reflected in the human activities, values, orientations and estimations (Krylova & Zhilina, 2010). The person is the entity of the event, is the carrier of social norms, social interrelations, social interactions, social roles and statuses. The man is inside the existence and his orientations as the subject of the activity carry the co-existential expressions in the continuously changed by him himself the world. In its activity the person is not only manifested but also developed, determined and created. (Rubinstein, 1989) That is why, activity-based nature and is identified by as the approach for students' tolerant behavior development, as it enables to find the meaning of tolerance through co-existence of educational process's entities. The Russian scientific and pedagogical ideas of activity-relatedness as an aspect of the educational process are developed in works of M.I. Rozhkov (2011), L.M. Abolin & K.K. Valiakhmetov (2002). In the study of O.V. Bochkareva (2008), the activity is considered as a co-existence; instrument for individual's resistance to the isolation of life spheres, resulting to self-development; a necessary phase of existence, the interrelation between understandings of "I" and "Other" (human, nature and society). Thus, as the guiding base of activity-relatedness the existential principle acts to the explaining of human existence, its inner world, interrelations with others and the environment.

The study included the following methods: theoretical (generalization and systematization, analysis and synthesis,); sociological (observation, interviews, questionnaires) (Terentyeva, Pugacheva & Lunev, 2015).

### **Results**

The study involve the following outcomes 1) the instruments for tolerant behavior development (the creation of a special activity-based environment, personality-role development of tolerant behavior, development of situations of progress in constructing and realization of strategies for sustainable interaction based on religious, cultural and ethnic differences, the use of implicit tools; stability of intergroup tolerant behavior) and 2) the experimental verification.

### ***Instruments for tolerant behavior development***

The explanatory dictionary of the Russian language describes the instrument as the internal structure of the object (Prokhorov, 2003). The concept "mechanism" in the last decade is widely spread in educational research. In her thesis of I.V. Ryzhkova (2009) as one of the aims of the study considers the essence of pedagogical instrument and discovers pedagogical tools to enhance future teachers' pedagogical training for vocational training implementing in technical high school. She suggests understanding the selection by teachers of acceptable tools, methods, forms, techniques of vocational training, ensuring the solution to specific educational issues in teaching these instruments (Ryzhkova, 2009). It is advisable to rely on this interpretation of the pedagogical instruments. It is revealed that the students' tolerant behavioral instruments' development involve: 1) the creation of a special activity-based space (contests, promotions, project competitions) (Zamaletdinov et al., 2016); 2) personal and role-based formation of tolerant behavior in the educational process (speaker, observer, organizer, lecturer, expert, / researcher, assistant, adviser, participant of public movement,) (Yepaneshnikov et al., 2016); 3) the development of situations of progress in constructing and realization of strategies for sustainable professional interrelation paying attention to religious, cultural and ethnic differences (Petrova et al., 2016); 4) the application of implicit tools in the students' personal-significant sense development of tolerant behavior and the capability for sustainability and conscious actions on the base of social partnership and consensus (capability to listen to students and to respect their opinion, respect for the student's honor and dignity, respectful attitude to the students, the friendly tone in communication, the ability of the teacher to admit if he or she is wrong, a sincere recognition of the students' achievements; an expression of approval on the slightest progress of students, the ability to establish contact; properly protect their point of view in the debate; the ability to manage their own emotional condition) (Pugacheva et al., 2016); 5) development of a stable inter-group tolerant behavior (possession of interrelation skills, recognition of individual differences and methods of individualization, universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, mutual respect of interests, values, orientations, attitudes, significance of individual qualities that provide prevention and efficient resolution of conflicts in the process of professional activities and training) (Lunev & Pugacheva, 2013).

It is revealed that these instruments of tolerant behavior development ensure: 1) mutual understanding, trust and consolidation of teachers and students; 2) the establishment of tolerant relations in student groups, which define the development of individual qualities (Merlin, 1979).; 3) tolerant interrelation and communication of the person in a definite social space, which identifies the dynamics of its properties, qualities, focus, orientations; 4) development of students qualities, attitudes, properties and values which are necessary for tolerant behavior through interpersonal estimation (Andreeva, 2000).; 5) the development of the experience of tolerant behavior by assimilation a complex of communication situations and types of activities (Andreeva, 2000).

The study established: 1) the efficiency of students' involvement in the variety of activities that encourage the consciousness of a sense of tolerance and directed on the development of the unity of individual qualities, attitudes, values, orientations and ability to tolerate behavior is enhanced if to insure their subjective importance; 2) – the performance of activity-relatedness in the development of tolerant behavior is improved if to ensure the co-creation of values and

important interrelationship of all the entities of the educational process; 3) the efficiency of the educational and professional activity is improved if to ensure eventual mutual impact of entities of educational process on the base of values and worldviews on tolerance.

### *Experimental verification of the instruments' efficiency for development of tolerant behavior*

Experimental verification of the study was conducted from 2014 to 2016 in ascertaining, forming and controlling stages (Lunev, Pugacheva & Terentyeva, 2015). The experiment included 350 teachers, 475 students from the Southern Federal University (Rostov-on-Don, Russia), which discovered the criteria and gave characteristics to the levels of students' tolerant behavior.

The purpose of ascertaining phase was to determine criteria of students' tolerant behavior: knowledge, motivation and the activity-based. In the formative phase a special program for the realization of instruments for development of tolerant behavior was fulfilled. As a constituent part of a special activity-based space the following events were organized: 1) professional skills' competition, a competition for the best orientation wall-newspaper "tolerant behavior"; 2) students' participation in activities "Give Children Hope", "Generations' interrelation," "Under the flag of good will"; 3) "Flowers on the grave of veterans of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)"; Talk with the imam -Khatib from the mosque - "Memory" and the governor of the Monastery of the Mother of God; some sports events. The testing of personal-role development of tolerant behaviors' models by cadets was implemented by the realization of socially-directed youth projects, students' participation in the activities of youth associations, youth forums speeches. They included for example, 4 November all Russia celebrates a national holiday, National Unity Day. On this day in 1612 the People's Militia soldiers led by Kuzma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky liberated the country from the invaders, and demonstrated the example of heroism and unity of all people, regardless of origin, social and religion status. November 4, 2016, students held a rally "WE are united!", protecting the idea of unity in our country. To develop the students' situations of progress in constructing and realization strategies for sustainable professional interrelation the following activities were implemented: gifting of "thank-you" letters to students' parents; awarding scholarships (a special state scholarship of the Russian Government, scholarship of the President of the Russian Federation, and others). To check the implicit tools: methodical seminars for teachers, discussions with the students, discussions with students and teachers were specifically conducted. To provide the sustainability of intergroup tolerant behavior the lectures and discussions, special training sessions were held on the self-organization of the daily routine, psycho-techniques on passing testing and examinations, psycho-correction sessions, individual counseling for mental stress's reducing.

To achieve the aim of the control stage the characteristics of the optimal, efficient and acceptable levels of students' tolerant behavior were prepared based on the identified criteria. The optimal level notes that personality-important sense of tolerance is developed as the base of social and professional interrelations paying attention to religious, cultural and ethnic differences, prevention and constructive resolution of conflict situations in life and professional activities; consciousness of the value and normative imperatives of life and professional activity; established value orientations on the understanding, responsibility, rule of law, the life, honor and human dignity, security, legal human security, peace in the country and the world; capability to exercise social and psychological stability in difficult and extreme terms; willingness for understanding and working with environment, regardless of origin, language, nationality, gender, race, property and official status, convictions, membership of public associations, place of residence, attitude to religion. The efficient level implies that the person can tolerate socio-cultural differences between people; knows how to use the ways of emotional and cognitive regulation to optimize one's own activity and psychological state, however, content-semantic peculiarities of tolerance are not updated as values and social civil society norms and standards, and valuable orientation to life, honor and dignity of every person, regardless of its religious, cultural and ethnic characteristics are not formed. Acceptable level demonstrates that the person recognizes the significance of professional and sustainable

behavior; valuable orientation to justice, the rule of law, peace in the country and the world are generated; possesses the abilities and skills of social and psychological stability in situations of threats; understands the responsibility for realization the duty in accordance with the competences of law enforcement agencies; but the sense of tolerant interaction is not realized, the tolerant behavior as social norm of civil society is not considered enough.

### **Discussions**

The study of literature demonstrates the presence of a theoretical framework for the issue of study. Philosophers identify the content of tolerance, in the first place, as a rule of entity's legal conduct, described by ideological and psychological openness, resilience and courage at a determined choice or adoption of any decision, orderliness and responsibility; as a moral approach guiding human activity and developing a special type of philosophy; as a practical instrument to resolve contradictions and conflicts efficiently (Zolotukhin, 2001). Secondly, tolerance is considered a principle of culture and it is noted that it should be a tool to attain a humane existence (Magomedova, 2000). Psychologists believe that tolerance is expressed as an enhancement of the sensitive focus to the subject by using the patience and decision-making instruments (empathy, assertiveness, understanding) (Kleptsova, 2001). The materials for the training of tolerance consider the category as an integral description of the individuals, which identifies their ability in crisis and problem situations actively to interrelate with the environment in order to restore their psychic and mental equilibrium, to attain positive adaptation, avoid confrontations and to form successful relationships with themselves and the environment (Soldatova, Shaigerova & Sharova, 2001). Works of political scientists treat the tolerance as a factor of world political development, for overcoming of the conflicts in the world and reduce the risk of threats (Olinichenko, 2004). V.A. Vasilyev (2000) considers tolerance as a moral and political phenomenon, defines it as the most significant democratic rule and a base of successful relationships between people in a society in which all citizens equally are responsible in front of the law, and justifies its attitude in the context of "intolerance" - its opposite category. M. Waltser (2000) notes that tolerance ensures the very life of diverse communities. The Russian pedagogy determines tolerance as the patience to different views, habits, and customs and as the individual's ability to tolerate adverse impacts of a definite environmental factor (Vishnyakova, 1999). It is revealed that the development of the set of concepts of tolerance is implemented through the category of sustainability and the need to maintain the approval of pluralism in modern society. We consider that tolerance is a common cultural competence, which possesses a consistent integrity of the traits and abilities of the personality, providing the development of orientation on the accumulation and realization of the social norm of mutual understanding and interrelation with the environment and the development of willingness for acceptance, sustainability and conscious activity on the base of social partnership and consensus.

### **Conclusion**

Development of tolerant behavior is a non-linear process which involves: 1) purposeful regulation of the orientations' development on the models of tolerant behavior (education); 2) the formation of cognitive representations of tolerant behavior and understanding of tolerant behavior's opportunities (self-education); 3) instruments for development of tolerant behavior (the creation of a special activity- based space, personality-role development of tolerant behavior, conducting situations of progress in constructing and realization of strategies for sustainable interrelation based on religious, cultural and ethnic differences, the application of implicit tools; stability of intergroup tolerant behavior).

It is revealed that the instruments for development of tolerant behavior result to: 1) consciousness of the values of tolerant behavior by students as a social norm; 2) formation of skills of tolerant behavior due to the productive application of their own resources; 3) enhancement of the traits, attitudes, values of the individual resulting to the formation of skills of psychological stability; 4) interiorization of experience of tolerant behavior; 5) the harmony of spiritual and moral, civic and patriotic personally important meaning and value -regulatory imperatives of life and professional activity (rule of law, civic duty, cooperation).

The research results enable allocating of prospects for further study of the problems that are connected with the development of methods to form students' tolerant behavior. Paper Submissions may be profitable for university heads and professors; staff of continuous professional training and retraining centers in the selection and structuring of the content of continuous professional education for university teaching staff.

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## METHODS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' READINESS FORMATION FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

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### Abstract

The study is relevant due to unfavorable dynamics of students' health and the necessity of preventive mechanisms' using to form their readiness for a healthy lifestyle. Health is a resource of social capital which is necessary to adapt to new socio-economic conditions for person. The paper is aimed at identifying methods for university students' readiness formation for a healthy lifestyle. The guiding principle to the study is the integrative one which enables to consider a healthy lifestyle as a complicated multifaceted category, which accumulates a variety of qualitatively varied constituent parts and express the basic phenomena of human life activity. The study includes 350 teachers, 450 students who have determined the criteria for readiness for a healthy lifestyle among young people (consciousness of health's relevance, assimilation of abilities and skills of accumulation and preservation of their own health, physical development, understanding the necessity for a healthy lifestyle, respect for the protection of other persons' health). Core conclusions are scientific verification for preventive methods as the base to form students' readiness for a healthy lifestyle; defining of cognitive and informative, health and fitness, preventive and prophylactic methods of university students' readiness formation for a healthy lifestyle. The importance of the obtained outcomes is that preventive methods are scientifically proved tools which prevent from the occasions of pedagogical deviations and contribute to finding resources to address them.

**Keywords:** preventive methods, readiness to a healthy lifestyle, health and fitness.

### Introduction

The study is relevant due to unfavorable dynamics of students' health and the necessity of preventive mechanisms' using to form their readiness for a healthy lifestyle. Health is a resource of social capital which is necessary to adapt to new socio-economic conditions for person. (Constitution of the World Health Organization, 2016). Health is not just the absence of illness, but a complex of physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being of the individual (Information Bulletin of the World Health Organization number 345, 2016). The phenomenon of "healthy lifestyle" involves observance of physiologically optimal regime of activity and

relaxation, good nutrition, a sufficient level of physical activity, observance of the rules of personal and public hygiene, environmental protection, profitable for the person leisure activities, observance of the rules of Mental Health (Kalju, 1988). There is a necessity for modern universities of the guiding principles of students' readiness formation for a healthy lifestyle. To implement these principles in the process of readiness formation for a healthy lifestyle one can consider two methods. First, within the realization of external socio-cultural terms of human life activity and necessity of healthy life-style as a condition of physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being of the individual (Bulich & Muravov, 2003). Second, within the realization of the internal terms connected with human responsibility for the existence of the integrity of his existence (Bezrukikh, 2004). This results to preventive nature of the phenomenon of students' willingness development for a healthy lifestyle and its orientation on assimilation of theoretical knowledge about health and healthy lifestyles, formation of abilities and skills of preservation and accumulation of their own health, physical formation, healthy lifestyle, prevention and adjustment of physical health of the person (Litvinova, 2004). The paper is aimed at identifying of methods of university students' willingness formation for a healthy lifestyle.

### **Study methodology**

The guiding principle to the study is the integrative one which enables to consider a healthy lifestyle as a complicated multifaceted category, which accumulates a variety of qualitatively varied constituent parts and express the basic phenomena of human life activity. The human body is a complicated multi-dimensionally-organized dynamic system. In this system, health is a social and cultural aspect that determines the life-style of the person (ideal), able not only of living within a definite culture, but also supporting it with its vital functions and well-being attainment (Kazin, Blinova, & Litvinova, 2000). Integrative principle in the identification of the category "healthy lifestyle", the reasons and tools for its development, preservation and enhancement are described in many studies (Shchedrina, 1989; Guvakov, 1991; Lisitsyn, 1992). The integrative principle allow involving in the category "healthy lifestyle" in accordance with physiologically optimal mode of activity and relaxation, good nutrition, a sufficient level of physical activity, accordance with the order of personal and public hygiene, environmental protection, profitable for the individual leisure activities, accordance with the rules of Mental Health. It is evident that the disturbance of at least one of these parts do not have only a negative influence on human health, but also can decrease to "no" the efforts to preserve and enhance it. So, the issues of a healthy lifestyle go far beyond public health borders and need an integrative principle to its solving (Groisman, 1998). The phenomenon "healthy lifestyle" has been actively seen in researches on different scientific studies. This is due to the fact that the category is relevant as for life, and so for scientific field. Besides, there are new sides of scientific field - preventive pedagogy, the psychology of health (Groisman, 1998; Nikiforov, 2002; Zenova, 2006). The study relied on the following methods: theoretical (generalization and systematization, analysis and synthesis); sociological (interviews, questionnaires, observation, expert estimation).

### **Study Results**

The study results include: 1) scientific verification for preventive pedagogy as the base of willingness development for healthy lifestyle; 2) instruments of university students' willingness development for a healthy lifestyle: cognitive and informative, sports and health, preventive and prophylactic 3) experimental justification of their efficiency.

### ***Preventive pedagogical base***

Pedagogy developed as the scientific branch of education. However, little by little its influence was broadened and nowadays pedagogy has become a system of scientific knowledge (Lunev & Pugacheva, 2013). One constituent part of this system has become preventive pedagogy. In Russia, the origin of preventive pedagogy is connected with famous Russian researcher I.Y. Lerner (1991). I.Y. Lerner (1991), considers that pedagogy is not engaged in important issue of how the university can level the shortcomings of social impact, the moral atmosphere in education of the younger generation? The educational content by I.Y. Lerner (1991) was formed in dependence on the policy, without paying attention to the students' needs; Humanities were

based on ideological principles. The aim of the educational science, I.Y. Lerner (1991) saw in development a preventive pedagogy, which could prevent the opportunities of pedagogical deflection and define measures of their solving. Nowadays preventive pedagogy is developing actively. Its main task is the research of ways to prevent social abnormality and to teach methods of healthy lifestyle. The preventive pedagogy considers health as an integrative category, in the view of which the health involves three aspects: spiritual, mental and physical. The first two parts are combined by the phenomenon of "mental health", which by its very nature is represented in cultural and historical aspect. That is why, due to integrative ideas about health, the methods which prevent deviant behavior and develop a focus on healthy lifestyle are very important (Antonova, Shulga & Erdyneeva, 2004).

*Methods to develop willingness for a healthy lifestyle*

There are three kinds of methods to develop readiness for a healthy lifestyle: cognitive and information, preventive and prophylactic, health and fitness. Cognitive-informational method is aimed at acquiring of knowledge on health, healthy lifestyles and illness prevention. The consciousness of knowledge about health and healthy life-style serve as the base of life (Shchedrina, 1989). This awareness occurs in the process of one's "feeling" and emotional "experience", is acquired during the implementation of definite health-preserving exercises and health-developing actions. It ensures personal importance of assimilated knowledge, their awareness and form subjective valuable attitude of the individual to health and healthy life-style. Emotional attitude forms the foundation, on the basis of which the needs and motivation are developed that define willingness for a healthy lifestyle, the capability of the individual's development, ability to analyze their own behavior in the social and natural environment, carry out objective self-estimation, and fulfill practical implementation of health-creating thinking (Shepel, 2006). The process of mastering knowledge on health, healthy lifestyles, illness prevention leads to the students' interest in literature about health and healthy life-style, in various methods for body's healing and strengthening, in the interrelationship of human life and the biosphere, and the dependence of physical and mental health from environmental terms, experience of healthy lifestyles, the continuity of traditions, developing respect for the individual's health, the value of every human life (Korotkova & Pugacheva, 2011). Cognitive information methods: talks, lectures, debates, almanacs' publication, and the like contribute to it.

Health and fitness methods are aimed at the development of abilities and skills of preservation and the accumulation of their own health, physical enhancement and methods of a healthy lifestyle's development. Due to this group of ways the students' system of hygienic abilities and skills is formed which is necessary for normal functioning of the body (care of one-self, clothing, place of residence, environment, daily routine, diet, prevention of harmful habits and illnesses, mental hygiene). Students master the means of activities in order to improve their motor activity, physical inactivity's prevention, hardening of the body, high adaptive capacity (Bulich & Muravov, 2003). But, nowadays students keep to a sedentary lifestyle, sitting at the computers for a long time. So, consequently there is a lack of physical exercise, which is not just a lack of movement, but the kind of illness, resulting to the destruction of the body's functions (supporting - motor apparatus, blood circulation, respiration, digestion and etc.). Studies demonstrate that modern students mostly experience "motor deficit", i.e. the quantity of movements made by them during the day is below their age norm and all their time students spend in a static position, which increases the burden on certain groups of muscles and leads their exhaustion. This decreases the power and effectiveness of skeletal muscles, which result to a distortion of posture, violation of the spine, flattening of feet and height development delay (Naumenko, 2004). Students' flexibility, agility and coordination, strength, speed, overall hardness of their body are decreased. Physical inactivity leads to the formation of metabolic disorders and excessive deposition of fat, resulting to various diseases. The study demonstrates that, 68% of students suffer from the consequences of inactive life, 30 - 39% - are overweight. Injuries happen often among such students, they catch cold 3 - 5 times more often and myopia is found among 42% of students, 25% of students have an increased blood pressure (Golikov,

2000). Besides the formation of the organism is impacted negatively by excessive exercise also, especially it occur among debilitated students, which results to strain of all body systems, a decreasing resistance to infections. That is why, one must not only learn to identify students' individual motor mode, leading to the enhancement of the functioning of the organism as a source of healthy lifestyles, but also to ensure a custom mode in an educational institution (Lunev, Pugacheva & Stukolova, 2014a). There is a lack of individual approach to the students' teaching at physical training lessons and in extracurricular kinds of mass sports work, and this circumstance puts all the students in the conditions of uniform demands without paying attention to the limits in physical abilities and leads to big damage of their personal formation. Some guys being afraid of failure demonstrate a protective reaction of protest or try to avoid physical activity. Therefore, sports and health practices should be oriented to the formation of personally significant life skills that improve overall performance; skills of personal and public hygiene; enhancing physical condition, the formation of common physical training, improving the volume and diversity of kinds of physical activity, based on the identification of the students' individual motor mode and differentiation of educational standards in compliance with the level of their formation.

The preventive and prophylactic methods are aimed at the development of students' motivational-valuable focus to health and a healthy lifestyle (Bezrukikh, & Son'kina, 2003). Values are developed by the students as a result of awareness of their needs in connection with the opportunities of satisfying them, i.e., as a result of the valuable attitude. Valuable attitude arises after his discovering for himself the difficulties of satisfying the arising needs. The more difficult is the possibility to meet different needs, the more important is the value of this or that thing. Valuable attitude is a necessary aspect of the value orientation, activity and interrelationships, which are manifested in the value attitude. Health is considered to be a natural and absolute value and scientists define three levels to describe the value of health: personal, biological, social. Health is not an end in itself but a necessary condition for the complete nature of the exercise of human life goals and values (Leontjev, 2003). Preventive pedagogy replaces the center of issues from the development of students' knowledge, abilities and skills on the holistic formation of the individual. These conditions contribute to the increase of social and educational importance of students' valuable attitude to the development of health, a healthy lifestyle, the accumulation of knowledge on the prevention of disease, which define further full implementation of their life goals and meanings (Naumenko, 2006). The purpose of modern education is training of professionals ready to learn throughout their life, able of self-organization and competitiveness in the labor market of modern society (Lunev, Pugacheva & Stukolova, 2014b). In the socio-economic practice, it is expressed in the human commitment to physical, mental and social well-being, aware attitude to their health as a source of and a necessary condition for optimum life activity and long-term activity in all spheres of life and professional activity (Kamasheva et al., 2016). A modern graduate of the university is a practice-oriented specialist whose set of knowledge, abilities and skills enables administrative and technical support of the production management processes, complex technical, technological and information systems, participation in their design and introduction (Petrova et al., 2016). The process of development of valuable attitude to health and healthy life-style comes through self-knowledge, self-preservation, self-development of the individual, through the harmonization of human interrelationship with environment, other people, and nature, through continuous spiritual and moral quest (Akhmetov et al., 2016). To manage their health, first of all, people should change their value orientation to it, take responsibility for their own health, accumulate the necessary amount of knowledge, and realize themselves as entities of health-developing activities. And only keeping these conditions will enable most fully understanding the intended aims, use their mental and physical abilities in this process (Meshcheryakov & Rožhnov, 2006). Preventive-prophylactic ways involve preventive vaccination, fortification, tempering, healthy catering, gym, physiotherapy, herbal medicine, aromatherapy, massage and etc.

### *Experimental verification of the efficiency of the methods for readiness development on a healthy lifestyle*

Experiment was carried out from 2013 to 2016 and was attended by 350 teachers, 450 students from research universities of Kazan (Russia). Experimental verification was conducted in ascertaining forming and controlling stages (Lunev, Pugacheva & Terentyeva, 2015). In ascertaining stage a special program for the realization of the determined methods was created. In the forming stage this program was realized. An elective course "Healthy lifestyle and prevention of bad habits" was created and implemented to test the cognitive-informational methods. To test the efficiency of health and fitness methods the students' individual regime was defined; group and individual physical training lessons were conducted. To test the efficiency of preventive and prophylactic methods a set of sanitary and hygienic conditions of the educational process was prepared, which involved demands for the constructing, natural and artificial lighting, air-thermal regime, equipment of rooms, regime of life activity, daily and weekly training load, regime of students' hygienic training, catering, premises catering, equipment and organization of classes in computer rooms. The control stage included students' and teachers' written survey on their readiness criteria for a healthy lifestyle which identified: consciousness of the health priority; presence of abilities and skills of preservation and accumulation of their own health, physical improvement; realizing of the necessity for a healthy lifestyle; respect for the preservation of the health of other persons.

### **Discussion**

The issue of readiness development for a healthy lifestyle is described in many studies (Pugacheva, Lunev, & Stukolova, 2014, Antonova, Shulga & Erdyneeva, 2004; Bezrukikh 2004, Litvinova, 2004; Golikov, 2000). It is revealed that researchers have unilateral attitude to the concept "healthy lifestyle", and it is essentially reduced to hygiene program of human life. This limitation of social and medical aspects on healthy living, the terms of its development and formation can be avoided if the analysis of the category "healthy lifestyle" involves social and philosophical ideas. More close context and more in-depth content is given to the health issues in the socio-cultural conception of public health activity by V.I. Guvakov (1991), who considers that organized public health activity is a form of social management. A distinctive peculiarity of the traditional areas of public health activity, according to V.I. Guvakov (1991), is the development of health concepts on the base of mutual combination of medical and biological knowledge and orientation on the person as an entity of activity. The social and cultural changes in the beginning of the XXI century demanded the health concepts' direction on a man as the entity of public health activity and the insufficiency of medical and biological knowledge and the necessity in transition to the social and psychological views is naturally revealed. Social and cultural health standards in the cultural and historical context are clearly demonstrated in studies of O.S. Vasiljeva & F.R. Filatov (2001). They consider the social and cultural standards of health as conceptual schemes or methods to describe human life activity arising in specific social practices. Their study enables to understand the issue of health as a universal category of human culture, which is manifested in the valuable basis of definite socio-cultural communities. Based on the studies of these authors, the integrative principle has been chosen as the methodological basis of our study.

### **Conclusion**

For a long period of time a healthy lifestyle, was considered as a problem of personal life, which is significant mainly for the survival and formation of the person. Nowadays, a healthy lifestyle is constantly conceptualized as an important category of social life, as a structure-forming factor of sociability. Healthy lifestyle attain the status of a complex and global integrative category and the most significant pointer of national wealth that is considered not only as a natural aspect (a condition of the body and mind), but as a rather complex phenomenon conditioned by a contemporary cultural life (concepts, pictures of world, knowledge) and social institutions and technology. The importance of these obtained outcomes is that scientifically proved the preventive pedagogic function which prevents the opportunity of pedagogical deflection and finds resources to their solution. The realization of this function has resulted to the outlining in

teaching science as its constituent part of the preventive pedagogy. Defined methods (cognitive and informative, sports and health, preventive and prophylactic) are directed on students' theoretical knowledge formation on health and healthy lifestyles, abilities and skills to conduct a healthy lifestyle, prevention and adjustment of somatic health.

The outcomes of the study enable to allocate prospects for further research of the issues which are connected with the creation of special programs on the students' readiness formation for a healthy lifestyle. The paper Submissions may be profitable for university heads and professors; staff of continuous professional education and retraining centers in the selection and structuring of the content for continuous professional education of the teaching staff of universities.

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## DIDACTIC PRINCIPLES IN WORKS OF MUSABEK BAYZAKULY

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### Abstract

In this study, can be traced way of life, and the era of literary environment, genre and thematic structure of the poet's works, deals with the problems of literary traditions influence on the work Musabek Bayzakuly, analyzed Epics the poet, as well as highly artistic version of the epic tales "Er Shore" belonging M.Bayzakuly. Mussabek Bayzakuly was known as "Molda Musa" and Researchers of their creativity, philosophy, education afraid of their titles spiritual education, in connection with many names, including were unjustly forgotten. This article is dedicated to the life and work of the outstanding Kazakh literature poet - Mussabek Bayzakuly, who lived in the of the late XIX and early XX century. There are many XX century poets who left an imprint in Kazakh literature. Mussabek Bayzakuly (1849-1932) was born in South Kazakhstan region, in the village of Shoktas. Mussabek Bayzakuly is a lyric poet, who admired love and nature in his works and who wrote about social issues in the form of fables. This article is dedicated to the life and work of the outstanding Kazakh literature poet of the late XIX and early XX century. We can note two major periods of collecting and studying the poet Musabek Bayzakuly. The first - covered version, published in the 1930. The second - research and publications written since 1960. Analyzing them, in general it can be seen that there are the main versions of products Molda Musa and show their art and meaning.

**Keywords:** poet, translations, Kazakh language, fabulist, spiritual education.

### Main text

*Kazakh fabulist*

Mussabek Bayzakuly (1849-1932) was known as "Molda Musa." Molda Mussa Baizakov - the famous bard, educator, one of the first Kazakh fabulists. He received a religious education in the Karnak Madras, where studied his grandfather Mukhtar Auezov Berdikozha. Highly educated, with knowledge of several languages, Mussabek Bayzakuly builds a spiritual center that teaches children for different languages. At the same time, he translates the works of great western and eastern authors' work: Aesop's fables, poems by Pushkin, Shahnameh Ferdowsi. In 1909, when there was built a new mosque in Petersburg, and with the recommendation of the local Muslim clergy, Molda Mussa wrote the book "Idayatname."

The introduction said that we can notice two main periods of collecting and studying the poet Musabek Bayzakuly. The first - covered version, published in the 1930. The second - research and publications written since 1960. Analyzing them, in general it can be seen that there are the main versions of products Molda Musa and show their art and meaning.



Therefore, we consider them a necessary step on the path of knowledge of life and creativity Molda Musa. In our time there was the need for more accurate and in-depth study of works of the poet, in accordance with the current level of literary criticism. Considering the collected material to the present day, voiced comments and abstracts should identify the historical place and meaning Molda Musa in Kazakh literature of the late XIX - early XX centuries. From this point of view, this implies a series of problems. One of them - the maximum coverage of the creative biography Musabek Bayzakuly. In written up to this time works of this question is very little discussion. Information from the writer's biography of his establishment in the creative evolution and how development should be meaningful. What poetic environment in which he lived Molda Musa influence on his work of traditional rich artistic traditions of Kazakh and eastern classical literature? Underline their didactic value. All these issues require careful study, these and other factors have been the object of a monographic study by Z.Orazbekova. After all, no doubt, the value of the product of any poet - in his ability to show social and historical realities of the time in which he lived. It is known that the special value of the works Musabek Bayzakuly just due to the fact that they are covered topical issues of the era. Critical for the study is the systematic disclosure of historical realities in the poems and epics bard. Molda Musa left with a diverse point of view of the legacy of the genre: the poem-initiation aitys, fables, condolences, jokes, translations and even voluminous epics. Consequently, the priority is to discover literary genre creativity Molda Musa varieties and their fundamental principles and history of origin. Finally, it is important to discuss the artistic scheme works by identifying patterns displayed in them. Including a special phenomenon that should be emphasized is the influence on his work of oriental poetry.

Pretty complicated is the question of when they were written and where to store the product Musabek Bayzakuly. Up to now not found the poet's personal records. Therefore, despite the absence of the originals, as the most valuable exhibits should be noted two manuscripts. The first recorded by Otebay Turmanzhanov during a trip to the village of Molda Musa. This sample was put into the fund handwritten Kazakh Academy of Sciences. In our hands by Musa Tokkozhaev recorded in April 1917 and again in 1967 rewrite the manuscript, totaling 90 pages. It is written predominantly black pencil on paper Cyrillic writing. The manuscript includes works:

- «The Fox and the Tiger"
- «The husband traitor"
- «The thief and the Tiger"
- « Condolence to Zhanadil on the death of his father Isa"
- «A poem-ordination rural municipality Bekkozha"
- «Letter Mold for Matan Musa"
- «Letter to Musabek Seyilbek Usenuly"
- «A poem-ordination Molda Musa blacksmith"
- «Musabek poem dedicated to the peasants in the sand"
- «Mourning for deceased Bektursyn Bi"
- «Letter to the mullahs relatives Kushata."

Contained in this manuscript are particularly valuable information sheds light on the biography Molda Musa and contain memories of his time studying in madrassas Karnak (This is explained in more detail in the monograph by Z.Orazbekova). In this manuscript, and found a few short poems that were not included in the publication of the works of the author and not scanned researchers. These include the beginning of a poem Maylykozha and Molda Musa, another begins, "Musabekov friends were Omar and smallpox" and his poem "The top of your blushes like a girl", "The smell is like your red flower." The total volume of poems in the manuscript Musa Tokkozhaev - 2500 lines. Their importance is, firstly, that entries are made countryman and disciple of the poet and, therefore, close to the original; Second, explain the reason for the birth of a number of works. They also help to compare the textual point of view of the poet's works, and specify the time of writing, the names of the mentioned people and place names.

Thus, the manuscript Musa Tokkozhaev especially valuable for studying the heritage of Molda Musa.

For Mussabek's wonderful translations of excerpts from the spiritual Persian literature, his instructor Qozy damulla, who was teaching at Carnac Madras - assigns him the title of "Mullah" Najip E.N. (1968). This is written in the works of professor at the University Bloomington (USA) Akram Habibullayev: "In the spread of Islam and religious knowledge in Central Asia, along with such major centers of Muslim civilization as Bukhara and Samarkand, the towns and villages of the Southern Kazakhstan as Turkestan, Isfidzhab, and Carnac were also considered as civilization centers. Among these spiritual centers, however, the role of Carnac, which is located approximately 25 kilometers from the city of Turkestan, is of paramount importance. It is one of the oldest cultural centers in the region and has recently celebrated its 2000 anniversary. In Soviet times, however, the village was named as Atabay, in honor of the party secretary Communist Rahmankul Atabayev, who was killed by local counterrevolutionaries. After the collapse of the USSR, Carnac has regained its original name. Unfortunately, we don't have enough studies about the history of Carnac, even archaeological excavations of the ruins of the former citadel Bazartobe are not still investigated. For now, we have two books on the history of Carnac, written by local ethnographers based on oral traditions. However, both of them are written in Uzbek language. These books can hardly be counted as the scientific work; still, they contain some valuable information about the history of Carnac and its inhabitants.

Before the Bolshevik Revolution, Carnac was one of the religious and educational centers, which plays a special role in the penetration of Islam in the region, especially in Kazakh steps. According to local historians, before the October Revolution in 1917, there were four Madras as at Carnac. These religious schools played important role as scientific and educational centers not only for residents of southern Kazakhstan, but also for all Kazakh villages.

The special authority was given to Halfa (Khalifa) Madras. It was founded by Aymuhammad Hodge, who is better known under the pseudonym as Qozy Hodge, Qozy Mullah, Qozy damylla or Qozy Turkistani. In his childhood, his parents affectionately called him Qozy (Goat). When Aymuhammad grew up, however, he chose for himself the name which became more famous than his childhood name. History of Kazakh literature. II. A. (1965) Associate Professor D.Kassymov explains the "Mullah" in terms of Latin meaning of "concept". The concept is a unit of intercultural communication. The concepts can represent the culture of the people, its mentality, and its nationhood. The Turkic people of the Central Asia are united and close to each other not only through their similar language, but also through their spiritual values. A study of concepts allows you to select general and specific features in the spiritual and material culture of the people.

The concept is a reflection of the cultural consciousness of the people.

The concept of "Mullah", "Mullah" Molda, "Moldo" in the minds of the Turkic peoples related to the concept of spirituality.

Different dictionaries give the following definition of the token. "Mullah - Mullah, a minister, a spiritual person" Akram Habibullaev (2014)

"Molla - Mullah, competent, educated" - noted in his famous dictionary scientist Uighurologists E.N.Nadzhip. Najip E.N. (1968)

In the "Dictionary of Russian language", published in 1999 in Xinjiang is a more detailed interpretation: Mullah - the person who received a religious education; the person giving religious education; mentor" A. Zhanabayeva (2012).

In a bilingual Russian-Kazakh dictionary, published in 2005 by the Institute of Linguistics named after A.Baitursynov noted mullah-molda. There is no other explanation. "The Muslim cleric, priest; teacher of old method school. In a figurative sense: humble, obedient, right." - Such a definition is given in the pages of Wikipedia.

Thus, the token "mullah" includes the value of the spiritual person, educated person, as well as a mentor.

In modern Turkic languages: Kazakh, Uighur, Kyrgyz the word "mullah" has both positive and negative connotations: 1) Mullah - a clergyman, teacher, literate person, recognized adept who

deserves great respect. As an example there are names of the great educators, writers and poets, philosophers, public figures: Molla Mahmud of Kashgar, Hazrat Molly, Molly Bilal Nasim, Mullah Musa Sayrami, Molla Nazugum ... from Uighur language.

The famous Kyrgyz poet, performer of the epic "Manas", the first fabulist Togolok Moldo 1860-1942g, Bayymbet Abdrahmanov own name, he studied at the rural Muslim school, passing on his knowledge to children.

Moldo Kilic -the first bard who began to write his works.

Kazakh Mullah Almagambetov, educator, continued teaching of Ibrai Altynsarin, bard, poet, having the rank of mullahs taught children the Russian language (he knew 7 languages).

All of these persons were not spiritual servants, they had a spiritual education. For their educational activities in recognition of the people they awarded the honorary title "mullah".

In the explanatory dictionary Uighur language fixed the token "damolla" meaning "director, head of the supreme religious school," as well as "a person with a deep knowledge" [3.502].

In the living spoken language of some people - the Uighurs, Uzbeks, and Tajiks - this token is used in a respectful reference to scientific personalities, such as "Professor". Also it is used, wanting to express deep respect: Shami damulla, damulla Bazaar Akhund, Sabit damulla, Qozy damulla.

### *Linguistic-cultural field*

Linguistic-cultural field has received a negative character vividly reflected in proverbs and sayings in which people expressed their attitude to some of the activities of the mullahs: Chala mullah - lit.. partially mullah, within the meaning of semi-literate, an amateur.

In Kazakh language - dumshe molda dindi bouzar - in val. Amateur spoils faith. In Uighur language: Molla bolmak asan - adem bolmak kiyin. To become Mullah is easy - to become a man is not.

Mollilik kilmak or mulla bolmak - in val. teach, instruct wits.

Molla moshuk - in val. taught life, get a lesson, a coward. Mollinin deginini kil, kilginini kilma in Uighur language. In Kazakh Moldanyn istegenin isteme, aytkanyn iste- in val. do what the mullah says, but do not do what he does. Zhalap keriganda molla boptu, word for word- fallen woman in old age has become a mullah - in val. teach morality.

More on linguistic-cultural words "mullah-tevip, teup", "mullah-bakhshi, bakhshi." In the worldview of Turkic peoples (Uighurs, Kazakhs and others.) are widespread worship of the earth "Yar egisi" water "Su egisi", fire "Ot egisi." They found expression in folk rituals and traditions: weddings, births, expelling evil spirits, purification, and treatment. Studies ritual culture can show religion and beliefs through which people and their manifestations in the cultural traditions in the present. So, shamanism, displacing previous beliefs, absorbed rituals, attributes, concepts, magical techniques, adapting them later, to later religions.

In modern society, the mutual interpenetration and religions can be seen in the activities of Bakhshi, healers, astrologers, in particular, in their prayers and incantations. Turning to God, they may call in the help of all the saints, spirits of the four elements, flora and fauna. In Kazakhstan there are currently hundreds of shamans, healers, astrologers, whose functions include the definition of the diagnosis, straightening aura (punched evil eye biofield), treatment, prediction of the future, and "opening" of the road. It is necessary to distinguish between the functions Bakhsh and Taupo (tevip). Their activities are focused on the treatment of people from physical and spiritual ailments. However, the approaches to the problem are different.

Bakhshi in its activities based on the strength of spirits, entering them into direct contact. As a rule, the treatment process begins reading the verses of the Qur'an. It uses attributes of shamanistic rites: tambourine, bells, sacred plants or juniper branches Peganum. And the knife, hoe, whip, fire, water, etc. If necessary, the disease is transferred to a black hen or black sheep on the rag or paper dolls on animal figures made of watermelon or melon peels. Most Bakhshi considers it necessary to instruct the patient to God's way, calling to teach the Holy Koran, to make pilgrimages to holy places. Most often this shrines in Arstan Baba mausoleum Yassavi

Turkestan (SKO). Caravans of pilgrims to worship at the graves called "Bes Ata" near the village of Uzun-Agach.

Mola-tevip, or medicine man, in the Kazakh language "emshi" cures using holy spirits - ancestral spirits, and uses herbs and self-made powders, offers to drink read out prayers clean water. Some tevips or medicine man deny the power of God and faith in him and look to the forces of nature: the sun, the sky, saying the original spell with magical properties. In this regard, very interesting is the activities of Parhat-Ata, who lived in Chundzha, Uyghur region. Its activities are evaluated ambiguously. However, after his death, crowds of supporters continue teaching about the sun. Tevips and Bakhshis can predict the future on kumalakah-dried lamb pellets (or beans), the number of which is always 41 apiece. With their help, they can detect diseases and their causes. Uighurs called "Molla-Bakhshi" or "Molla-tevip" the famous, recognized doctors.

Among Kazakhs much denial of the term "bakhshi" is detected. Official religious ministers seek to reconcile them with Islam, make all sorts of work to eliminate uncharacteristic official religion moments. This is clearly evidenced by television programs aimed at educational activities, "Zhumalyk Kezdesu", "Shipa." Former tevips, forecasters have more delicately call themselves "emshi" - the doctor. The terms "Molla-Bakhshi" and "Molla -tevip" difficult to understand, given that the word "Mullah" refers to religious authority of Islam.

Bakhshi - witch doctor, wizard, shaman; tyrant. Akram Habibullaev (2014)

Tevip - Tabib, witch doctor. Akram Habibullaev (2014)

As can be seen from the data dictionary, compiled in the last century, the token bakhshi and tevip had no means unambiguous semantics. They reflect people's attitude to these representatives during the change of the political system in the country, at a time when religion and its ministers developed an ambiguous attitude. Of course, this is not the last role was played by ideology, as well as those books and dictionaries, in which ordinary people were spelled something other to do with faith and folk traditions.

Tokens like bakhshi and tevip have no extensive linguistic-cultural fields. Basic meaning into tokens mullah and mullah-Bakhshi-tevip carries the first part. Token mullah matters competent professional healer, and deserve special respect.

Symbiosis of different religions and beliefs is vividly expressed in the activities of doctors, bakhshi, predictors. In particular, in their prayers and incantations can trace the path of the millennial beliefs, especially that retain national traditions and rituals; as well as ways to adapt them to modern conditions.

In this regard, a very interesting prayer-spell of Uighur Pazyla Bakhshi, who lived in Red box village (now Guldala) Almaty region, "On sakkiz min alamni yaryatkan Allanin yolinda, Adam ata ,Hava Ana, Yar egiliri, Su egiliri, kun egisiga, tun egisiga, Muhammad alayhissalam paygambirimga, parishtilarnin, pirilarnin, uluk kush pari, Ilan pari, yolvas pari, bulbul pari, Hori pari, gul pari, buga pari, kiyik parilarga atidim. Anilarni sakliguchi Omay aniga, Khizir atiga, sheyit katkan zhigitlarga, Ilim bilimga buy bolgan Ivrayim atiga begishlayman ...

Ya Alla! Moshu bandanni kollap-korgap, aldyga Altun tazhlik parylarni, akysyga kumush tazhlyk parylarny kulturgaysan ... "

Literal translation: "In the name of Allah, the creator of the eighteen thousand worlds, Adam the father and Eve, the mother, the owners of land, water, day and night, our Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, in the name of the angels and spirit guides, the spirits of birds, snakes, tigers, nightingales, girls -angels, angels of flowers, deer and fallow deer conjure. Defender Umai-ana, Khizir-ata-jigits fallen heroes, wise Ivrayim-ata dedicate ... O Allah, bless his servant and put in front of angels with golden crowns, behind the Angels in Silver Crown ... "

Prayers and incantations deserve special attention because they are rich material for linguistic and cultural studies, as well as in the study of the features of symbiosis religions and beliefs of different eras.

Some people believe that the spread of psychics, magicians, fortune tellers and people's interest in them increases in various transitional historical moments, the so-called "troubled" times

associated with a low coefficient of security of society. Probably, we should clarify this statement and refer not only to the period of economic downturn, but also to varying degrees of availability of information. People with extraordinary abilities were at all times, both in periods of prosperity, and in time of recession various public, political, and economic systems. They had their supporters and persecutors. The people, along with official medicine addressed in the past and continue to turn to unconventional methods in different situations. Regarding this, in the Uighur language there is the expression "savap bolmak" in the sense of "cause or permit recovery problems." Xinjiang has modern medical institutions, where traditional medicine and alternative is studied very well. Today, traditional medicine with deep roots in antiquity proves their worth and competitiveness.

Activities of doctors, healers are in particular interest, because the results of their activities are unexpected. Sometimes the most difficult patients are cured. Children are born of infertile parents. The official medicine cannot find any explanation for this. However, do not always use the terms Bakhshi, shaman or tevip when talking about their activities. Name "scientific" terms: bioenergotherapist, psychofitotherapist, teopsychofitotherapist recorded in program "Shipa" of channel "Kazakhstan".

Esoteric vocabulary, activities of shamans, bakshis, tevip-healers as a whole has not yet been the subject of extensive research both in terms of linguistic and cultural science, even constituting a rich reservoir of folk traditions and rituals.

Speaking about the concept of "Mullah", we note that the term in Soviet time's concelebrated unkind service for many followers of Islam, as well as scientists, whose name is added to the title of "Mullah", emphasizing the deep spirituality, wisdom, all-round talents. Researchers of their creativity, philosophy, education afraid of their titles and spiritual education. In connection with many names, including Mullah Musa Bayzakuly were unjustly forgotten.

Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has acquired a new status and new opportunities in the spiritual realm. In 2004 was adopted the state program "Cultural Heritage", which envisages the creation of an integrated system of study of great cultural heritage of the nation, including modern national culture, folklore, traditions and customs; reconstruction of historical, cultural and architectural monuments of special significance for the national history; generalization of centuries-old experience of national literature and writing. According to the portal "Cultural heritage» <http://www.madenimura.kz> during the years of the program, published 537 titles of books on history, archeology, ethnography and culture of Kazakhstan, sold more than half a million copies. Among them are such series as "Babalar sozi", "Library of World Literature", which includes advanced literary creation in Europe, America, Australia, Africa, Asia, "History of Kazakh literature", "The philosophical heritage of the Kazakh people from ancient times to this day", " World cult urological idea ", " Economic classics ", " world philosophical heritage ". The first attempt to unite the best examples of works representing a rich philosophical heritage of the Kazakh people, was a series of "philosophical heritage of the Kazakh people from ancient times to the present day." Philosophical views of outstanding sons of the Great Steppe starting from statements Qorqyt-ata and continued in views of Abai and Shakarim, considered the pearl of the world humanistic spiritual culture. Whole galaxy of poets was returned, among which can be safely called and gifted bard Musabek Bayzakuly.

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Molda Musa works, although come to the attention of scientists in the 30 years of the twentieth century. - A long time unnoticed. Valihanov CH.CH. (1961) Moreover, there are reasons. The main reason - in the class approach to the evaluation of literature, especially the legacy of the past, during the Soviet era. The researchers, noting the text of a work of art of the word "skin",

"Mullah", "torus", preferred not to deal with such authors because they believed their propagandists of the ruling class or religion.

Speaking of the concept of "Mullah", we note that this term in Soviet times concealed unkind service for many adherents of Islam, as well as scientists, whose names were added to the title "Mullah", emphasizing the deep spirituality, wisdom, all-round talent. Researchers also their creativity, philosophy, education feared their titles and spiritual education. In connection with this many names, including Molda Musa Bayzakuly were almost undeservedly forgotten. Even in this era of a collection of poems Molda Musa many years lay in the publishing house "Zhazushy" Valihanov CH.CH. (1961) and then published in abbreviated form, which is undoubtedly a consequence of the former partisan views.

It is known that has been neglected not only creativity Molda Musa, but also many other poets who found inspiration in the works of the classical eastern literature and writing in the tradition of oriental literature.

A new period of renewed interest in heritage Molda Musa falls on the sixties of the last century. In this regard, particularly noteworthy monographic section 2 volume "History of Kazakh literature" R. Berdybay A. (1995). Corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Rahmankulov Berdibay. He estimates the work of the poet: "The poet's literary legacy Analyzing Musabek Bayzakuly, you can see that he understood the interests of the people and in his writings covered the realities of the era. in his works reveals the class antagonisms, the poet calls on society to education and education, the arts, humanism; the educational value of his works is very large. in his fables and poems he seeks advice on a variety of issues of life. At the same time, he became known as a master aitys ..." R. Berdybay A. (1995).

Candidate of Philology Asilhan Ospanuly in his thesis, exploring creativity akyns neighborhoods Karatau stops and the life and work of Musabek Bayzakuly. in these works the place mentioned and some valuable qualities of the poet. the above-mentioned works were an important step in the study of heritage Molda Musa.

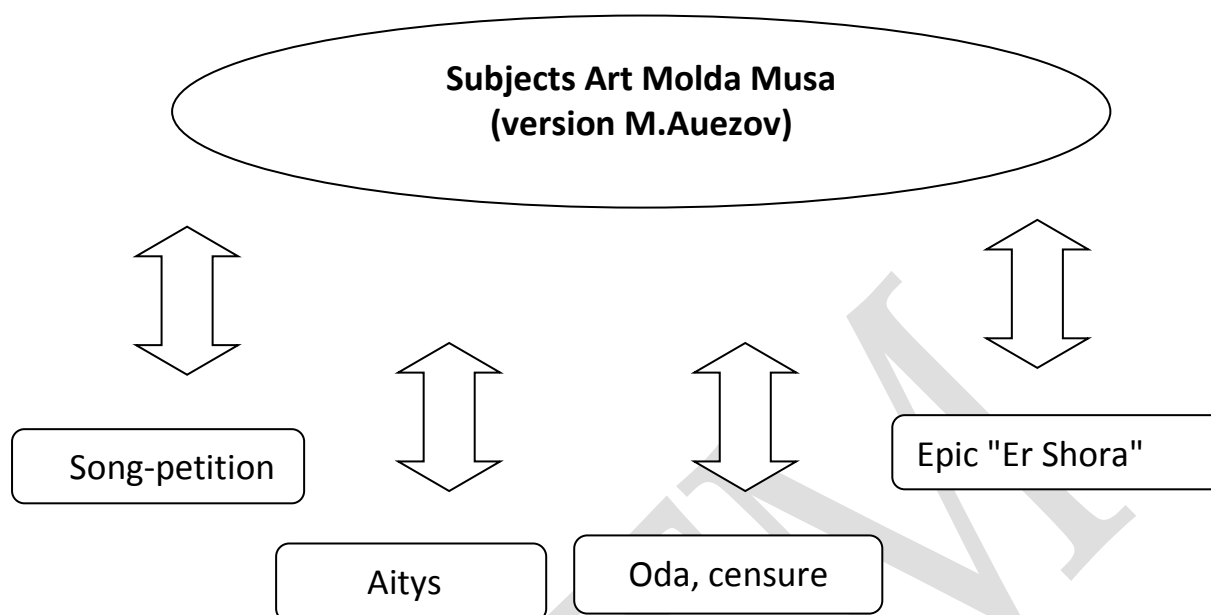
In 2012 issued a scientific monograph "Literary Heritage Musabek Bayzakuly" researcher Z.Orazbekova genres creativity Molda Musa considered as: 1) song-dedication; 2) songs, sympathy; 3) lamentations; 4) song-tolgau; 5) greeting; 6) aitys (written); 7) aitys improvisations; 8) humorous epigrams; 9) fables; 10) parable; 11) Rubaie; 12) ode -madhiya (praise); 13) Poems (epics); 14) the socio-political lyrics; 15) philosophical lyrics; 16) love poems; 17) Natural lyrics

## 2. Tables & Figures

Mukhtar Auezov focuses on genre features works Musabek Bayzakuly and wrote about his work as follows: "... Molda Musa - comes from ordinary people, enjoys the respect and love of the people and lives mainly due to the poems dedicated to the uneducated and susceptible to flattery rich Musa writes poetry, trying to please the audience, so his writing is based on folk songs, simple and popular language. He does not tend to verbosity and ornate, writes in an accessible form, like zhyr Terme or quatrains ". Next, the scientists wrote about the work of the poet, and it includes the following topics:

- 1) first of all - the song-petitions;
- 2) aitys;
- 3) ode (exaltation) - censure;
- 4) in the genre of heroic epic - poem "Er Shora".

SCHEME 1.



Of particular note is a significant contribution to the well-known literary critic, candidate of philological sciences Asilhan Ospanuly in the study and promotion of the poet. His research on the works of such prominent poets of the South Kazakhstan as Madeleine Mile Kulyshak, Nuraly Musabek, Ergobek he cites in his book "Poets neighborhoods Karatau".

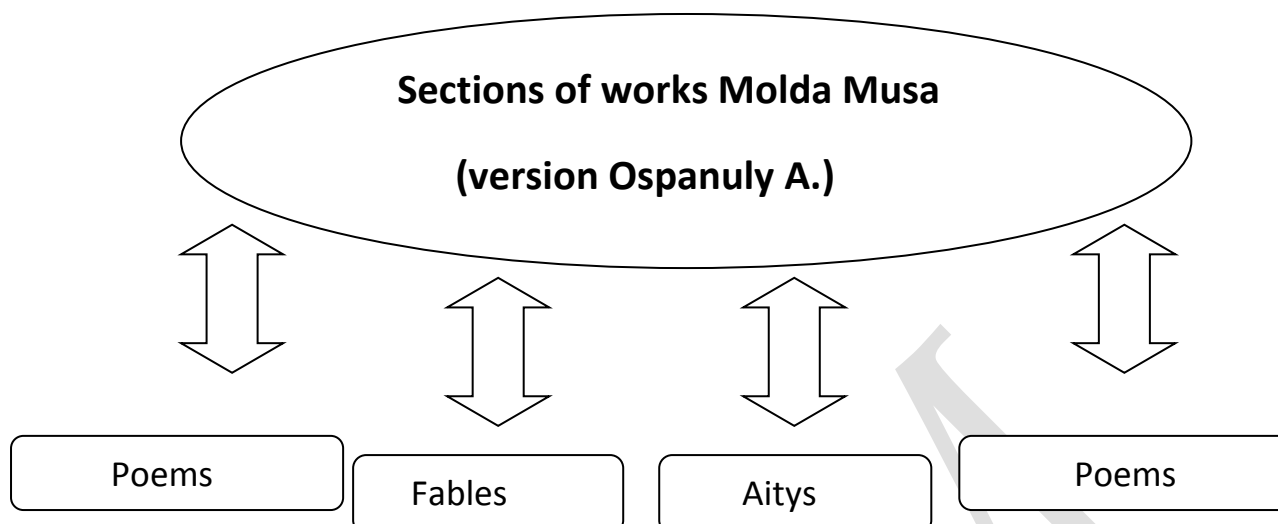
Molda Musa poet scientist Asilhan Ospanuly considering 4 categories:

- Poems
- Fables
- aityys
- Poems (See. Diagram 2).

The researcher analyzes the social meaning of a number of works, including should be made and some of the scientist.

Noting some poems Musa Molda on various topics, he assesses his works in the genre of the fable as a significant contribution to the development of Kazakh literature in general: "Speaking of which one of the first poets began to write original works in the genre of fables, perhaps it should be noted not only writer Sabit Donentaev, but, first and foremost, a poet Musabek. In chronological aspect, despite the fact that his fable went only orally and in manuscript form, it should be considered a pioneer in the genre".

SCHEME 2.



### 3. Copyright

Since gaining independence in Kazakhstan was adopted the state program "Cultural Heritage", which envisages the creation of an integrated system of study of national literature and are names of poets was returned, among which can be called name Musabek. The purpose - the study of his work.

### Acknowledgements

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Especially, please allow me to dedicate my gratitude to confirmation after substantial advisers and assistants:

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Finally, I sincerely want to thank Akram Habibullaev professor from Bloomington, United States for joint research and interest in creativity Musabek Bayzakuly.

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## THE EFFECT OF SEMANTIC MAPPING INSTRUCTION ON EXTROVERT VS. INTROVERT IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' WRITING

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### Abstract

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of semantic mapping instruction on extrovert vs. introvert Iranian EFL learners' writing. To do so, 80 intermediate level students were selected from among 120 EFL learners as the main participants of this study after running a test of language proficiency (NELSON 050D). The participants shaped the two experimental groups and the control group of the study. The experimental group one included 25 extrovert learners and the experimental group two included 25 introvert learners, while the control group included 30 learners, comprised of 15 introverts and 15 extroverts. The participants went through the process of pretesting, intervention, and possessing through taking Nelson Proficiency Test and ESOL Writing Test. The findings revealed that semantic mapping had a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing and indicated that this technique had a significant effect on both extrovert and introvert Iranian EFL learners' L2 writing. Meanwhile, a significant difference was found between the introvert and extrovert participants' writing post-test scores, with the extraverts having a better performance. The findings of the present study could be used by English teachers and learners as this can provide them with a ground to use semantic mapping more meticulously in writing classes and focus on the mismatch between input they receive and their current learning. This way the classroom interactions could be enriched and would help subsequent L2 writing development of the learners.

**Key Words:** Semantic Mapping Instruction, Extrovert Learners, Introvert Learners, L2 Writing

### 1. Introduction

Second language learning development in general and L2 writing enhancement in particular have been attractive for English Language Teaching (ELT) researchers in the last two decades (Fujieda, 2006). However, there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. Developing writing skill is an important and complex part of language learning. There are different categories for writing. It seems that writing skill is more difficult than other skills. However, it is important to master this skill in this modern world (Robinson, 1986). More importantly; many researchers have tried to find out the role of writing in learning a foreign language (Harkalu, 2002; Li & Chingell, 2010; Neagu, 2010; Sadeghi & Taghavi, 2014; Ur, 2015).

Semantic mapping is an adaptation of concept definition mapping, but builds on student's prior knowledge or schema. While it draws on prior knowledge it recognizes important components and shows the relationships among the components (Davies, 2010). According to El-Koumy (1999), semantic mapping as a picture of conceptual relationships and a tool which

was mostly used by readers allowing them to scan the range of ideas while trying to understand the underlying concepts within a text. Heimlich and Pittelman (1986) added a set of advantages related to semantic mapping technique. These advantages are motivating students of all grades, integrating thinking with reading, integrating assessment with teaching, and making judgments concerning the appropriate instruction needed. Writing difficulties are the major problem for many students with learning difficulties. In this sense, many studies have been carried out to understand and investigate the problems students face during developing their writings in the target language they are learning (Hyland & Milton, 1997; Hyland, 2015; Matsuda & Silva, 2014). Writing in English is often neglected in English learning classes, partly because the current textbooks used in the FL conversation courses lack activities that can strengthen writing skill or even teachers are in difficulty with teaching this skill (Burner, 2014). All these cause that learners receive little practice in writing in English when they are learning it as a foreign language (Tavakoli, Ghadiri, & Zabihi, 2014).

Laney (2002, pp. 71- 75) maps out the human brain and explains how neuron-transmitters follow different dominant paths in the nervous systems of Introverts and Extroverts. It turns out that Introverts just don't talk unless they have something to say. They hate small talk. They want everyone to just be real and honest (Laney, 2002). They think a lot. They like to have problems to work on, puzzles to solve. Introverts are often individualists. Introverts typically relax at home or in nature, not in busy public places. An extrovert is a person who is energized by being around other people. This is the opposite of an introvert who is energized by being alone. In fact, extroverts tend to think as they speak, unlike introverts who are far more likely to think before they speak. Extroverts often think well when they are talking. Extroverts enjoy social situations (Ahmadian & Yadegari, 2009). In this study, researcher aims at investigating whether semantic mapping instruction can assist extrovert and introvert learners' L2 writing.

This research was an attempt to examine whether the semantic map could facilitate L2 writing. Therefore, the result of this study in semantic mapping strategy is expected to improve student's writing. In addition, this strategy would help teachers to enhance their teaching methodology and increase students' performance in writing. The feedback would provide some insights to the English teacher and hence enable them to identify some feasible steps to improve their writing instruction. The present study is expected to help in planning and organizing activities especially the ones which concern enhancing students' writing skills. The findings of this study will reveal students' weaknesses on writing skills and it enables the authors to design a suitable writing book for the Low Proficiency students. In sum, this study is significant because it helps arise students' understanding in L2 writing. Besides that, this study significantly contributes to writing strategy and gives some insights to the EFL teachers and students.

## **2. Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The present study aimed at investigating the pedagogical effectiveness of semantic map instruction on extrovert and introvert Iranian EFL learners' writing. In order to achieve this purpose, the following research questions were proposed:

- Q1: Does semantic mapping have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing?
- Q2: Does semantic mapping have significant effect on introvert Iranian EFL learners' writing?
- Q3: Does semantic mapping have any significant effect on extrovert Iranian EFL learners' writing?
- Q4: Does semantic mapping have more significant effect on introvert learners' writing than extrovert ones?

## **3. Method**

The present chapter deals with explaining participants of the study, instruments used for collecting the data, procedures, data analysis, and the design of the study.

### *Participants*

The participants of the study were 120 intermediate EFL students studying English in Goldis Institute in Tabriz. The participants of the study were female native Persian speakers, with an average age of 16. The researchers selected 80 intermediate level students as the participants of this study from among 120 students after running a test of language proficiency (NELSON 050D). Following the test of general proficiency the participants received the style questionnaire of extrovert and introvert scale as well. The participants shaped the two experimental groups and the control group of the study. The experimental group one included 25 extrovert learners and the experimental group two included 25 introvert learners, while the control group included 30 learners, comprised of 15 introverts and 15 extroverts.

### *Instrumentation*

To accomplish the purpose of the present study, the following research instruments were used:

1. A **Nelson Proficiency Test** (level 050D) to assess the language ability of the participants and to see if they were homogeneous. This test included fifty multiple-choice items to assess the lexical, grammatical and phonological knowledge of participants. Based on its reliability shown in the previous studies ( $KR-21=0.89$ ), it was used in the following study.
2. **Personality Trait Questionnaire** which was a valid version of Extrovert vs. Introvert scale developed by Al-Shalabi (2003) to represent the learners' style.
3. **ESOL Writing Test** as pretest of writing to assess the learners' writing ability prior to the treatment phase. The test included 3 tasks and each task would tell the learners how much to write, how much time to spend and how many marks they could get.
4. **ESOL Writing Posttest** which was given to the learners after three weeks of instruction and treatment.

### *Procedure*

The research was conducted over a three-week (two times per week) period. In order to conduct the research, the researcher invited a large sample of 120 EFL learners. The sample took the NELSON proficiency test and then according to the purpose of the study, the participants were randomly divided into three groups: two experimental groups namely extroverts ( $N=25$ ) and introverts ( $N=25$ ) and a control group ( $N=30$ ), which received no instruction concerning concept mapping. All groups received an ESOL writing pretest prior to the treatment phase. The experimental groups received semantic mapping training during the treatment phase, while the learners in the control group did not receive any training. Following three weeks of instruction and treatment, the learners received the ESOL writing posttest and the data were collected and put into statistical analyses and reported.

### *Design*

The design to carry out this study is quasi-experimental, with different treatments for experimental and control groups. The independent variable of the study was semantic mapping instruction and the dependent variable was L2 writing among Iranian EFL learners. Extrovert and introvert styles were the moderating variables and the learners went through the process of pretesting, intervention and post testing.

### **4. Data Analysis**

Table 1 below represents the descriptive statistics of the subject selection procedure. The KR-21 reliability index for the NELSON test was .94.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics of Subject Selection*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	KR-21
NELSON	120	8	50.0	36.52	10.954	119.983	.94

### Writing Pretest

Table 2 shows the results of descriptive statistics of the participants on pretest writing.

Table 2

#### *Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Writing Pretest Scores by Groups*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	Control	30	60.38	4.038
	Experimental	50	60.05	5.818

To ensure the normality of the distribution of the participants' writing pretest scores, the researcher used Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results of this test are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3

#### *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Pretest and Posttest of Writing by Groups by Personality Types*

Group	P-Type		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
			Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Experimental	Extrovert	Pretest	.120	25	.200	.954	25	.312
		Posttest	.132	25	.200	.967	25	.566
	Introvert	Pretest	.128	25	.200	.950	25	.245
		Posttest	.159	25	.102	.962	25	.464
Control	Extrovert	Pretest	.177	16	.193	.911	16	.122
		Posttest	.200	16	.086	.890	16	.056
	Introvert	Pretest	.195	14	.155	.883	14	.064
		Posttest	.181	14	.200	.943	14	.462

These results confirmed the normality of the distribution of the participants' writing scores. Having met the normality distribution assumption, it was necessary to determine whether there was a significant difference between the participants' writing pretest scores or not. To do so, the researcher used an independent samples t-test. Table 4 displays the results of this test.

Table 4

#### *Independent Samples t-test; Pretest of Writing by Groups*

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	

								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.574	.062	.276	78	.783	.333	1.207	-2.070	2.737
Equal variances not assumed			.302	76.236	.764	.333	1.105	-1.867	2.534

Based on the results displayed in Table 4; ( $t(78) = .276$ ,  $p = .783$ ,  $r = .031$  representing a weak effect size; 95% CI [-2.07, 2.73]) it can be claimed that there was no significant difference between the participants' writing pretest scores; in other words, the participants were at the same level of writing before the treatment. It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = 3.57$ ,  $p = .062$ ). That is why the results of the independent t-test were reported based on the statistics displayed on the first row in Table 4.

## 5. Results and Findings

### *Results of the First Null Hypothesis*

The first null hypothesis stated that semantic mapping has no significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing. After the treatment, the researcher again administered the ESOL Writing Test to 80 participants to see whether their writing ability had increased or not. To yield this purpose, the researcher computed the descriptive statistics. Table 5 illustrates the results.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Writing Post-test Scores by Groups*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Posttest	Experimental	50	67.96	7.191
	Control	30	62.85	5.125

The results in Table 5 indicated that the experimental group ( $M = 67.96$ ,  $SD = 7.19$ ) had a higher mean than the control group ( $M = 62.85$ ,  $SD = 5.17$ ) on the posttest of writing.

An Independent samples t-test was run to see whether there was a significant difference between the participants' writing post-test scores or not. Table 6 shows the results of this test.

Table 6

*Independent Samples t-test; Posttest of Writing by Groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	5.893	.018	3.404	78	.001	5.110	1.501	2.122	8.098
Equal variances not assumed			3.698	75.573	.000	5.110	1.382	2.357	7.863

Based on the results displayed in Table 6; ( $t(75) = 3.69$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = .391$  representing a moderate to large effect size; 95% CI [2.35, 7.86]) it can be claimed that there was significant difference between the two groups' means on the posttest of writing. Thus the first null-

hypothesis **was rejected**. The experimental group after receiving semantic mapping, significantly outperformed the control group on the posttest of writing.

It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met (Levene's  $F = 5.89$ ,  $p = .018$ ). That is why the results of the independent t-test were reported based on the statistics displayed on the second row in Table 6.

#### *Results of the Second Null Hypothesis*

The second null hypothesis proposed that semantic mapping has no significant effect on introvert Iranian EFL learners' writing. In order to compare the introvert participants' pre and post-test writing scores in the experimental group, the researcher computed the descriptive statistics. Table 7 designates the results of this test.

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics; Pretest and Posttest of Writing (Experimental Introvert Group)*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Tests	Posttest	64.46	25	6.801	1.360
	Pretest	59.82	25	6.105	1.221

Based on these results it can be concluded that the introvert subjects in experimental group had a higher mean on the posttest ( $M = 64.46$ ,  $SD = 6.80$ ) than pretest ( $M = 59.82$ ,  $SD = 6.10$ ).

A paired-samples t-test was run to see whether there was a significant difference between the experimental introvert participants' means on the pretests and posttest of writing or not. Table 8 shows the results of this test.

Table 8

*Paired-Samples t-test; Pretest and Posttest of Writing (Experimental Introvert Group)*

Paired Differences							
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
4.640	2.527	.505	3.597	5.683	9.181	24	.000

Based on the results displayed in Table 8; ( $t(24) = 9.18$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = .882$  representing a large effect size; 95% CI [3.59, 5.68]) it can be claimed that there was significant difference between the experimental introvert subjects' means on pretest and posttest of writing. Thus the second null-hypothesis was rejected. The introvert subjects in experimental group after receiving semantic mapping, significantly had a higher mean on the posttest compared with pretest.

#### *Results of the Third Null Hypothesis*

The third null hypothesis proposed that semantic mapping has no significant effect on the experimental extrovert Iranian EFL learners' writing. In order to compare the extrovert participants' pretest and posttest of writing scores in the experimental group, the researcher computed the descriptive statistics. Table 9 designates the results of this test.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics; Pretest and Posttest of Writing (Experimental Extrovert Group)*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
--	--	------	---	----------------	-----------------

Tests	Posttest	71.46	25	5.815	1.163
	Pretest	60.28	25	5.633	1.127

Based on these results it was concluded that the extrovert subjects in experimental group had a higher mean on the posttest ( $M = 71.46$ ,  $SD = 5.81$ ) than pretest ( $M = 60.28$ ,  $SD = 5.63$ ). A paired-samples t-test was run to see whether there was a significant difference between the experimental introvert participants' means on the pretests and posttest of writing or not. Table 10 shows the results of this test.

Table 10

*Paired-Samples t-test; Pretest and Posttest of Writing (Experimental Extrovert Group)*

Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
			11.180	2.106			

Based on the results displayed in Table 8; ( $t(24) = 26.54$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = .983$  representing a large effect size; 95% CI [10.31, 12.04]) it can be claimed that there was a significant difference between the experimental extrovert subjects' means on pretest and posttest of writing. Thus, the third null-hypothesis was rejected. The extrovert subjects in experimental group, after receiving semantic mapping, significantly had a higher mean on the posttest compared with pretest.

#### **Results of the Forth Null Hypothesis**

The fourth null hypothesis stated that semantic mapping had no significant effect on the extrovert and introvert Iranian EFL learners' writing. To yield this purpose, the researcher computed the descriptive statistics. Table 11 illustrates the results.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Writing Post-test Scores by Personality Types (Experimental Group)*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Posttest	Extrovert	25	71.46	5.815
	Introvert	25	64.46	6.801

The results in Table 11 indicated that the experimental extrovert subjects ( $M = 71.46$ ,  $SD = 5.81$ ) had a higher mean than the experimental introvert group ( $M = 64.46$ ,  $SD = 6.80$ ) on the posttest of writing. An Independent samples t-test was run to see whether there was a significant difference between the experimental extrovert and introvert participants' writing post-test scores or not. Table 12 shows the results of this test.

Table 12

*Independent Samples t-test; Posttest of Writing by Personality Types (Experimental Group)*

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means
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	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.460	.501	3.912	48	.000	7.000	1.790	3.402	10.598
Equal variances not assumed			3.912	46.869	.000	7.000	1.790	3.400	10.600

Based on the results displayed in Table 12; ( $t(48) = 3.91, p = .000, r = .491$  representing an almost large effect size; 95% CI [3.40, 10.59]) it can be claimed that there was significant difference between the two groups' means on the posttest of writing. Thus the fourth null-hypothesis was rejected. The experimental extrovert group significantly outperformed the experimental introvert subjects group on the posttest of writing. It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = .460, p = .501$ ). That is why the results of the independent t-test were reported based on the statistics displayed on the first row in Table 12.

## 6. Discussion

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effects of semantic mapping instruction on extrovert and introvert Iranian EFL learners' writing and the results of data analyses revealed that semantic mapping had a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners writing. Also the findings revealed that semantic mapping had a significant effect on both extrovert and introvert Iranian EFL learners' L2 writing. The findings also revealed a significant difference between the introvert and extrovert participants' writing post-test scores, with the extraverts having a better performance.

All of these findings are in line with the findings of other researchers recorded in the literature: In terms of the first finding of the study which asserts that semantic mapping strategy has a significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' writing performance, Abdollahzadeh and Fard Kashani (2011) studied the influence of semantic mapping on performance in task-based learning and came to know that semantic mapping strategies highly affect second language acquisition of the learners. Ahangari and Behzady (2012) also argued that explicit teaching of computer-mediated concept mapping had a positive effect on the writing skill in general.

The present study demonstrated that the experimental groups who received semantic mapping and the related instruction outperformed the control group who followed traditional approach, which is in line with the findings of the study done by Chen (2007) confirming that strategy training not only leads to the improvement of language proficiency, but also engages the dynamic internal changes in the learning process. In an attempt to evaluate semantic mapping as a learning tool, Dwyer, et al. (2010) found that semantic mapping in the form of map reading was more positive than text reading when used for teaching reading comprehension and writing to the EFL learners. In fact, the present study revealed that the learners trained through semantic mapping could develop better writings.

The findings revealed that extrovert learners had a better writing performance under the effect of semantic mapping. This reveals that extrovert learners could be more benefitted from mapping strategies. This is line with Ahmadian and Yadegari's (2009) study concerning the effects of extroversion/introversion on the use of strategic competence in written referential communication. As they found extrovert EFL learners could employ strategic competence more carefully. Ebrahimzadeh's (2016) study also confirms that extrovert learners develop more



technical pieces of writing. Neagu (2010), however, discusses that introvert learners enjoy more accuracy in their writings. Harrell (2008) also asserted that pencil-and-paper mapping strategies and techniques improve writing skills among both introverts and extroverts. Elsewhere, Harrell (2011) has argued the significance of argument diagramming and critical thinking in introducing the novel concepts to the EFL learners. Harrell (2012) also discussed the efficacy of argument diagramming and semantic mapping to teach language skills, and consequently to come up with more proficient EFL learners. The findings of the present study can also take support from Li and Chingell's (2010) study which revealed that mapping strategies and personality types are closely connected asserting that extrovert and introverts react differently to various types of mapping.

## 7. Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of semantic mapping instruction on extrovert and introvert Iranian EFL learners' writing. The results of data analyses revealed that semantic mapping had a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners writing. Also, this technique had a significant effect on both extrovert and introvert Iranian EFL learners' L2 writing. The findings also showed that extroverts could have a better performance. Therefore, according to the results of the present study, some implications for teaching and learning semantic mapping strategies pertained to writing performance can be suggested: Semantic mapping strategies could be employed by second language teachers to make the learners more aware of what they are dealing with while writing. The assumption is that semantic mapping strategies facilitates writing development (Ellis & Yuan, 2004), and learners must pay attention to the specific strategies features which could enrich their writings and focus on the fact that well-organized writing requires well-organized mapping and planning. Considering the differences existing between the target like forms and those of the first language while writing might help the learners come up with more to-the-point and comprehensive writings (Maftoon, Birjandi, & Pahlavani, 2014). This could be energized via employing semantic mapping, argument mapping, and concept mapping energized through preplanning strategies.

Monitoring the written materials and presenting a dynamic concentration on what is being developed is also possible through employing semantic mapping strategies and paying attention to argument structures in learner writing (Botley & Hakim, 2014). This could be done through a kind of cognitive comparison which has been seen as one of the crucial processes in language acquisition (Birjandi & Seifoori, 2009). English teachers could use semantic mapping techniques such as finding relations, categorizing the information, brain storming, developing subcategories, presenting supports, major and minor ideas (Bailey & Powell, 2008) in their classes to facilitate learning for the learners. This way the classroom interactions could be enriched and would help subsequent L2 development of the learners.

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MOJLTM

# MODERNIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN RUSSIAN HIGHER SCHOOLS IN THE CONDITIONS OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION INTEGRATION

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**Abstract.** The research relevance of organizational, content and technological updating of educational process in modern Russian higher education institutions is substantiated by the increase of globalization processes in the conditions of which higher school is experiencing difficulties when it comes to the competition in the market of educational services. In this regard many higher schools are developing and realizing new trajectories of preservation and accumulation of their competitive advantages. The article is aimed to reveal regional experience of organizational, content and technological updating of educational process in Kazan Federal University as the strategic priority to enhance its competitiveness within the Program of competitiveness increase among leading world scientific and educational centers. The key idea of the research was the development of a project aimed to create a research laboratory in collaboration with the Russian Academy of Education at Kazan Federal University; the results of their joint activity are directed to the introduction of new mechanisms to update educational process in the conditions of science and education integration. The article covers the goals and issues of a higher school and research laboratory scientific interaction within the Program of competitiveness increase of higher education institutions; the results of joint development and implementation of educational process monitoring system in a higher education institution are presented; requirements to organizational, content, technological, and information-methodical support of educational process in a higher education institution are elaborated. The article provides a project on organizational, content, and technological updating of educational process in modern Russian higher schools in the conditions of science and education integration that is of practical value for the constructive extrapolation of the presented experience in other higher education institutions; the results obtained in the course of joint activity can be used as a guideline for further organizational and pedagogical development aimed to increase the competitiveness of higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** competitiveness of higher education institutions; educational process; integration of science and education; organizational, content, and technological updating.

## **Introduction**

### *Relevance of the issue*

The accession of Russia to the Bologna Convention caused the necessity to update the training process in modern higher schools. Innovative changes have affected organizational, content, and technological aspects of educational process connected with transformation of goals and values in higher education institutions due to their move to the status of scientific-research ones in the conditions of globalization and internationalization of higher education. This direction requires a detailed examination of educational process arrangement at a higher education institution; development and approbation of variable models of bachelors' training (Kalimullin, 2014; Gabdulchakov, 2014; Safiullin et al., 2014); introduction of innovative variable and flexible master's programs, strengthening of a research component in their training, formation of their cross-cultural competence; developments of students and teachers' academic mobility; ensuring continuity of scientific schools at a higher education institution; development

of new approaches to education standardization focused on competitive participation of higher education institutions in the international market of education services.

*Tendencies in organizational-content updating of educational process*

The process of higher school training intensification is characterized by a number of tendencies. There are the following among them: integration of vocational and common cultural training of specialists along with their personal qualities development, aspiration to self-realization, creative self-expression; move to creation of curricula in a block-based way with a wide choice of elective courses, rating system of knowledge evaluation, a wide range of opportunities for independent deepening of specialization; introduction of open systems of intensive training in educational process, etc. (Valeeva & Karimova, 2013; Parfilova & Karimova, 2015; Sakhieva et al., 2015).

*Relevance of educational process technological updating*

Modern educational technologies serve as a tool of practical implementation of new training systems that have higher pedagogical characteristics in comparison with traditional educational systems. These technologies guide educational process on the achievement of a necessary level of training efficiency and quality, and provide each student with the possibility to choose their individual educational trajectory that considers their cognitive abilities, motives, inclinations, and other personal qualities to a full degree (Zakirova & Koletvinova, 2014).

The updating of modern higher education content is accompanied with the development of effective training technologies. Many higher education institutions give preference to traditional training technologies; they disregard humanistic relations, personal communication, and interaction of participants of an integrated pedagogical process (Kalimullin, 2014b; Vlasova, Kirilova & Sabirova, 2015). In this regard, the problem of educational process technological updating in a higher education institution is urgent in pedagogical science and practice at higher education institutions.

**Methodological Framework**

The research laboratory of the Russian Academy of Education (RAE) and Kazan Federal University was created in April, 2014 under the leadership of the head of the university I.R Gafurov; its aim is organizational, content and technological updating of educational process (Gafurov, Platonova & Pratchenko, 2014; Masalimova, Usak & Shaidullina, 2016). The laboratory allowed the university to receive highly skilled and specialized consulting services of RAE scientific divisions. In its turn, Kazan Federal University – as one of the largest higher education institutions of the Russian Federation (more than 47 thousand students, 180 curricula for a bachelor's degree, 120 curricula for a master's degree) and a participant of the Program of competitiveness increase among leading world scientific and educational centers – represents a strong experimental base for approbation and introduction of new ideas developed by RAE scientists.

*The goal of Kazan Federal University and the Russian Academy of Education collaboration*

The creation of a research laboratory in cooperation with the Russian Academy of Education on the basis of the University was aimed at providing a qualitatively new level of competitive graduates' training and formation of an integrated position in educational process: "student - the subject of education: individual - personality - human" due to educational process intensification by means of technological updating of person's open, flexible, and individualized lifelong education.

Collaboration goals of RAE and University research laboratory:

- development and introduction of an educational process monitoring system in a higher education institution;
- ensuring organizational and content updating of educational process in a higher education institution;
- implementation of effective educational technologies complex introduction;
- information and methodical support of educational process in a higher education institution.

### **Results and Discussions**

#### ***Development and introduction of an educational process monitoring system at a higher education institution***

The necessity to set this task is substantiated by the fact that its solution allows to trace the dynamics of students' educational motivation levels formation, their professional competences, personal growth, and to implement the appropriate correction at *organizational and administrative* (development and introduction of a set of fundamental documents about the quality system according to the international ISO 9001:2011 standard; designing of lifelong learning in accordance with the variability of higher education curricula and individual educational trajectories); *social and pedagogical* (extension the practice of international educational programs development, including franchising and programs of double higher school diplomas; interaction with employers during the whole training period; creation of the institution of consultants dealing with academic matters (tutors) and helping students to solve problems arising in the process of training); *information and technological* (improvement of e-University educational network platforms that represent a complex of software to arrange distance learning, consultation and knowledge testing in the network mode; introduction of training technologies that assume organization of students' independent work and wide use of: information technologies, technologies of distance and project learning, reflexive techs in combination with technologies aimed at the development of critical thinking, research technologies, etc.; introduction of Big Data technology to form a common database of applicants and students' educational achievements, to create a bank of educational technologies and the register of teachers' technological potential, to study indices of social sphere, etc.) ; *educational and methodical levels* (application of modular curricula providing students with the possibility to choose their individual educational trajectory, development of an individual educational route; development of modular educational programs of applied Baccalaureate; development of hand-out materials for foreign students experiencing difficulties in language communication). 4.300 applicants were questioned at the first stage of the research.

#### ***Solution of the given task***

In the course of solving this task, the analysis of motivational structure change dynamics of higher school students studying various courses was conducted; assessment procedures of students' vocational competences formed at studying different disciplines in different years of study were approved; accessibility to obtained results of students' educational achievements assessment was provided; key indicators of students' personal growth were defined.

#### ***Reserves and recommendations***

The results of the conducted research determine the following actions: creation of a database of higher school students' motivation factors, their educational achievements, digital portfolio of students' achievements; identification of barriers and resources that hinder/promote successful educational policy development; evaluation of the reality of achieved educational results by means of available resources within the allowed time, and in case of need entering of amendments into the educational policy of a higher education institution; development of individual educational trajectories with students' personal growth monitoring in view.

#### ***Ensuring organizational-content updating of educational process at a higher education institution***

The necessity to provide organizational and content updating of educational process is connected with goals and values transformation at higher education institutions due to their move to the status of scientific-research ones in the conditions of globalization and internationalization of higher education. This direction requires a detailed examination of educational process arrangement at a higher education institution; development and approbation of variable models of bachelors' training; introduction of innovative variable and flexible master's programs, strengthening of a research component in their training, formation of their cross-cultural competence; development of students and teachers' academic mobility;

ensuring scientific schools' continuity at a higher education institution; development of new approaches to education standardization focused on the competitive participation of higher education institutions in the international market of educational services.

### *Solution of the given task*

The solution of this task resulted in the development of an estimation procedure of organizational and methodical indices of conducted classes; classes conducted by teachers were subjected to examination in some KFU institutes; information on implemented training technologies has been collected; presentations of teachers' professional activity results, pedagogical innovations databank, an exhibition of methodical and creative works have taken place; variable training models of bachelors in the direction of "Pedagogical education" have been singled out at KFU: traditional (Elabuga Institute), distributed (institutes and faculties of KFU), integrative (IPO – at the stage of introduction); the standard of higher pedagogical education at KFU has been developed and submitted for discussion at the Coordination council; modular curricula and educational programs of bachelors' training according to profiles have been worked out; a linear trajectory of training has been given up and conditions for free "entrance" to programs of vocational training have been created; contracts with educational institutions and SC for the implementation of various forms of on-the-job training and network interaction have been signed; analysis of master's programs in the field of professional pedagogical education among students of non-pedagogical specialties has been carried out (for bachelor's degree graduates on pedagogical specialties); innovative GEP of applied magistracy in "Management in Education" and "Pedagogue in the System of Secondary Education" have been developed, approved and realized (for bachelor's degree graduates that have non-pedagogical specialties); the modular program "Professional and Pedagogical Day" with partner schools' assistance (lyceum named after Lobachevsky, IT lyceum) is being implemented, it allows to provide: the use of junior and senior students' joint activity resources (strengthening of a practical component, use of "internal" reserves for the formation of vocational competences, creation of organizational conditions for professionally oriented upbringing activity); classes and practices conducted on the basis of partner schools (inclusion in a real educational process); the pilot project of an additional educational program "Pedagogical education" has been elaborated for third-year and fourth-year students of non-pedagogical profile motivated for a pedagogical profession; continuous monitoring of KFU graduates' employment is conducted with RT employment services. The grant of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation for the sum of 13.8 million rubles was won as a result of the research.

### *Reserves and recommendations*

The results of the conducted research determine the following actions: creation of an individual methodical trajectory of higher school teachers' development; creation of conditions for personal, methodical, and professional growth of teachers working at KFU, successful adaptation of young specialists to teaching activity in a higher education institution; creation of methodical resources information bank; elaboration of mechanisms aimed at stimulation of methodological, critical, creative thinking, and professional competence of the teaching staff.

### *Implementation of effective educational technologies complex introduction*

Complex introduction of effective educational technologies is connected with: studying of world educational experience in order to identify its adaptive educational potential and constructive use in a higher education institution; analysis and expert assessment of foreign technologies introduced in the educational process of Russian higher education institutions; introduction of innovative training technologies and interactive methods. The variety of modern technologies of vocational education and their insufficient approximation for the target and address training of future competitive experts of a humanitarian profile determines the urgency of this direction development.

### *Solution of the given task*

The solution of this task included: SWOT analysis of educational technologies of the Higher school of ITIS KFU (analysis of classes at the Higher school of ITIS KFU to define strong and weak points, advantages and shortcomings of technological support of basic educational

programs, development of technological guidelines of the Institute to provide high quality educational results); development of a training program and master-classes of modern educational technologies application for KFU teachers; development and introduction of MULTITECHNOLOGY training technology the basis of which make the ideas of TRUMP plan for first-year students of the Institute of Psychology and Education; calculation of a training algorithm at the university for each separate module of the studied discipline, including all lectures and practical training, individual consultations and independent work; development of advanced training courses for teachers: "Innovative methods in education on the basis of the Singapore system" (40 people), training seminars for students "Possibilities of the Singapore training method at school and higher education institutions" (65 people) ; some changes (on the pilot basis) in TMC and educational process organization on the basis of a cooperative training method for first-year students (the direction: "pedagogical ("primary education") for disciplines "Phonetics", "Natural sciences", "Age psychology", "History of native literature"; diagnostics of the Singapore training method efficiency at the Institute of Psychology and Education at KFU; development of an interactive construct (model); publication of the study guide "Practice of interactive training" for teachers of higher education institutions the main purpose of which is to develop and improve teachers' abilities to arrange classes; creation of experimental platforms at the Institute of Psychology and Education and Elabuga Institute of KFU; training, diagnostics and introduction of interactive practices by teachers of the Institute of Psychology and Education and Elabuga Institute; development of expert assessment criteria of interactive practices application results by KFU teachers in various educational programs.

### ***Reserves and recommendations***

The following is necessary due to the results of the given research task solution: increase of training technologies share aimed at students' independent work arrangement, and wide use of information technologies, technologies of distance and project learning, reflexive technologies in combination with technologies of critical thinking development, research technologies etc.; reorientation of teachers' activity from information to organizational in the sphere of students' independent, educational, informative, research and vocational activity management; expert assessment of foreign technologies; promotion and improvement of the training process quality; development of students' intensive cognitive activity; formation of students' high standard knowledge, abilities and practical skills to use information technologies; creation and ensuring students and teachers' access to information educational resources; extension of students' independent work; use of modern ways to monitor knowledge; designing of interactive training technologies according to the variability of programs of higher education and individual educational trajectories; development of recommendations on interactive training technologies adaptation in educational process; increase of experimental platforms at KFU Institutes; improvement of higher education quality in the conditions of interactive training technologies integration.

### ***Development of information-methodical support of educational process at a higher education institution***

The necessity to develop information-methodical support of educational process at a higher education institution is associated with optimization of material and intellectual investments of a higher education institution; creation of natural psychologically comfortable competitive environment due to the transparency of students' training results, and teachers' professional activity as well; development of creative approach to educational issues solution; systematic consultation and large-scale testing of students' knowledge in the network mode; appropriate correction of students' individual educational trajectory; formation of common database of applicants and students' educational achievements; creation of educational technologies bank and register of teachers' technological potential. Information-methodical support of a higher school educational process is aimed to design an electron shell of the register of teachers' psychology and pedagogical potential, creation of psychologically comfortable educational environment, approbation of Big Data technology in the research of educational process at a higher education institution.



*Solution of the given task*

In the course of the task solution, key parameters, indicators, criteria have been developed in order to create a database; systematization, analysis, classification of obtained information has been implemented; the electron shell which is in an open entry for all KFU teachers has been created; KFU site, personal pages of the KFU teaching staff have been updated; consultation (individual and group), psychology and pedagogical education and training of KFU teaching staff to develop their psychology and pedagogical competence (lectures, advanced training courses, schools of sciences, schools of pedagogical skill, etc.) have been conducted; correctional developmental work with KFU teaching staff has been arranged; comprehensive (psychological, pedagogical, methodical, legal, social) help regarding matters arising in the process of work has been rendered to young specialists; indicators to study educational process at a higher education institution have been defined so as to apply Big Data technology; Big Data technology has been developed and introduced in the research of an educational process at a higher education institution; the efficiency of introduced Big Data technologies in the conditions of innovative educational processes has been estimated.

*Reserves and recommendations*

The following has been proposed due to the results of the conducted research: register's electron shell designing of teaching staff psychology, pedagogical and methodical potential (identification of leading experts in different directions with labour market demands in view, advanced training courses, scientific conferences, researches, etc.); inclusion of main results in Big Database; creation of psychological consulting centers for teachers and students at a higher education institution; encouragement of teachers for self-development, self-education, motivation for professional excellence achievement; increase of personal, methodical and professional growth of the KFU teaching staff; creation of conditions for young specialists' successful adaptation to teaching activity in a higher education institution; creation of psychologically comfortable educational environment; storage, processing and analysis of educational process indicators at a higher education institution in a real-time mode, continuous addition and comparison of already received information with new information of different structures and with various speed of replenishment from external sources for the purpose of educational process quality improvement at a higher education institution; identification of barriers and resources which are complicating/promoting the formation of a successful educational policy, students' individual educational trajectory formation, and teachers' individual professional and methodical trajectory of development at a higher education institution; development of recommendations on effective educational policy management at a higher education institution and information methodical support of educational process; development of interfaculty projects on the basis of data obtained due to Big Data technologies.

**Conclusions**

Thus, the solution of the designated research objectives allowed to create students' motivators database at a higher education institution to carry out appropriate correction of educational process; to develop students' educational achievements base to reveal barriers and resources complicating or promoting successful educational policy formation, and to develop individual educational trajectories with students' personal growth results in view; to develop a system of faculty motivation; to develop modular educational programs for applied baccalaureate on the basis of a competence-based approach as a main model of training specialists realized in the network interaction of KFU institutes, organizations and partner enterprises; to realize programs of practical modular magistracy to provide a fast entry to a profession; to design register's electron shell of the teaching staff's psychology, pedagogical and methodical potential (identification of leading experts in different directions with labour market demands in view, advanced training courses, scientific conferences, researches, etc.); to develop recommendations on effective educational policy management at a higher education institution and information methodical support of educational process; to develop tools of data intellectual analysis (Big Data) directed to the assessment of educational process quality at a higher education institution.

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# INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE TRAINING OF FUTURE SPECIALISTS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KAZAN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY

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## **Abstract**

The relevance of this study is due to new approaches to higher professional education. The main task of higher vocational school today is the formation of a responsible person, able to successfully organize their activities in problem situations with professional competence, moral consciousness, open-minded, able to constructively adapt to be competitive in today's tough job market. Education at the University shall form the thinking of future specialists capable of the birth of new original ideas and their realization, understanding of personal and socially relevant meanings. The purpose of the article is the research and development of science-based system of interactive technologies, the most effective in the training of undergraduate students of "Primary education" profile, future primary school teachers. The leading method to the study of this problem is a pedagogical experiment (notes forming and testing stages of the experiment), and the method of expert evaluations, statistical treatment of quantitative research results. The developed methodical system of the use of interactive learning technologies of undergraduate students contributes to the formation of social and personal and general culture, general science, tools and professional competence of future specialists of primary education in today's competitive job market. Article materials may be useful to teachers of higher educational institutions in the application of this method of formation of professional-pedagogical competence of students in the educational process of high school.

**Keywords:** interactive technology, undergraduate students, an elementary school teacher competence.

## **Introduction**

### *Relevance of the issue*

In modern conditions of development of society there is a need of new approaches to higher education, a look at the training of students - professionals of primary education from reproductive assimilation of knowledge aimed at the frontal forms of work with students it is necessary to find a student-centered approach based on the idea of prioritizing personal-semantic development, the subjective experience of the personality, the individual pedagogical support. Specialist of primary education must not only possess a system of professional competence to be able to apply in practice the knowledge acquired in high school, but also be able to apply this knowledge in new and unusual situations that require human-box thinking and innovative approaches to solving problems. The use of interactive learning technologies at the University contributes to the formation of professional competencies of the specialist, the development of analytical thinking, creativity abilities of the individual (Vedishenkova, Efimova&Ryabova, 2015).

### *Tendencies in organizational-content updating of educational process*

The concept of technology in the modern sense is used primarily in the production (industrial, agricultural), various types of research and production of human activity and involves a complex of knowledge about methods of operations, actions of the production process, guaranteeing certain results. Thus, the leading signs of technology are collection (the

combination, compound), of some components; logic, sequence of components; methods, steps, operations (as components); guarantee of results. Pedagogical technology is the set of methods (methods, techniques, operations) of pedagogical interaction, creating conditions for the development of the participants of pedagogical process and involves determining the results of this development (Kashlev, 2000). Scientists distinguish the following functions of educational technology in the pedagogical process: 1) organizational-activity; 2) Designing (predictive); 3) communicative; 4) reflexive; 5) developing (Bespalko, 2002). The first function involves the organization of the teacher, conditions creations for the child activities by the teacher; teacher and child activities creations; activities organizations by the child. The second function includes prevision of its possible results by participants of pedagogical process; modeling of pedagogical interaction; forecast of development of the child and the teacher in the implementation of educational technology. The third function reflects: communication activities of teachers and parents, members of the pedagogical process; information exchange between teacher and student; creating conditions of mutual understanding of the teacher and the pupil. The fourth function provides awareness of the teacher and the child in the current educational situation; assessment of the objective results of pedagogical interaction; understanding and mastering of experience of interaction; fixing the conditions and reasons for the development. The fifth function is a creation of conditions for the development of the child and the teacher; to provide the means of self-development of teachers and students.

*Relevance of educational process technological updating*

Research of Russian scientists shows that the word "interactive" is derived from "Interaction". Interaction is a purposeful interaction and mutual influence of the participants of pedagogical process, based on the personal experience of each (Kyrlyuk&Korz, 1996). When interaction is understood as the direct interaction of interpersonal communication, the most important feature that recognizes a person's ability to "take the role of another," imagine how it perceives the communication partner or group, and accordingly to interpret the situation, say their own actions (Peter & Yaroshevskii, 1998). Interaction is understood as an intensive process of dialogue, activities change and variety of activities; change of state parties (process). When the teacher interaction activities aimed at strengthening, intensification of activities of students and vice versa; system operations, activities, interaction between participants of the pedagogical process; purposeful reflection of participants in its activities, interactions; change and improve the behaviors and activities of the participants of pedagogical process (Bespalko, 2002).

In the US, the interactive learning technology is based on the ideas of the theory of symbolic interactionism, which serve as the basis for the development of an environment conducive to the process of self-realization of students in learning activities. In works of John G. Meade, G. Blumer they examine theoretical and methodological principles of the concept of interaction. The main focus is directed on interactive learning dialogue between partners which leads to personality socialization. During the socialization of the individual develops the values of various symbols developed in the community, and thereby more successful in the process of entering into a social "role" and perceives the installation "generalized another" (Blumer, 2001). According to American scientists, interactive learning contributes to the development of communication skills, ability to work in a group, make informed decisions, and most importantly to self-development of the man, the ability to present themselves as objects of his own thoughts (Mead, 2009). In Germany, since the late 70's - early 80-ies interactive technologies in education are in priority: training, programming, computer training, educational panel discussions, case-study (analysis of specific, practical situations), business and role-playing games. Especially business communication skills, training for managers at various levels who have success in the performance of official duties determined by the high level of interpersonal skills formed with other people got a wide popularity. Business communication training aims to develop in students not only effective interpersonal skills, but also to improve the general level of competence in this field, enhancing leadership potential. In today's Germany they use the method of Case-study, which involves the transition from the method for activity-accumulation of knowledge, practice-oriented approach. This is one of the

most experienced methods in the practice of teaching decision-making skills and problem solving in Germany. The purpose of this method is to teach students to analyze information, identify key issues to choose alternative solutions, evaluate them, and find the best option to formulate a program of action. In the analysis of concrete situations it is particularly important that there is an individual work of students combined with problem situations and group discussion of proposals prepared by each member of the group. This allows students to develop the skills of the group, teamwork (Teamarbeit), which expands the opportunities for solving common problems in the framework of the study curriculum subjects. As a result of the analysis of individual, group discussions, identifying problems, finding alternatives, the choice of actions and their implementation plan students have the opportunity to develop the skills of analysis and planning. In France, in the late 80s of the 20th century, widespread forms of interactive learning as a workshop or atelier (workshop or atelier ZHFEN - "The French group New Education") were popular. Workshop - one of the technologies of intensive training, including each of the participants in the "self-construction" of their knowledge through a critical attitude towards the available information to the received, and decisions on their own creative tasks. The advantage of this technology is the education of the person of the new formation, confident in their abilities and capabilities, able to build relationships with peers and adults, taking into account the opinions of others with the skills of self "construction" of knowledge , self solving of creativity tasks (Bassis, 1995) .

### *Relevance of educational process technological updating*

Native and foreign scientists mean training dialog under interactive learning technology, in which takes part the interaction of all participants. The word "interactive" is derived from the word "interact" (Eng.), Where the "inter" - mutual, "act" - to act. "Interactivity" means the ability to interact or to be in the mode of dialogue. Under interactive technology we understand the ways of organizing the system of interaction of the teacher and students in the form of training of the dialog, guaranteeing a pedagogically effective cognitive communication, in which conditions for students experiencing a situation of success in educational activity are created, their mutual motivational, intellectual, emotional, and other areas. Interactive learning technology of students at Kazan Federal University aimed at developing pedagogical values of future specialists of primary education, the development of students' ability to learn, critically analyze and interpret information, to put forward original ideas, to be able to protect them. These skills acquired at university, not only contribute to the assimilation of the students of the program material, but will succeed in the future professional activity (Kamalova&Ulianitskaya, 2014). Communicative competence and skills in the group largely provide social competence of the teacher and the achievement of success in life (Khairova, 2014). Interactive technologies create conditions for the development of psychological and educational workshops, contributing to a better understanding of their point of view (Gromova&Alimbekov, 2015). Primary school teacher must have such professional competences that will enable him to work with young people with deviant behavior (Novik&Podgórecki, 2015), children from children's homes (Ribakova, Parfilova, Karimova&Karimova, 2015).

In the learning process interactive technologies allow teachers to create a special learning environment, design training situation creatively, ensuring increase the activity of students in the acquisition of knowledge and skills, create conditions for the formation of professional competence of future specialists of primary education (Kamalova, 2015).

### **Methodological Framework**

In the experimental work we used such interactive learning technologies, as brainstorming, role play, project method. Experimental studies involved 166 undergraduate students 1 and 2 courses of the Institute of Psychology and Education, Kazan Federal University, studying the profile "Primary education".

In the first phase of the experiment (stating) during the 1 semester of 2013-2014 academic year on a practical training on children's literature at the 2nd year students were used reproductive teaching methods. Students were offered questions that did not require the analysis of a problem situation, the arguments of their own opinions on the works of children's

writers: who narrates in the stories of V.A. Oseyeva? What is the perspective of the story of L. Pantelev "Frank word"? What are the characteristics of creative style of V.P. Kataev in fairy tales for children? 1 year students were offered following questions on phonetics: What is sound? What is the system of vowels and consonants of the Russian language? Which of famous linguists studied the phonemes? According to the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of experiment in December 2013 students of 1 (106 pers.). And 2 courses (60 pers.) were offered to structure an examination of the material, its classification, analysis and synthesis.

### **Results and Discussions**

#### ***Development and introduction of an educational process monitoring system at a higher education institution***

The results of ascertaining stage of the experiment showed that students had not coped with the task. Ordering of educational material - 28%; classification of the facts, phenomena, events - 24%, analysis of artistic images of children's literature - 29%; Analysis of linguistic phenomena in Russian - 25%; generalization of the conclusions of section studying "Phonetics" and "Children's Literature" - 26% and 28%, respectively. These results showed that we should use such training technologies that would form reflexive and analytical skills, socio-personal, general science, tools and professional competence of future specialists of primary education. Experimental work on the second phase of the study (formative experiment) on interactive teaching students of 1 course was organized during the 2nd semester, students of 2 courses - within 4 semesters. At the workshops on "phonetics" and "Children's Literature" we used such forms of online learning as "brainstorming", role playing, and project method.

Effective form of online learning is "brainstorming", which allows developing of students' creative thinking, the ability to compare and contrast, think of associations, images, think of "conjecture." In the context of "brainstorming" there is a dialogue, which acts as a mean to remove all barriers to free the creative energies of its participants. The purpose of the "brainstorming" is collecting as many ideas freed from the inertia of thinking. During the "brainstorming" Students worked in small artistic groups from 4 to 6 people. The selection of the ideas produced special experts who recorded all sounded ideas and selected the most correct and original, considering the creative goals and objectives of its decision.

#### ***Solution of the given task***

At the seminars "brainstorming" on "phonetics" "The concept of the phoneme in the Moscow and Leningrad phonological schools" students of 1 course were offered such problematic issues:

1. How do the concepts of "phoneme" and "sound" in MFSH and LFSH relate?
2. What is the assessment of phonetic sounds [ə] and [ɪ] LFSH and MFSH.
3. What is the same and what is different and MFSH and LFSH opinion on the recognition of the importance of soft phonological velar [g] [k], [h].
4. What are the differences between MFSH and LFSH about the sounds [ʃ], [ʒ] reveal the essence of the phonological system of each of the schools?

"Brainstorming" allowed to create the necessary conditions to enhance the educational and cognitive activity of students, interest in the training sessions; initiate independent mental activity; the development of the creative potential of the individual student; prevent fatigue, creating a comfortable environment for the training and education of the future specialist; to create conditions for formation of professionally significant personal qualities of students.

Practice class on children's literature on the topic "The debate about children's literature in the 20-ies of XX century" held at the 2nd year students in the form of a "brainstorming". "Do children need fairy tales?" The purpose of the "brainstorming" was to collect the number of original ideas as much as possible. The work was organized in small groups of 5-6 people. To prepare for this lesson, students were given the problematic issues:

1. Do you agree with the statement of N.K.Krupskaya that the fairy tale distracts the child from real life: it reflects the ideology of the bourgeois world; it embodies the mysticism and religiosity?

2. Prove the justice of Gorky: "Children under the age of 10 require fun, and it is a biological law."

3. Is the writer S. Marshak right, claiming that all children's writers should learn from the fairy tale? What to learn, what do you think?

4. "Let gravity of the child to the magic, fantasy, mystery and imagination - then mutilate it, interfere with the normal development of the personality," claimed Lunacharskii. Do you agree with this statement?

5. Do modern children need fairy tales? Why? Explain your answer.

Preparing for this class contributed to the formation of the whole complex of reflective, analytical and methodological skills of the students, their general cultural competences. During the "brainstorming" students learnt to debate, to put forward their own ideas, to defend their point of view, to generalize, to give examples of read works of children's literature. Work in small groups of artists contributed to the organization of educational dialogue, formation of communicative skills, reflective and analytical abilities of students.

During the formative experiment, we actively used role-playing games. Educational point of role games is to strengthen students' thinking, to increase the independence of the future expert, to make a creative spirit in training to prepare for professional practice. The system of active learning, we used several modifications of role-playing:

- 1) simulation;
- 2) operational;
- 3) the performance of roles;
- 4) the method of staging.

1 year undergraduate students of the Department of Pedagogy and Methods of primary education of the Institute of Psychology and Education KFU summarized the results of the study course "Phonetics" in the form of role-playing game "Trial of illiteracy." The students were given the task of the word creative works, interpretation, acting game, decoration present form of the hearings with all the trappings of modern justice. Role-playing game "Trial of illiteracy" has allowed undergraduate students to demonstrate in-depth knowledge and skills in phonetics, an opportunity for participants to present their ideas in small groups, to form problem-solving skills, learn the art of dialogue from each other, develop their creativity and ability to present complex material in accessible and understandable form. The main result of that class was that students were willing to further research activities, the realization of creative projects, to continue learning in an interactive way.

2nd year undergraduate students prepared to practical training on the course "Children's Literature" a role play scenario "Playground folklore." The aim of the event was:

- 1) to learn how to organize their own activities, to determine the methods for solving professional problems, evaluate their effectiveness and quality;
- 2) to search for, analyze and assess information needed for formulating and solving professional problems, professional and personal development;
- 3) use of information and communication technologies to improve the professional activity;
- 4) work in a team and the team to interact with the team members;
- 5) to develop creative thinking, imagination and fantasy.

At the stage of forming experiment Students performed the task of theoretical generalization and design, constructing tasks. These tasks were related to the analysis, synthesis, generalization of empirical data and the formulation of hypotheses; designing theoretical model studies, the experimental setup, abstraction, forecasting, designing. 1 course undergraduate students on the subject "Phonetics" were given the task designing of the following type:

1. To find the interaction of phonetics and orthoepy in the textbooks of Russian language of primary school.

2. To make a classification of the most common mistakes of primary school pupils in the phonetic parsing of words.

3. To find general laws to systematize material on phonetics in various Russian language textbooks for primary schools.

During the study course "Children's Literature" (4th semester) 2nd year students were given a project assignment:

1. Learn the content of textbooks in literary reading. Make the classification of children's folklore works.

2. Make a table "Classification of works of children's folklore in the textbooks of literary reading"

3. Read the content of literary reading. Make a plan for an oral presentation on the topic "The subjects of proverbs and sayings in books of literary reading".

4. In literary reading textbooks find what lullabies folk songs are studied by younger students. Determine the means of artistic expression in lullabies.

5. Find out what tongue twisters are studied by primary school pupils; which articulation of sounds are they directed; what is the topic of patterns?

### *Reserves and recommendations*

On the third stage of experimental work (control) at the end of May 2014 students 1 and 2 courses have been given the following tasks aimed to check maturity of reflective- analytical, problem-analytical and creative competences of future specialist of primary education. 1st year students were offered to draft "Textbooks elementary school in the Russian language: a reflection of the views of leading scientists philologists Moscow and St. Petersburg phonological schools"; 2 year students to draft a "Creative portrait of children's writer of the XIX century" (Pushkin, P.P. Ershova, V.F. Odoevsky); "Creative portrait of children's writer of XX century" (K.I. Chukovsky, B.V. Zahoder, E.N. Uspensky).

### *Implementation of effective educational technologies complex introduction*

Analysis of completed projects showed that in the formative experiment the students of 1 and 2 courses formed reflexive and analytical skills, substantive and methodological competencies:

1) reflexive and analytical skills: the ability to allocate most importantly, 85%; the ability to analyze material- 87%; ability to organize material- 89%; the ability to classify the material 86%; the ability to draw conclusions and generalizations of 88%, the ability to put forward original ideas and defend them- 84%, the ability to dream, imagine- 83%; teamwork - 92%;

2) substantive competence: willingness to use knowledge of scientific bases of the course content of elementary school - 67%; positive attitude to the subject matter - 78%; conscious possession of specialized terminology to the extent necessary in connection with the contents of the educational material - 79%; ability to interpret and organize scientific information on the subject- 84%; the ability to tailor the content to the capabilities of the discipline of students with 89%;

3) methodological competence: willingness to plan, select, to synthesize and design the training material on subjects - 87%; willingness to organize various forms of study on subjects - 79%; willingness to implement the activity approach to learning and the ability to organize educational work of younger schoolboys - 85%; willingness to use innovative technologies of education- 94%.

Thus, interactive technologies create conditions for the formation of "ability to learn", the development of problem-analytical, problem-reflective and creative thinking in the educational process in the creation of situations, constantly requires new solutions for increasingly complex and gradually learning tasks.

### *Solution of the given task*

Modern native and foreign education science in a new way studies the content of education in a new way. However, in the Russian pedagogical practice is still dominated informational technology, while the objective needs of society makes the problem of the widespread introduction of developmental and personality-oriented technologies. Modernization of the Russian education is aimed not only at changing the content of subjects,



but also at changes of teaching methods approaches, expanding the arsenal of teaching methods, the revitalization of the students in the class.

***Reserves and recommendations***

Studies, held by scientists show that the prevalence of reproductive approaches create indifferent attitude to learning among half of the students, and a negative attitude among the third. That is why in the field of higher professional education, it is important that the student was not only a passive object of exposure but could find the information independently and exchanged views on a specific topic with their peers, take part in discussions, find arguments to perform a variety of roles. Interactive learning requires the use of special forms of organization of cognitive activities, and poses very specific and predictable targets, such as creating a comfortable learning environment and the inclusion of students in the educational interaction that makes the process of productive learning. Compared to traditional training in interactive teaching changes the interaction of the teacher and students' activity the teacher gives students a place of activity and the task of the teacher is to create conditions for the initiative. Therefore, it is necessary to generate social and active initiative creative personality, developing natural inclinations, tendencies and personality of each student through the use of interactive learning technologies.

**Conclusions**

Thus, in the course of training undergraduate students at Kazan Federal University were used such interactive technologies such as "brainstorming", role playing, project method, in which students completed tasks that contribute to the formation of professional competencies:

- 1) empirical tasks - collection, classification and systematization of data on the studied process or phenomenon;
- 2) setting a theoretical generalization - analysis, synthesis, generalization of empirical data and formulation of the hypothesis;
- 3) designing, design tasks - design a theoretical model studies, the experimental setup, abstraction, forecasting, designing;
- 4) promotional tasks - practical implementation of the model study in a real school of reality requiring manifestations of organizational, communication, planning, adjustment and management qualities of the future specialist;
- 5) analytical tasks - tasks requiring manifestation abilities to analyze the results of implementation of recommendation and make conclusions by monitoring and regulation, to give an objective assessment of the results, summarize, draw conclusions and set new challenges in research. Each type of task includes such content through which we can identify, build and develop research, professional skills of the student, dominant style of mental activity during the performance of work. During assignments the student performs the transformation of mastered knowledge and skills of a specific professional basis.

Education at the University shall form the thinking of future specialists capable of the birth of new original ideas and their realization, understanding of personal and socially relevant meanings.

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## TEACHER PORTFOLIO: ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS, FUNCTIONS, STRUCTURE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Abstract

The issue is relevant due to the fact that the idea of designing, developing and implementing Teacher Portfolio is associated with new understanding of the goals in modern education, i.e. facilitating person's skills development that helps him build his own educational and professional development strategy in a continuously changing environment, forming different competencies including realization of personal potential, self-education, desire and ambition for continuing professional development and learning throughout life. The article highlights the main directions in the research related to portfolio design and use. It considers the contradictions that have determined the reasons for a portfolio and its potential. The paper gives the author's interpretation of 'teacher portfolio' concept, disclosed the essential characteristics of Teacher Portfolio, identifies its goals, general and specific objectives, and distinguishes its functions. It considers the structure of Teacher Portfolio, its main sections and content that reflects the main areas of teacher's professional activities, reveals his philosophy of teaching and allows to demonstrate his achievements and results through these activities. The author enlists the following principles Teacher Portfolio is focused on: complexity, reliability, consistency and continuity, optimal combination of openness and privacy. The practical significance of the study is based on practical recommendations it gives to a teacher for creating and developing a successful portfolio. The paper is addressed to teachers and school authorities, teachers of pedagogical high education institutions, teacher trainers, and teaching personnel working in the system of further teachers' development.

**Keywords:** teacher portfolio, structure of a teacher portfolio, practical recommendations for creating a portfolio.

### Introduction

A contemporary teacher is a creative person possessing pedagogical problem solving and critical thinking, a creator of syllabi for multi elective courses based on advanced experience and new techniques of instruction and training, and interpreting them under the specific pedagogical conditions with diagnostic goal setting and reflection.

These high demands to the personality of a teacher and his professional competencies suggest completely different mechanisms of evaluation and presentation of his achievements and results related to his educational, developing, methodological, scientific research, self-educational, realization of personal potential, and other of activities (Shaidullina et al., 2015). One of the forms is a portfolio as a collection of materials that document one's teaching performance, highlights significant teaching accomplishments, and is able to lead to self-reflection and promotion decisions.

Major contradictions that caused creation and use of Teacher Portfolio in education system are the following:

- between the requirements to professional standard for teachers and formal approach to evaluation of the quality of his professional activities, or work;
- between the obsolete system of evaluation and assessment and contemporary requirement to the system of school education, as well as the quality of educational and training services provided;

- between the need to improve staff policy in a contemporary school and the lack of adequate forms of work with teachers staff in educational institutions.

### **Literature Review**

The studies on the issues of designing, creating and using a portfolio in educational practice have been conducted in different directions: the study of foreign, or international, experience in using a portfolio in education and training, presented by V. K. Zagvozdkin (2004), T. G. Novikova, A. S. Prutchenkova & E. E. Fedotova (2005) in their papers; N. V. Zelenko & A. G. Mogilevska (2009), L. S. Kolodkina (2008), O. V. Nikiforov (2007), A. A. Semenov (2008), E. Kh. Tazutdinova (2010) reported in their papers that a portfolio may be successfully used in professional training of future teachers; L.P. Makarova (2010), M. A. Pinskaya (2009), M. M. Potashnik (2009), L. A. Pronina (2009), Zagvozdkin V. K. (2010) considered the issues of creating and using a professional teacher portfolio in pedagogical work.

The number of foreign researchers devoted their papers to the issues of creating and developing a portfolio: D. Baume (2001), B. W. Hurst (1998), M. Kimball (2002), J. Strivens (2007).

There are different definitions of portfolio concept given by Russian researchers: Yu. Yu. Dergacheva (2009) accentuates attention on the fact that this is the form that helps in developing and assessing teacher's practice, determining the level of skills and competencies and, in training, adapting them to the conditions maximally responding to professional routines.

E. V. Grigorenko (2007) defines portfolio as an effective method of rational and transparent professionals' promotion on the labor market. It is a method to assess their competencies, as well as their career prospects, professional and creative cooperation with an employer.

In our view, interpretation of portfolio concept only as the means of evaluating and assessing skills and competencies is very specific and doesn't fully define its true meaning, since the very idea of portfolio and the strategy of its implementation in educational practice has been considered in the context of changes occurring in the current educational paradigm. Under the conditions of dynamically developing reality it is necessary for a teacher to develop and implement his/her individual strategy of developing and improving his competences, competitiveness, personal and professional self-determination and self-implementation in the contemporary society.

The increasing number of publications devoted to the issues and challenges of using portfolio in educational practice still does not introduce clarity into the content and essence of this question, thus causing the need for further study of this phenomenon, disclosing its essential, functional, structural characteristics and principles.

### **Methodological Framework**

Competence approach makes methodological basis for creating, implementing and developing Teacher Portfolio in educational practice with a particular focus on the results of professional activities in the form of competencies (Zimnyaya, 2006; Medvedev & Tatur, 2007).

The following principles make the basis for Teacher Portfolio structure:

- comprehensiveness (materials related to the results of the teacher's work through different forms of educational, teaching, training, methodological, scientific, self-educational and other fields spheres of his work, and various forms of reporting on it, i.e. documents, papers, opinions, expert conclusions and the like);
- adequacy and reliability (correspondence of the materials presented in the portfolio to the true state of things);
- succession and continuity (materials presented should reflect the dynamics of the expansion of the teacher's professional sphere and his professional development);
- optimality (portfolio development is not the final aim but it is able to contribute into improvement of teacher's professional activities and develop a set of competencies (Sakhieva et al., 2015);

- combination of openness and privacy (documents, materials, results, opinions and responds are open to be used by consumers, or users, of educational services, administration and society as a whole, and at the same time, there must be a guarantee of copyrights).

### **Results and Discussions**

#### *Teacher Portfolio characteristics related to its essence (principles), goals and functions*

Considering the essential characteristics of Teacher Portfolio we have focused our attention on the fact that portfolio is a technique for defining, determining, accumulating, systematizing, assessing and presenting actual achievements and results in educational, developing, methodological, research, self-educational and other forms of activities in the specific time interval, and they are related to teacher's abilities to facilitate development of his existing competencies and developing the new ones, as well as his willingness for further self-development, and bringing all his talents and competencies into dynamically developing practice.

A portfolio goal is directly connected with teacher's improvement in the field of his teaching style and professional competencies.

General objectives for creating and developing a Teacher Portfolio are:

- to motivate the teacher to improve the quality of the work that he is associated with;
- to form and develop his professional competencies including his self-education;
- to demonstrate the dynamics of teacher's achievements in different forms of activities, and ensure monitoring his personal progress in wide range of educational and professional contexts;
- to design and plot individual personal career trajectory important for his development as a teacher (Sharifzyanova, Shtreter & Nauryzbayeva, 2015);
- to form healthy competitive school environment which is able to determine the conditions for his successful professional career;
- to develop his reflexive and evaluative skills;
- to prerequisite conditions for successful self-implementation in the society.

The specific tasks for creating a teacher portfolio are the following:

- to systematize materials in different forms of activity;
- to suggest a method of presenting a certain material;
- to ensure objective, periodic, open assessment of the activities considered;
- to serve as the basis to be used when going through teacher certification procedure and participating in professional competitions.

The basic functions of the Portfolio are:

- motivational, that increases motivation in his professional activities;
- forming and developing, that contributes into new knowledge acquisition, existing and new competencies development, creativity;
- designing and simulating, that helps to design one's own model for individual educational route and professional development;
- accumulating and presenting, that means accumulation, recording and presenting the dynamics of professional achievements in different forms of activities;
- reflexive and assessing, that makes it possible to accomplish a comprehensive integrative assessment of results and achievements, his general cultural and professional competencies levels, and allows to develop reflexive and assessment skills (Sakhieva, 2011).

#### *Teacher Portfolio structure*

- The front page
- Content
- Introduction (with a list and description of the materials included in the portfolio and their justification as the evidence proving the teacher's professionalism and competencies).

### Section 1. General information about the teacher and his work

1. Resume (1 page).
2. Autobiography (1 page).
3. Documents confirming his/her qualification as a teacher (photocopies of graduate diplomas and certificates related to his professional activities and the documents about awards received).
4. Statement of his teaching philosophy (depends on the teacher's experience).

### Section 2. Teaching methodology, strategies, objectives

1. Methodological theme (may be as a table covering information about the themes, terms, estimated and received results (intermediate and total)).
2. Information about the educational program, syllabus, or/and curriculum that the teacher has been working with (whether or not it was examined and assessed by the Assessment Committee).
3. Methods (and materials related to them) used to ensure teaching and learning (in the form of a table including the name of the method, its type (e.g. a developing program for teaching gifted students and those who have special educational needs, may include the subject syllabus, teaching materials in the form of student and workbooks, practical developments, a glossary, practical recommendations, reminders, didactic material, handouts, lesson presentations, and the like), the date of development, brief description, version type (printed, manuscript, audiovisual, computer and other; if printed it should have the publication data), volume in pages and printed sheets, publishing house, edition, print run, co-authors, distribution (school libraries and teachers, school sites, Internet, printed versions). This is also the subdivision where the reviews on books and teaching materials developed may be presented.
4. A list of teaching methods and procedures with their brief characteristics.
5. A list of the classes/lessons observed by peers and colleagues (№, date, lesson theme, its type, class, observation level (school, district, city, Republic, etc.)).

Note: The best plans and developments of observation lessons (in Russia called 'open lessons') and master-classes (in the last 5 years or 5 years from the time of last certification); the photocopies of the observed lessons analysis, or master-classes observed by the leader, president, of methodology association, local administration, the members of expert committee, and introspective analysis of the lessons and master-classes may be arranged and attached at the end of the section and an e-Portfolio folder.

6. Information about reports on the themes related to methods of teaching presented at the sessions of creative groups, methodological associations, professional associations, teachers' meetings, seminars, etc. ((№, date, theme, organizers, location, level (district, city, republic, All-Russian, International)). Note: The best plans and reports are accumulated at the end of the subdivision and an e-Portfolio folder.

7. Being appointed as a chairman of a teachers' methodological association, workgroup on urgent methodological themes, mentoring (aid to young colleagues in their teaching, preparing for their certification, developing their portfolio, and the like).

### Section 3. Monitoring the quality of teaching process and students motives and emotions

1. Monitoring the results and quality of the students acquisition of educational programs (information about students' progress, outcomes, and quality of the knowledge acquired arranged according to years (%) and test results (%)).
2. Results of students' participation in subject Olympiads, projects, competitions (№ of sequence, date, the event, organizers, level, students, class, results).
3. Results in final school examination on the subjects taught.
4. Motivational and emotional spheres monitoring (learning motivation, cognitive activities, anxiety, frustration, etc., prepared in collaboration with a school psychologist).
5. Teacher assessment by means of interrogating students and parents and its correspondence to their expectations (according to results of school opinion poll)

### Section 4. Innovative, scientific and experimental activities

1. Information about writing a final graduation work, i.e. Bachelor/Master dissertation (the date of defense, theme, scientific supervisor (name, degree, position), educational institution, specialty/major), or about writing the final qualification work on psychological and pedagogical theme (date of defense, theme, scientific supervisor), candidate/doctoral dissertation (date of defense, theme, the stages of writing, scientific supervisor's name, degree, title, position, specialization, the leading organization).

2. Information about the scientific research and experimental activities done, including grants (№, date/terms, theme, task, scientific supervisor (name, degree, title, position), the form and degree of participation, level, results, form of reporting).

3. Information about presentations and papers submitted to various scientific conferences, research and experimental work or grants (№, date, the theme of presentation, organizers, location of the event, level); programs may be attached. Note: The best presentation at scientific conferences are attached at the end of the section, in the appendices, other materials may be placed in an e-Portfolio folder.

4. A list of scientific publications (№, the title, type (concept, monograph, paper, abstract, etc.), information about publication, pages and printed sheets, edition in copies, co-authors).

### Section 5. Education and work with students' parents

1. Class list and general information about students of the class (№ in sequence, students' names, information about attending additional education schools, i.e. music/arts, sports, handicrafts, hobbies, etc., contact information).

2. Results of diagnosis of students' general culture level, behavior and manners, interpersonal relations in the class association (prepared together with school psychologist).

3. Educational activity area in a class students supervision and its brief description.

4. List of extracurricular events conducted, including peer evaluation (№, date, the theme of extracurricular event, its form (excursion or trip, literary and musical compilation, poetry/ music parties, contests, etc., class, level). Note: The best plans of supervised open events (5 years from the moment of the last certification), photocopies of analysis of the events may be placed at the end of the section, the rest are placed in the e-Portfolio folder.

5. Information about students participation in different festivals, competitions, sport events, etc. (№ in sequence, date, event, organizers, level, names, class, results).

6. Information about the work involving students' parents (№ in sequence, date, event, level, class).

### Section 6. Public Social activities

1. Information about teacher's participation in public social events (social, funds, actions, elections of different levels, development of socially significant projects, programs, social initiatives, etc.) (№ in sequence, the form of activity, organizers, date, level, results).

2. Information about teacher's participation in voluntary and charity events (charity events and events for disabled children, orphans, migrants, elderly people, war veterans, labor and other voluntary initiatives).

### Section 7. Information about self-education, qualification development, professional retraining

1. Individual self-development program including goals, objectives, content and estimated results.

2. Information about the observation of other teachers' lessons (№, date, theme of lesson, its type, class, names of the teacher observers, brief analysis of lesson).

3. Information about participation (no presentations) in the work of teachers' communities, associations, of different levels (№ in sequence, date, theme, organizers, location, level, status (attender, questions discussed)).

4. Information about participation in the events without presentation and publication (№ in sequence, date, theme, organizers, location, level, status (attender, presenter, and lecturer). Programs of seminars and conferences may be attached.

5. A list of professional literature studied including all edition data (№ in sequence, year, title, authors, edition, brief annotation).

6. A reference list of electronic educational and self-educational sources used by the teacher.

7. Information about Teachers Development courses (date, title, location, organizers, hours, and certificate information). Note: Photocopies of certificates and information about courses completed are attached at the end of the section.

8. Information about professional retraining (date, location, organizers, a quantity of hours, course title, the theme of the final qualification work, certificates). Note: Photocopies of certificates are attached at the end of the section.

9. Personal professional internet sites and blogs.

### Section 8. Introspection, self-analysis, of the professional activity

Introspection and self-appraisal of educational, self-development, methodological, research, social, and other forms of teacher activity, his competencies, existing professional experience, and self-development competencies is recommended to be written in free form.

### Section 9. Further self-development strategy

In this section the teacher makes plans for the future, further ways of self-perfection, self-development, self-implementation. This stage is especially urgent in the context of the new 'learning throughout the life' paradigm.

### Section 10. Professional Achievements

1. Participation in professional competitions, contests, etc.(№ in sequence, date, name, organizers, location, level, results).

2. The information about encouragements and awards.

3. Information about publications, radio and TV interviews related to the teacher's professional activities (№ in sequence, date, title, short outline, mass media source). The photocopies and clips may be attached.

Note: Photocopies of confirmations to professional achievements are attached at the end of the portfolio.

General Notes:

School authorities, chairs of teachers' associations, members of certification committees may adapt the structure of Teacher Portfolio, adding and removing divisions for filling in;

A teacher also may adapt it so that to show his personal advantages.

### ***Ways to use the Teacher Portfolio in educational practice***

- to accumulate and systematize materials in the period between attestations, it may help not only to analyze and present creative experience, but also expand the boundaries of professional interaction and collaboration, which, in its turn, considerably increases the significance of certification procedures;
- for self-appraisal, self-assessment, and determining the prospects for professional growth;
- when choosing the right person to fill a position;
- when changing jobs.

### ***Practical recommendations to create a good portfolio***

- paper portfolio is a folder with files;
- it includes only photocopies of documents;
- each division or subdivision is recommended for giving information on a certain sphere of teacher's activity;
- the dates of every element included make it possible to trace the dynamics of the professional development, and must be signed by the author, developer, or compiler;
- it is desirable to accompany the reports by photographs confirming the content;
- the materials attached should cover the time period after the teacher's last attestation;
- if the author of portfolio makes the complete electronic version of it, then it is expedient to use hyperlinks to the materials he refers to, to attach brief audios and videos, etc.;



- it is reasonable to use have two folders: 1) for all materials accumulated which most fully reflect teacher's practice results, achievements, it is very substantial; 2) the folder to be submitted to the attestation committee containing the best materials from the first folder.

### Conclusion

Although portfolios can be time-consuming to construct, they can capture the complexities of professional practice in ways that no other approach can. They suggest an effective way to assess teaching quality, provide teachers with opportunities for self-reflection and collegial interactions based on documented history of their own teaching, i.e. Teacher Portfolio is:

- an independent personal set of materials to demonstrate real professional experience;
- his individual, personal, trajectory in planning, its implementation and analysis;
- integrated assessment of the competencies developed;
- the way to immerse into the professional environment thoughtfully and further self-implementation and self-development in it.

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## THE INFLUENCE OF ANXIETY ON PUPILS' SUCCESS IN STUDIES

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**Abstract.** The relevance of this problem is associated with the fact that, anxiety negatively influences the successfulness in educational and social activity, leads to the disturbs of health which is seen in children' diseases. In this respect, the article's aim was to study the influence of anxiety on pupils' success in studies. The investigation was held in gymnasiums № 8, 125, 37 in Kazan, from 2012 until 2015. For graduation of structure of the level of anxiety the testing of methods of defining the school anxiety by Phillips was held. The investigation of individual traits of teachers were held with the help of adapted inquirer Leongrad-Schmischeka. Simultaneously the monitoring of success of pupils and the indexes of teachers was held. The results of the investigation showed that the state of anxiety in definite periods has higher indexes. In the 1st grade it is connected with the adaptation of small pupils to the educational activity, in the 4th grade, the final primary class - it is connected with preparation to the forthcoming examinations. Accordingly, 2-3 classes do not have the additional emotional burdens for pupils as the expectation of future transfer, the break in calm regime of life. Thus, the peak of successfulness in social and educational activity of a pupil in primary school occurs in the 2-3 grade. It should be noted that under the changes of terms of organization, the agreed plan of child's activity and the use of health saving technologies will raise the successfulness of pupils at the primary schools.

**Keywords:** school anxiety, health saving technologies, the success of learning activities, adaptation to school

### Introduction

The models may be implemented in such forms as: in- and out- of- house training; on-the-job training and day release training; centralized and decentralized; long-term and short-term; fragmentary, formalized and targeted; supporting and anticipatory; traditional and integrated; individual, course and team training.

The development of a successful, competitive person, capable to self-education and self-actualization is one of the main problems of modern domestic education. The success of learning should be viewed as a qualitative assessment of the activities' results, which consist of objective performance and students' subjective attitude to these results (Birina, 2014; Kurapova, 2011; Khairutdinova, 2015; Kubiato, Usak & Masalimova, 2016; Gubaidullina et al., 2016; Kalimullin, 2006; Valeeva & Kalimullin, 2015; Parfilova & Kalimullin, 2014).

The implementation of new learning standards provides large amounts of students' learning efforts and the introduction of new forms of students' testing leads to anxiety increasing among students, including lower grades. Anxiety negatively affects the health and success of younger students as in their learning activities so in their socialization (Ermakova, 2002; Gurov, 2009; Alekseeva et al., 2015).

Modern methodologists and teachers of the pedagogical practice propose to introduce healthcare technics into the educational environment to reduce the negative impact on children's health.

### **Methodological Framework**

The problems of anxiety in primary school and the negative influence of anxiety on the results of students' educational and social activities are considered in the research of A. I. Zakharova (2000), E. J. Brel (1996), V. A. Gurov (2009), E. S. Ibragimova (2011).

To the issues of academic success studies of N. E. Shchurkova (2006), S. A. Amonashvili (1990), A.S. Belkin, A. (1991) are dedicated. The study of the personality, factors contributing to professional growth, the success of teachers are reflected in the works of T. N. Shcherbakova (2006), A. K. Markova (1990), N. N. Nikitin and N. M. Gajiyev (1996)

The idea of favorable conditions' creating in organization of educational process for the preservation of students' health through the implementation of healthcare technics in education is revealed in the works of A. M. Mityaeva (2012), N.F. Petrova (2013), F. F. Kharisov, and L. A. Kharisova (2012), G. K. Selevko (2002), N. K. Smirnov (2002).

### **Materials and Methods**

The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of anxiety on success in educational activity of younger students. The study was conducted in secondary schools and gymnasiums of Kazan from 2012 to 2015. For the diagnosis methods for students' anxiety level's diagnostics "Phillips", monitoring of teachers' training and educational activities and the adapted questionnaire of character "Leonhard-Shmishek" were used.

#### *The diagnostics technique of students' anxiety level "Phillips"*

To research the level of anxiety among primary school children in our study, we used the technique of diagnostics "Phillips". The essence of this technique is to examine the level and nature of anxiety associated with the school with the children of primary school age. The test consists of 58 questions. The questions were read to students, but some additional explanation of the content of the question was not required. Each question requires a definite answer ("Yes" or "No"). The questions cover all aspects of the students' life. According to the methodic, there are the following factors on the basis of school anxiety: 1. General anxiety in school, 2. The experience of social stress, 3. Frustration needs in achieving success, 4. Fear of self-expression, 5. Fear of the situation of test knowledge, 6. Fear of lack to meet the expectations of others, 7. Low physiological resistance to stress, 8. Problems and fears in relations with teachers. The presence of certain syndromes and their quantity allows us to analyze the overall internal emotional state of the student (Rogov, 1999)

#### *Monitoring of teachers' training and educational activity*

In the order of the Education and Science Ministry (from 25.06.2013 № 2441/13) the criteria to estimate the activity efficiency of pedagogical workers of secondary educational institutions of the Tatarstan Republic are defined. The main criteria to estimate pedagogical workers' activity efficiency can be shown by the following indicators:

- student successful performance according to the results of the final certification and/or an independent estimation of their educational results;
- training of students - winners of Olympiads, winners of conferences, competitions on the subject;
- participation in professional competitions, grants, scientific conferences.

Thus, the students' success in their social and academic activities is an indicator of the effectiveness of the teachers' activity. Based on this phenomenon, we conducted monitoring to identify the relationship between the achievements of the teacher and their students' academic success. To fulfill this task, questionnaires were developed, allowing trace the dynamics of efficiency change of teachers' activity on the criteria which were mentioned previously, from 2012 to 2015.

#### *Adapted character questionnaire of "Leonhard-Shmishek"*

The questionnaire is designed to diagnose the type of personality accentuation. It includes 88 questions, 10 scales corresponding to the character accentuation. The purpose of

using this questionnaire in our study is the identification of the relationship between the teachers' character accentuations and the students' success. (E. I. Rogov, 1999)

### **Results**

Students' diagnosis showed that the level of overall anxiety is higher in students of classes 1 and 4.

More than 70% of first grade students experience social stress associated with adapting to school: the transition to a new activity, establishing of relationships with a new circle of communication, the mastering of the student's role. Students with dis-adaptation have higher rates of low physiological resistance to stress (up to 23 % of students of first graders). It is often are "domestic" children who didn't attend preschool educational institutions.

In Russian schools in the first grades the training without putting marks is practiced. There is more gentle symbolic evaluation system. Students are not explicitly divided into successful and not successful during the first year of study. Regarding their social success, the conducted monitoring showed that pupils of this age are more interested in creative (often decorative) activities than academic or research activity. At this age children have low indicators as for the factor "Fear of expression".

Fourth graders are mostly exposed by the effects of factors "Frustration needs in achieving success" (57%), "Fear of the situation of test knowledge" (46%), "Problems and fears in relations with teachers" (66%). Despite of this, the academic success of anxious children remains above average and at high levels. This is connected with the fact that increasingly popular becomes among students in their final years (4, 9, 11 classes) the "work on marks", excluding psychological and physical abilities of the student to large amounts of academic load.

4th grade students differ by their social activity. According to the monitoring results, the 4th grade students often become winners and prize-winners of Olympiads, competitions of educational orientation for Junior school students. The relevant successful performance indicators are observed among teachers working with 4 grades.

However, it should be noted that the best indicators of academic and social success and a high percentage of successful children in the student group (74%) are observed in 2-3 grades. The test results of students of 2-3 grades allow us to conclude that students of this age are less suffer of General anxiety, free from emotional tension, are not affected by frustration, show higher results in academic and social success, which is reflected as well as in the successful performance of teachers. As a rule, children during this period aspire to self-expression, try to demonstrate their ability, socially mobile and their range of interests is very wide. The main task of teachers is to support children and to help bring the projects to their completion.

Comparative analysis of the results after diagnostics of younger students' anxiety, test of "Leonhard-Smishek" and monitoring of participants' success in educational process (students, teachers and the school administration) revealed significant relationship between teachers' character accentuation and their students' success. Students of teachers with emotive accentuation have the best results on anxiety and academic success rates (18% higher than other teachers).

Thus, the main sources of anxiety among younger students are changing of their usual environment (admission to the 1st grade, transfer from one educational institution to another), the increased requirements to learning reasoned by the transition from one stage of education to another, the character accentuation of teacher's personality.

The decrease of the anxiety level and as a result the academic success increase among younger students is observed during the healthcare technics' using in educational process. The term "healthcare educational technics" can be considered as a quality characteristic of any educational technics, as its "security certificate for health", and as a collection of principles, techniques and methods of pedagogical work, which supplementing traditional technics of training and education, give them a sign of healthcare.

In teaching practice various educational, healthcare technics are implemented, which can be divided into three groups:

- organizational - pedagogical technologies which determine the structure of the educational process, contributing to the prevention of students' state of fatigue, inactivity, and other maladaptive states;

- psychological-pedagogical technologies related to the direct work of the teachers in the classroom through their impact on the students;

- training and educational technics, which include training curricula on care about the health and culture forming on students' healthy lifestyle keeping, motivation forming to keep healthy lifestyles, harmful habits' prevention, including the carrying out of organizational and educational work with students after school, education of their parents (Tzabybin, 2009).

The application of healthcare technics should form in students:

- scientific understanding of the essence of health and healthy lifestyles; attitude to the health as to value; a holistic view of the person;

- skills to manage one's health;

- knowledge how to prevent harmful habits and addictions, as well as various diseases, understanding of the essence of these phenomena;

- skills of first medical aid; the culture of interpersonal relations;

- safe -behavior skills ( for health) in different life situations;

- strategy and technics for self-development.

The advantages and disadvantages of the most common healthcare techniques are presented in table 1.

**Table 1.** Healthcare technics in domestic and foreign practice

brief description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Technic: Individualization of learning</b>		
Learning through - differentiation, i.e., students' grouping on the basis of their features or complexes of these features for learning on various academic plans and curricula.; -individualization of educational activity within the group; -training in individually different pace: accelerated (acceleration) or slow motion (retardation).	-students do not experience a lot of mental stress, as are trained according to individual plans and curricula; -in the heterogeneous group all forms of teaching are individualized: frontal, group, individual.	- time and material costs per student, -additional difficulties when passing to another educational organization (students' low mobility)
<b>Technic: Gamification</b>		
The use in the process of learning of the game mechanisms, principles and tools to solve real, non-game tasks and problems in various fields of public life.	- active participation of students; - encouraging of competitive behavior in the study of this or that discipline	- separation of games' content from educational material; - excessive enthusiasm of the learner in the formal aspects of learning
<b>Technic: Pedagogy of cooperation</b>		
A system of methods and technics of education and training based on the	- the child's teaching in the zone of his proximal development	- time and material costs per student,

principles of humanism and a creative approach to personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teaching without coercion</li> <li>- a set of keywords, the letters arranged in the form of reference schemes, to avoid cramming of the material</li> <li>-ideas of an advancing, large blocks, freedom of choice</li> <li>- dialogic reflection</li> <li>- joint activity of teachers and students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- insufficient level of competence of modern teachers, Lack of students' readiness to new forms of interaction with teachers</li> </ul>
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### Technic: Mental maps

Independent thematic fragment of study aimed at solving of specific tasks or the development of a definite skill with specific goals, objectives and levels of material's study, with the definition of skills aimed at achieving of the desired result.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- active participation of students;</li> <li>- ability to change the sequence of modules depending on the needs of students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- modules' dependency from each other;</li> <li>- the necessity of the modules' staging passing.</li> </ul>
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### Technic: Project objectives in teaching

System or a set of tasks aimed at communication and collaboration methods' forming through group work on teacher's task solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participants' activity;</li> <li>- variability of educational problems' solutions;</li> <li>- formation of communication skills;</li> <li>- practically orientated training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- time and material costs;</li> <li>- project task does not direct learners to specific training topics;</li> <li>- project task has a large amount of heterogeneous material</li> </ul>
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### Discussions

High anxiety of children is a problem that deserves special attention, as it affects learning activities. Increased anxiety of children leads to health problems, resulting to particular diseases. (Kovaleva, 1999). However, it should be noted that in the domestic practice pedagogical healthcare technics are applied very seldom. According to research by Petrova N. F., in the modern school a multilevel implementation of healthcare technics in the classroom becomes popular: using of individual methods, the implementation of individual technics, the integrated use of technics (Petrova, 2013). In some cases, the implementation of healthcare technics is limited only by the increased number of training hours in subject "Physical culture", "Activity safe-behavior". This study identified a close link between: individual style of pedagogical communication and the students' anxiety, implementation of healthcare technics and anxiety level decrease.

### Conclusion

In the diagnosis the technique of school anxiety definition "Phillips", the adapted questionnaire of "Leonhard-Shmishkek", monitoring of students' success and teachers' performance were used. The study identified the prospects how to use healthcare technics in education to prevent and reduce the anxiety in primary school children. It can be concluded that the modern domestic education needs in the development of the united integrated healthcare system of educational process's organization in the school. However, the principles

of variation of domestic education curricula do not allow the implementation of this system in practice of education. Therefore, the question arises about the necessity to create the universal health curriculum's model (matrix) for educational process's maintenance with taking into account the peculiarities of educational curricula in the primary school.

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## DIVERSIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL ON-THE-JOB TRAINING MODELS AND FORMS IN CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS CONDITIONS

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### Abstract

The relevance of this problem is associated with the fact that most employers consider practical training results of technical university graduates as insufficient. Therefore, it makes it necessary to seek for effective forms of additional training in the industrial or business environment. In this respect, the study's aim was to develop formal, non-formal and informal corporate training, and justify the forms in business conditions. The most valid approach to study this issue is an integrative approach that allows to consider the forms of corporate training as integration and interrelation of professional activities in modern enterprises. The formal model involves formal professional on-the-job training, such as: young professionals courses and professional development programs; retraining programs developed to meet the needs of business, or enterprise, and retraining programs to get additional qualifications, etc. Among the forms of non-formal vocational corporate training the author identifies mentoring, organizing and coordinating manufacturing, rationalization and invention activities, research and creative activities of the young employees, temporary rotation, etc. The model of informal professional on-the-job training involves organizing in-house scientific and technical exhibitions, as well as exhibits of scientific and engineering achievements aimed at informing the employees about company history, its departments and its achievements, etc. These models and forms are able to motivate young professionals and support when developing and improving their skills and competencies, have emotional attachment to the results of their work, enhance their adaptive abilities, raise up the new generation interested in innovation economics, maintain continuity of science-and-engineering schools and corporate mentorship programs.

**Keywords:** diversification, on-the-job training, formal, informal, non-formal models, forms, business conditions.

### Introduction

At the current stage of labor and workforce development, the search for talented, promising, high potential employees has become critical for many businesses and organizations, regardless of their professional orientation and geographic location. The issue of high qualified employees remains one of the main tasks in ensuring and maintaining the competitiveness of enterprises, industries, regions and the country as a whole.

Industrial business and trade associations in the regions of Russia provide services that contribute to solving the problem of recruitment. Industrial business and trade association suggest that the recruitment agencies belonging to them are able to implement programs for further developing the labor market. Recruiting agencies apply a wide range of headhunting methods: the mass media, the Internet, its own database, techniques of direct recruiting ranging from assessment tests to procedures of content analysis.

The experience in the using external sources of recruitment via mass media shows that they are rarely benefited from information provided by experts.

The requirements for graduate's professional knowledge and skills cover the following: business and technology skills; organizational and performance management skills; professional knowledge; meta-professional qualities (Shaidullina, 2010; Senator, 2010).

However, employers reckon that the level of practice oriented training in technical university graduates is insufficient. For this reason they have to be trained in-company to increase the level of their skills and competences in enterprises (Goloscchekina, 1990; Diachkov, 2010; Kuznetsov, 2005; Government Decree, 1994; Uzhakina, 2009).

Studies conducted by the National Management Training Foundation (Russia) showed that the main barriers in reforming industrial business enterprises are inadequate corporate training and untrained middle and grassroots level managers and the employees participating in the launched state-of-the art projects.

After studying 4 to 5 years at the university an undergraduate encounters such problems as: little or no experience related to his job, unfamiliar areas of the job, frustration and disappointment by the career start. On the other hand, his desire to put into practice all his knowledge and skills and attract his credibility among the new colleagues through his positive participation in the team work may cause a negative impact. To help the graduate in the process of adapting to job requirements it is common for large companies to develop special programs targeted at new comers' adaptation and successful career.

So far, only the formal side has been taken into consideration when developing educational policies and strategies. Today strong boundaries of the formal system are blurring, this is reflected in the Model Of Russian Education - 2020 for knowledge economics which claims that flexible unfinished trajectory of person's education is based not only formal, but also non-formal and informal education (Morozova, 2011; Vinogradov, 2001; Personnel Management Policy of OAO "LUKOIL, 2006; Denisov, 2011; Fedotova, 2003; Gubaidullina et al., 2016; Kalimullin, 2006).

Having analyzed the model of in-house training and development, presented in numerous sociologic and pedagogic researches, the authors found it necessary to consider the basic models of young specialist vocational training including formal, informal and non-formal types.

#### **Methodological Framework**

The concept of education throughout life embraces labour market demands rather than proposals emanating from professional education and training system. Modern education is not only the stock of knowledge, but also the basis for psychological readiness of a person to continuity in his knowledge accumulation, its processing and improvement when transferring professional knowledge and skills, culture and moral values from one generation to another. In this regard, the concept involves three types education:

- formal - obtained in educational institutions, structured in terms of training objectives and duration, and confirmed by a specific document (for example, Diploma of primary, secondary, tertiary vocational education, etc. );
- informal (spontaneous) - education, which is implemented through person's own activity in rich cultural and educational environment;
- non-formal - implemented daily, is not a structured in terms of objectives and duration, may be done in the form of a self-study (including the Internet, remote technologies, etc.), through skills development, additional further professional education, training in the workplace, in the form of exchanging, or sharing information, knowledge, and skills enhancing, etc. (Polonsky, 2004; Amplua, 2005).

Having considered the typological characteristics of formal, informal and non-formal education proposed by B.M. Polonsky in Russia, we have identified and specified models for vocational and industrial training of young employees: formal, non-formal and informal.

The formal model of vocational training includes the following: Professional Development course for young employees; further training; vocational retraining program

caused by business circumstances; vocational retraining with certificates awarded for qualifications; MBA and Executive MBA for top managers and management reserve. The criteria for distinguishing features of the model are associated with the opportunity to receive a certificate and meeting the business demands after finishing the training as a qualified specialist.

The model of informal technical and vocational training includes the following:

- mentorship;
- organization and coordination in production, optimization, innovation, scientific and creative activities of young professionals (the Young Professionals Council);
- involvement of young people in the School of Business Management that contributes to fostering their managerial competence;
- temporary rotation;
- training sessions, etc. (Masalimova, Usak & Shaidullina, 2016).

This model meets specific requirements of the business enterprise but is not confirmed by any certain certificate of accomplishment that certifies completing a planned course in a specific field.

The informal model is not confirmed by any certificate of accomplishment, and it does not have to meet the enterprise requirements, but still, what is good, it includes post-training forms of corporate training required to validate the knowledge and skills acquired, as well as their support and further improvement. The modules of post-training facilitating corporate training include the activities aimed at tracking the improvement of competences in a real practical activities and individual programs for professional development. The most common forms and means of post-training corporate training are the following:

- intercompany (corporate) scientific and technical exhibitions, exhibits of science and technology aimed at informing employees about the yearly years and history of the business or company, the organization divisions and achievements, intercompany (corporate) conferences introducing company traditions, studying corporate research and technology events (thus, they make it possible to identify the most capable to research activities);
- professional competitions, and competitions for young inventors;
- temporary creative teams to accelerate and introduce the most promising work-improvement suggestions;
- post-training facilitating corporate training to validate the knowledge and skills acquired and create the training environment;
- interactive games to help in social and professional adaptation through corporate e-university.

The models may be implemented in such forms as: in- and out- of- house training; on-the-job training and day release training; centralized and decentralized; long-term and short-term; fragmentary, formalized and targeted; supporting and anticipatory; traditional and integrated; individual, course and team training.

**Table 1.** Corporate education forms

<p><i>In-house (intercompany)</i> - is carried out both in the workplace and through prof. activities on the territory of the enterprise.</p>	<p><i>Out-of-house</i> -is carried out in specialized vocational training institutions, training centers.</p>
<p><i>On-the-job training</i>- learning in the process of professional employee activity and through mentoring.</p>	<p><i>Off-the-job training</i> - <u>Employee training</u> at a <u>site</u> away from the actual <u>work environment</u>, vocational training institutions and training centers, often utilizes <u>lectures</u>, <u>case studies</u>, <u>role playing</u>, <u>simulation</u>, etc.</p>
<p><i>Centralized</i> - organized and financed at the level of the Corporation.</p>	<p><i>Decentralized</i>- organized at the level of divisions and departments and funded</p>

independently.

*Long-term*-long-term projects like the second higher education, MBA, etc.

*Short-term*-training of employees within a limited period of time due to business peculiarities or circumstances

*Fragmentary* - does not require a specific investment, not associated with the objectives of the specific organizations related to basic training centers.

*Formalized* - is classified as the stage of the specialist's career and is consistent with the needs of enterprise resource requirements.

*Targeted* - includes continuous training to address the specific challenges of the enterprise.

*Anticipatory* - oriented for perspective directions of the company, preparation for work in other contexts.

*Supporting* - assimilation of well-established views, methods and rules in order to work effectively in a typical and recurrent situations to develop abilities to perform tasks that do not require another approach

*Traditional* - based on information and innovations, and focused on the knowledge that may be useful in future careers

*Integrated* - based on information, innovation and communication, as well as emotions and focused on simultaneous specific changes related to both the enterprise and its employees.

*Individual* - the trainee is assigned to the most skilled mentor or instructor.

*Team* - group training of 5 to 10 persons in a team

*Course* - taking place in the educational unit of the enterprise, in training course schools or centres etc. belonging to enterprises

It's quite natural for any large company to hire graduates of top universities, and with regard to small and medium-sized companies, it should be noted that they are not very eager to hire recent university graduates. However, their reluctance to spend time and energy for working with young HR reserve may impact negatively their situation, so as it's not a secret that the adequate perception of newbies and the innovations suggested to them, eventually, really influences positively the attractiveness of the company. It's like searching 'for a place under the heavens' when there's maximum commitment and self-actualization, or personal fulfillment, which results in reviving business processes in the company. To achieve these desired changes in the company it is necessary to create the environment for special social and professional of new employees. This environment includes modules of post-training support, a key section of the corporate training programs necessary to validate the knowledge and skills acquired, as well as support them and make further adjustments and improvements. To identify the acquired knowledge and competences there are modules of post-graduate corporate training support including activities aimed at tracking the growth of new employees and specialists in their yearly career, their competencies in practical activities, and individual programs of professional development.

#### **Results and Discussions**

*The Young Professionals Council is a form of corporate business training aimed at creating research competence of professionals*

One of the forms to encourage the development and improvement of research competencies is the Young Professionals Council whose objectives are:

- to organize and coordinate business and production, innovations, inventions, scientific and creative activities of young people in the company;
- to develop intellectual potential of young professionals, promote their professional and spiritual development and Cultural Advancement;

- to create conditions for developing their research competence, involvement in joint research;
- to develop the responsibility for business and research results.

In order to implement these tasks, the Young Professionals Council of TATNEFT oil and gas producing company organizes events aimed at helping young employees to acquire research skills; assists and supports implementing economically feasible inventions and proposals; conducts youth scientific and practical conferences, contests, ideas, proposals and exhibits of scientific and engineering achievements (to stimulate the creative potential of young professionals); creates creative youth groups to address industrial, scientific and technological challenges; organizes informational support in dissemination of science and technology achievements among the youth; youth clubs; events contributing to the development of scientific and technical Youth Creativity associations in higher and secondary vocational training institutions; introducing talented young professionals to be enrolled as the reserve for top management, etc.

### *The Young Professionals Council basic directions and tasks*

The governing body of TATNEFT Young Professionals Council is Young Professionals Central Council. Its purpose is to coordinate the work of TATNEFT young professionals. The Central Council accumulates, analyzes the scientific, technical, organizational and other information that meets the objectives of the organization; disseminates scientific, technical and organizational information in the line with the objectives of the Council (except for confidential information); participates in scientific conferences, symposia and seminars; takes part in exchange programs; develops educational programs, etc. (The standard adaptation of personnel of JSC "Tatneft", 2008).

Young Professionals Central Council is divided into the following areas:

- scientific activities including development of projects on Geology, Oil and Gas Fields Development, Production, Reservoir Pressure Maintenance, Well Workover, Drilling, Oil Refining, Energy, Automation and Control Systems, Oil Production Equipment, Oil Transportation, Economics, Jurisprudence, Human Resources Management;
- management which includes the secretariat, information support group, division responsible for partnership with educational institutions, personnel training and retraining, and the sector for external relations.

The responsibilities of the secretariat cover: preparation of projects, maintenance and examination of the documents, protocols, related to the competence of the Young Professionals Central Council; participation in preparing of reports; activities and events to ensure coordination and interaction between the Central Council and sections, or sectors, and structural units and subsidiaries of the company; providing information on the activities of the Council to the interested young personnel.

The information management tasks are the following: systematization, accumulation of the problems, tasks and achievements in science and technology; informing the young specialists of structural units and subsidiaries about scientific and business decisions and achievements; informing the members of the relevant sections about the existing problems, objectives and achievements in science and technology.

The section responsible for work with educational institutions, training and retraining of personnel, is involved in conducting scientific conferences, symposia and seminars in cooperation with the educational institutions; disseminating scientific and technical information in educational institutions; cooperates with public and professional educational institutions; provides assistance in training and retraining of HR.

The main challenges of the section, division, of external relations are the following: exhibitions, conferences, seminars, symposia;

interaction with similar councils outside the companies on the issues related to cooperation and joint activities;

interaction with mass media on issues concerning young professionals.

### *The benefits of the Young Professionals Council as a form of corporate training*

The form of post-training support in corporate training of engineering specialists promotes the following:

*at the institutional level-* implementation of the targeted training that is able to meet the requirements of oil production industry, anticipatory training, establishing the company's organizational culture, social and professional adaptation;

*in personal terms-* implementation of the systematic self-education, improvement of their information competence, opportunities for joint publications with the main experts of the company, participation in research projects, academic and professional mobility.

### ***Business management school***

Corporate schools of management help in effective training of young HR as a form to train the young employees in-house, develop and improve their managerial competencies. These schools are designed to transfer accumulated corporate experience from main experts and masters to young HR with a simple aim of involving them into the business management. Young people under 33 years may be enrolled as the Business Management school students. The list of the most active young workers is approved by the authorities of the company and the Young Professionals Council. Among the student of the school there may be those attending on their own free will though in coordination with the chairman of the Young Professionals Council and the school organizing committee. The objectives of the Business Management school include:

- management training;
- identifying the company HR reserve ;
- organizing a dialog of the young employees and the main experts of the company;
- intensifying the Young Professionals Council activities;
- promoting young HR participation in the company events related to production, business and social communication;
- forming the sense of corporate pride, and involvement in the enterprise events and achievements.

However, when selecting candidates for the Business Management school it is considered as more preferable to enroll those who have proved to be talented and active university students, i.e. graduates with university honors (or distinctions), graduates who were successful in on-line foreign language graduation project (Diploma) defense, took an active part in regional, contests, international conferences, won in innovative projects contests, etc.

### ***The Business Management school functions***

The Business Management school performs the following functions:

- organizational, that implies preparation of the official documents necessary to start the school;
- coordinating, i.e. coordination of all the services accompanying the school activity;
- methodical, that implies organization of the training sessions and lectures;
  - controlling, aimed to control the implementation of its activities;
  - information, to report of the school events on the Corporate Portal (a secured website).

### ***The content of training in the Business Management school***

The content of training in the Business Management school includes issues of organizational and technical nature related to the issues of management, professional activities, interaction with other business directions in the company, as well as to topical issues related to the company current status and prospects for its development based on the case studies of business management. After having considered the issues included in the content of the school it is possible to confirm that the list of the most relevant topics includes those that are able to assist in developing business qualities and abilities:

- self-discipline and ability to build constructive relations within the team,
- abilities to delegate the responsibilities and to monitor achieving necessary results for the business,
- ability to assemble a successful management team,

- ability to make decisions in a non-standard situation,
- ability to negotiate and defend one's position,
- ability to establish and maintain constructive relationships with external parties,
- strategic vision for the business, to strategic control of business development, etc.

On completing the course of lectures the students have to pass their final tests the content of which is made of the questions previously studied at the lecturers and which are submitted to the organizing committee, or administration, of the school and are conducted through TATNEFT corporate portal.

### ***Corporate Creative Temporary Teams***

The next form of corporate training of young employees of oil industry is a corporate creative temporary team organized to use effectively the labor resource and creative potential of HR, accelerate and introduce promising projects, inventions and high efficiency innovative ideas. Temporary creative teams involve qualified experts, engineers, economists, researchers and promising young employees, and are approved by the Bureau of Technical Society. Such societies and communities are carrying out their activities on the basis of contracts which determine the subject of work, its plan, period of execution of works, payment, delivery and acceptance regulations, mutual responsibility of the parties, etc.

### ***Creative Temporary Team Tasks***

Creative Temporary Team Tasks - among others- include supervising the process of creating a team project involving young professionals of different profiles where each member of the team is developing its part of the project: technical personnel - technical, specialists in the field of economics - economic, a manager - management, a process engineer - technological process, etc. The best mentors and leading specialists, possessing a range of competences for qualified advice in such command projects, act as leaders of such projects. This sort of counselling requires special training for a mentor in terms of his knowledge of holistic technological processes, inter-industrial knowledge and business development strategy.

### ***Forms of social and professional adaptation of young HR***

The forms, contributing to social and professional adaptation of young HR include the following:

- informing young HR about the history and divisions of TATNEFT company (visits to company museums, scientific and technical achievement exhibits, information about new technical innovations and inventions introduce in the company, memory books with photo information about yearly years of the company);
- involving young employees in sports and recreational activities (professional contests, innovation competitions);
- intercompany conferences contributing to the development of corporate traditions, experience, research and technical achievements, as well as finding the most capable, talented and creative employees ;
- providing continuing post-training classes (1.5 - 2 hour seminars or informal discussions) and events to consolidate the knowledge and skills obtained, create learning environment which the trainees get used to;
- interactive games submitted in the online e- corporate university fostering corporate culture development and adapting of the young employees in business situations.

### ***Conclusion***

The models of corporate technical and vocational training contribute to sustainable motivation and developing an attitude to the job chosen; emotional attachment to work results; enhancing their adaptive abilities; raising a new generation focused on the requirements of innovative economics; maintaining continuity of technical and scientific schools, and in-house and out-of-house mentorship; training in the workplace and further training outside the workplace; centralized and decentralized training; long-term and short-term training; fragmentary, formalized and targeted; supporting and anticipatory training; traditional and integrated; individual, course and team training.



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## RELATIONSHIP OF ECOLOGY AND SOCIALIZATION OF SCHOOLCHILDREN PERSONALITY

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### Abstract

Preservation and promotion of schoolchildren's health is the task of modern school. Health is the state of physical, mental and social well-being, harmony in oneself and with the surrounding world. The state of health determines success of an individual biological and social adaptation. In case of balance disorder in the system of health components there occurs disadaptation. Schoolchildren's health is being watched over in a comprehensive school. A teacher of today conducts teaching taking into account the state of pupils' health, modifies curriculums, constantly self-improves, masters the technique of primary prevention of exhaustion, develops hygienic, ecological knowledge, works on the formation of healthy needs, conducts fitness and health recreation events. Health state impacts on successful socialization of a personality. One doctor for the whole school cannot carry out this work either. In this case there should be more doctors at school, or teachers should be equipped with profound knowledge of children's medicine, or to train specialists who will provide schoolchildren with knowledge, abilities, skills, form competences in the sphere of health preservation and promotion during all years of children's studying at school. But a consolidated team of teachers, psychologists, doctors has to start working without any delay.

**Keywords:** ecology, health, healthy lifestyle, socialization.

### Introduction

#### *Relevance of the issue*

Issues of schoolchildren personality socialization are getting more pressing as it has become clear that the society is constantly experiencing changes and the person needs to keep up with the time to integrate and self-actualize.

Some time ago the above-named issue was treated seriously and conditions for successful socialization of schoolchildren in the country could have been created, this is described in A.N. Khuziakhmetov's work "School of work life" (Khuziakhmetov, 1985; Kalimullin, 2006).

The problem of socialization of schoolchildren in the last century and in modern times is researched by other scientists (Bronfenbrenner, 1981; Gabdrakhmanova, 2005; Tsybul'skaya et al., 2009; Dmitriyeva, 2011; Khuziakhmetov & Gabdrakhmanova, 2011; Horner, C.G. & Wallace, 2013; Parfilova & Kalimullin, 2014). The scientists studied the factors that contribute to the delay of the process of socialization (Fransteva & Tikhonova, 2011). One factor may be the schoolchildren's health. The empirical study problems of schoolchildren's health can be found in many works of scientists from different countries and of all historical times (Berk, 2000; Vasta, 1992; Gupta, 1989; Levin, Wagner & Heller, 1968).

The special place in researches of scientists takes the mental health of schoolchildren (Eapen, Al-Gazali, Bin-Othman & Abou-Saleh, 1998). It is now recognized that psychological

disorders, among children and adolescents have high prevalence rate. Scientists note that the prevalence children's mental disorders and symptoms similar to middle Eastern and Western studies.

Many works devoted to the study of factors affecting the health of schoolchildren. For example, heat, climate change is seen as a factor negatively affecting the health of schoolchildren (Dapi et al., 2010). There should be continuous study of the relationship of children's health and their socialization.

### **Methodological Framework**

Let us analyze the conditions created for the preservation of health of schoolchildren at the end of the last century and early this century on the example of the Republic of Tatarstan. Health promotes socialization of schoolchildren.

#### *The conditions for preservation of health of pupils at the end of the last century on the example of Republic of Tatarstan*

In order to form schoolchildren's practical skills at early stages and for the best organization of polytechnical training, preparation of pupils for future practical activities, i.e. successful socialization in their adulthood, there was established a scientific manufacturing educational complex on the basis of Novo-Baranskyay secondary school and collective farm "KzylEulduz" of the Republic of Tatarstan which included a scientific-experimental livestock breeding complex, school educational-experimental plot, school field, school garden and vegetable garden, school beeyard, school forestry, school production team, stationary camp of work and rest "Small Artek", branch of Kuibyshev Children's and Youth Sports School, branch of music school, amateur film studio "Chaika", photographic studio.

From the beginning, the complex and its facilities corresponded to the requirements of modern agricultural production and polytechnical education.

For this purpose the collective farm "KzylYulduz" constructed a standard building of a secondary school and a scientific-experimental livestock breeding complex, besides it allocated a big land area. Such agricultural machines as a tractor, combine harvester, potato-planter, grain-cleaner, ploughs, disks, grain seeders, dung-spreader, dump carrier, plunker, shovel plough, harrows were handed over to this school.

The following departments were established in the scientific-manufacturing farm: animal agriculture, farm industry, poultry farming, crop growing, gardening, beekeeping, vegetable farm, training-experimental school plot, department of agricultural mechanization.

Animal agriculture is the major chain in the general system of the polytechnical basis of agricultural industry, necessary for the development of children interest in farm animals, skills to look after them, to prepare and feed forages, to carry out experiences, to observe. Conducting this activity, children obtain certain skills of work using cars, mechanisms, such as grain grinder, straw grinder, silage cutter, root cutter, milking cluster, an autodrinker etc.

Taking care of cattle, schoolchildren could clearly see the influence of animal breeding, ultimate nutrition with the use of vitamins, macro - and microelements on the increase of productiveness.

In the area of cattle such operations as preparation and distribution of forages, milking, water supply and cleaning of waste were completely mechanized. Every year each cow, there were 25 of them, gave more than three thousand kilograms of milk.

The cattle-breeding branch also included an exemplary workshop for growing sheep and pigs. There were bought 6 thoroughbred sows of large-white breed, they farrowed 115 pigs at once.

Rabbit breeding is one of reserves to increase the production of dietary meat, therefore there were kept some breeds of rabbits on the fur-farm shop. Children with great enthusiasm looked after them since their first form. Besides, they grew up nutrias, minks, polar foxes.

Crop growing was considered as an important component of an educational-industrial basis of polytechnical education, when children are involved in work and use scientific data of advanced experience, mechanization. Here pupils carried out industrial experiments cultivating

certified seeds of winter and spring wheat, potatoes, vegetables, beets. Crop growing provided animals with forages.

In the orchard thousands of apple-trees, raspberry and currant bushes were planted. A school beeyard was placed there too. Children enjoyed looking after bees.

Vegetable growing is the most convenient section of Horticulture where the systematic interconnection of educational-production labour and teaching of subjects of polytechnical cycle was executed. Biological features of cropper and agrotechnics of vegetable cultivation allowed teachers and schoolchildren to carry out experiments almost all the year round, to make observations in a biological study room, to perform different practical trainings in greenhouses and an the open ground, to gather the harvest, to grow up seeds etc.

There was organized a forest growing work. Pupils took care of tree belt area and planted new ones. Nursery-garden work, settlements gardening, field camps and roads greenery were on the list of schoolchildren's activity.

The pupils were set a goal to get some final result, possible difficulties and ways of their overcoming were specified, methods of realization of tasks were stated, recommendations for the best way of their performance were given.

Apart from participation in growing high-yielding grain, vegetable and fruit production, in animal care, getting to know about machines, gaining practical skills of work, many schoolchildren were actively engaged in the work of Kuibyshev children's and youth sports school, Kuibyshev seven-year music school, children's amateur film studio and a photographic studio.

Much was done for schoolchildren's health. During summer period there were organized 3 sessions of the work and rest camp "MalyArtek" where a swimming pool, solarium and aerarium, experimental site of young naturalists, an orchard, greenhouse, workshop for school groups, library, bandshell, film projection unit, radio station, film-photo laboratory, game room, open-air cage for animals, shooting gallery worked during the whole season.

The combination of physical labor and an occupation of interest, a healthy diet, fresh air, interact with peers and teachers contribute to strengthening the health of schoolchildren.

Favorable conditions for successful solution of preservation of schoolchildren's health, polytechnical education, labor, moral, physical, esthetic training were established. Pupils were given opportunity to try any social role, to execute it successfully or not. And what is more important, from our point of view, pupils were engaged in socially approved activity. The whole system contributed to the successful socialization of students (Khuziakhmetov, 1985).

***Conditions for the preservation of the health of schoolchildren in the early 21st century on the example of Republic of Tatarstan***

Schoolchildren should be involved in activities aimed at their health preservation for the purpose of their socialization and education. In the context of a modern society socialization processes imposes new requirements for a spiritual image, views and younger generation activities: 1) implementation of social and economic, political and spiritual changes can be put into practice only by highly educated, highly skilled and consciously participating people; 2) extreme complexity of an individual socialization process requires continuous improvement of means of its implementation; 3) socialization of the personality is an integral part of the solution of all public social issues; 4) socialization of the personality assumes overcoming of negative phenomena in people's consciousness and behavior. In order to act as a full-fledged member of the society, able to function among other people, an individual needs to devote more and more time to socialization, therefore to issues of health.

School should and can become the most important part of this process today. Health through education, successful socialization on the basis of solid health is one of the ideas of the modern education system.

R.G. Gabdrakhmanova notes that system activity in this direction in the Republic of Tatarstan has been conducted since 1998 when the republican purpose-oriented program "Education and Health of Schoolchildren of the Republic of Tatarstan" was developed. It established foundations of a network of schools promoting health. The experience saved up in

the republic allowed to extend our practices to other regions of the Russian Federation, and to improve our own activity in this direction (Gabdrakhmanova & Korchagina, 2012).

The Federal interdisciplinary program "Health" approved by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (under the edition of professor V.N. Kasatkin, L.A. Shcheplyagina (2007), etc.) in 2003 was put to an evaluation test in Tatarstan. Today more than 80% of teachers of the republic work according to this program, using resources of learning sessions, class hours, off-hour events.

The Interdepartmental purpose-oriented program "Education and health of students and pupils of educational institutions of the Republic of Tatarstan" has been realized in the educational system of the Tatarstan since 2009. The main task of the program is to master the basic competences allowing to acquire knowledge in the field of health preservation and promotion independently.

The weighty contribution to health promotion of schoolchildren was made by the project on school network development to promote health.

In 2012 in the republic there were 1123 schools promoting health, it makes 59,6% (in 2010-2011 academic year there were 1254 schools, that made 54,9%).

Annually, this activity is actively supported by the Ministry of Education and sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan on a grant basis. As a result, schools have an opportunity to improve their material and technical equipment, to acquire sports equipment and to re-equip medical offices.

Within the frames of the Federal purpose-oriented program "Children of Russia" for 2007 - 2010, 19 educational institutions having the characteristic "School of contribution to health of a gold level" got the equipment for medical offices.

In 707 (37,5%) comprehensive educational institutions of the republic, sports and health facilities of municipal level are actively used to conduct PE lessons, in 1781 educational institution (94,4%) these facilities are actively used at the organization of extracurricular sports and health activities.

In educational institutions of the republic federal and republican educational programs "All colors, except black", "Health", "Skills of life", "Smoking prevention at school", "Alcoholism and narcotic addiction prevention", "Formation of life values and development of behavioral skills of pupils of a secondary school" and others are realized. V.N. Kasatkin's (1998), M.M. Bezrukikh's (2004), V.M. Yaltonsky's (2004), T.I. Palacheva's (2004) methods are effectively introduced.

Health, children's and teenagers' development largely depend on a balanced nutrition and efficiency of its organization in educational institutions.

Kazan was the first in the Russian Federation where school cafeterias modernization by introduction of modern technology of hot breakfast preparation, their cooling and transportation to school cafeterias (Cook&Chill system) was carried out. Today all school cafeterias of Kazan are brought into accord to Sanitary Regulations and Standards.

In Naberezhnye Chelny, Nizhnekamsk, Zelenodolsk nutrition is organized through school meal preparing companies delivering semi-finished products of high readiness, they develop the same menu for schoolchildren, supervise the quality of precooked food. Today 92% of schoolchildren of the republic have balanced hot meals.

### **Results**

At the end of the last century for the various collective socially significant labor activity which provides formation of qualities characteristic for a socialized personality, such as independence, discipline, responsibility, flexibility, creative activity, need for work, love for work and the person of work, constructiveness, initiative, economic and ecological education, etc. are necessary for effective socialization of schoolchildren. Today the above described organization and the activity organized in it would be called a social project which prepares a competitive and socialized personality (Gabdrakhmanova, 2015).

Competitiveness is defined not as a single quality, but as an integrated characteristic including the following properties and features of the personality: 1) high level of working

capacity; 2) aspiration for qualitative eventual result; 3) ability to handle stress, ability to overcome difficulties; 4) creative attitude to business, work; 5) aspiration for professional self-perfection; 6) ability to accept important, even risky decisions; 7) ability to communicate, ability to cooperate, to collaborate; 8) ability to master a new business; 9) ability to learn, self-realize, self-develop. It is necessary to add that the activity, in which the personality is engaged, has to be socially approved and provide benefit for surrounding people and society. In this case a child will receive pleasure and satisfaction of it. To possess such properties and features an individual should have good health.

R.G. Gabdrakhmanova notes that socialization is a process and result of a schoolchild's social development, it is the process of a schoolchild's interaction with the social environment when an individual learns to perform social roles, perceives values, norms, rules and examples of behavior. The essence of socialization process is that the person gradually acquires social experience and uses it for adaptation to the society (Gabdrakhmanova, Egereva, 2012).

Primary socialization of a child begins, as all of us know, in a family, then, it is school. School and education system realize both primary and secondary socialization and interact with the personality on micro - and macro- level at the same time. In comparison with a family, school possesses tougher social norms violation of which is accompanied by obligatory formal sanctions. In the world there are no more successful institutes of socialization of a young generation than a modern school.

The socialization of a child's personality and health preservation of schoolchildren are the main objectives which modern school has to solve.

In the modern school for successful socialization, schoolchildren need to possess solid health so as not to spend efforts, time and funds on treatment or recovering. Unfortunately, schoolchildren passively treat their health. The reason is that schoolchildren do not possess sufficient level of knowledge about health. Health workers complain about it and often blame teachers for it. They think that schoolchildren receive very little information on health preservation, that those class hours about a healthy lifestyle, smoking hazards and drugs are not enough. The modern school is obliged to form initial ideas of physical training importance for strengthening of person's health (physical, social and psychological), to generate ideas of its positive impact on a person's development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social). Children have to know that health is the basis for successful study and socialization.

By the end of elementary school pupils have to acquire abilities to organize health saving activity (a day regimen, morning exercises, health precautions, action-oriented games etc.). They should have skills of systematic supervision over their physical well-being, value of physical activities, health monitoring data (height, mass of a body, etc.), indicators of main physical qualities development (force, agility, endurance, coordination, flexibility), careful attitude to their health that implies the choice of safe ways, actions.

According to the World Health Organization "Health is a property of a person to perform biosocial functions in the changing environment, with overloads and without losses, on condition of disease and defects clearance. Health happens physical, mental, moral".

Health is the state of physical, mental and social well-being, harmony in oneself and with the surrounding world. The state of health determines success of an individual biological and social adaptation. In case of balance disorder in the system of health components there occurs disadaptation.

### **Discussions**

The state of health determines success of an individual biological and social adaptation. In case of balance disorder in the system of health components there occurs disadaptation. To preserve the health of schoolchildren needed to create an enabling environment. The state is trying to create these conditions. System components favorable conditions change with time. At the end of the last century, the basis of this system was a joint with older work, healthy food, medical supervision, activities of interest, attractive tours throughout the country. Early this century the basis of this system are a healthy diet, sport activities, education of children to

saving their own health, the supervision of a physician and psychologist. Implement all of the conditions and programs people: teacher, Director, parent, etc.

#### Conclusions

A teacher of today conducts teaching taking into account the state of pupils' health, modifies curriculums, constantly self-improves, masters the technique of primary prevention of exhaustion, develops hygienic, ecological knowledge, works on the formation of healthy needs, conducts fitness and health recreation events. A teacher realizes the program at lessons and can sometimes focus attention only on these or those conditions which promote health preservation. The class teacher can devote some time to issues of health protection and invite experts. But it should be noted, that due to their training teachers do not carry out sufficient work concerning schoolchildren's health preservation as medical workers would like to have. One doctor for the whole school cannot carry out this work either. In this case there should be more doctors at school, or teachers should be equipped with profound knowledge of children's medicine, or to train specialists who will provide schoolchildren with knowledge, abilities, skills, form competences in the sphere of health preservation and promotion during all years of children's studying at school. But a consolidated team of teachers, psychologists, doctors has to start working without any delay.

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## TRAINING OF A MODERN TEACHER IN THE SETTINGS OF INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IMPLEMENTATION

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### Abstract

The article deals with the university implementation of new approaches for planning and carrying out of lectures in accordance with modern educational technologies. Here, the relevance of the problem is justified, the role of interactive technologies in the training of a modern teacher is discussed, and a brief overview of the theoretical concepts of the interactive learning technology principle in the Russian pedagogics is given. The aim of the study was to analyze the interactive lectures conducted by teachers of the Kazan Federal University (KFU) and the subsequent establishment of the "Modern Interactive Lectures Databank" for further professional experience exchange, as well as for the planning and organization of the professional activity of future teachers. The empirical basis of the work is the results of triangulation content analysis of student essays and questionnaire survey of the teachers of the Kazan University. The study was conducted by the authors of the article in a project aimed to study the interactive lectures prospects in KFU. It has been concluded that according to the results of empirical studies, the skillful combination of teaching methods, self-training methods, facilities and forms of interaction with the students leads to an increase in the positive motivational background during the lecture, elevates the responsibility of an individual student for the result of collective, group or pair work. The support of previous experience and expertise acceptance of the other partner (teacher or student) in terms of interactivity are important for the development of a personal assessment of the lecture. The interactive lecture creates the preconditions for the expression of personal qualities, general knowledge of students and teachers that focuses on partnership and the implementation of learning as a co-creation.

**Keywords:** student, pedagogical education, competence, interactive technology, interactive lectures databank

### Introduction

#### *Relevance of the issue*

At present the contemporary system of professional high education in Russia is confronted with solving the problem of training a teacher capable of providing pedagogical support to creative potential, innovative abilities, spiritual and moral culture of his/her students (Bondarevskaya, 2010). This is encouraged by a new fledgling paradigm of education in Russia related to a multi-dimensional approach to vocational training of specialists of the XXI century (Yalalov, 2012; Kalimullin, 2006). Pedagogical activity is indeed intrinsically multifunctional. Thus, in teaching and educational process, a contemporary pedagogue has to be aware of the active educational and cognitive activity of students, the educational process formation taking into account the students' personal peculiarities; the formation of self-

development readiness and life-long learning; the projection and structuring of the students' social ambience in the educational system. In order to achieve these objectives, the pedagogical education of new type involves further perfection of the technological component. Pedagogues have to permanently learn new technologies and ways of interaction with students (Deulin, Samarawickrema, 2010; Gubaidullina et al., 2016; Valeeva & Kalimullin, 2015).

*Tendencies in organizational-content updating of educational process*

Contemporary requirements, put forward in the higher education system, dictate new conditions of how the teaching process should be organised. Ways of educational activity organising appear to be the factor that drives student to development and self-development. Therefore, the implementation of new approaches to planning and holding classes in a high educational institution is a current vital problem that university teachers are faced with. The introduction of interactive methods and forms of learning in the educational process in a university is one of the most important factors that would increase the cognitive activity of a person, would give a student and a teacher a nature of mutually accepting interaction, creating a field of cooperative creative effort and emotional experience. In addition, the modern ways of organizing educational activities encourage students to growth and self-development.

**Methodological Framework**

We regard interactive teaching as a prior strategy and tactic of tertiary education based on the interaction between teachers (online and offline) under the coordinating influence of pedagogical support (guidance) and as the one assisting in developing competences and students' self-fulfilment in the teaching professional activity (Golovanova, Asafova & Telegina, 2014, p. 10).

Thus, in current syllabi the ratio of time allotted for class and independent work is 1:3.5. Therefore, the university educational activity nowadays primarily draws on organising of students' systemic self-study. This has to be assisted by teacher's active work with e-University Networking Educational Platforms (NEP) – a range of software for distance learning organising, advising and knowledge testing by Internet/Intranet technologies used for forming an extensive teaching methodology base available to students. LMS MOODLE platform, preferably applied in Kazan (Volga) Federal University, enables creating the distance learning courses (online courses) embracing all required teaching, ancillary and controlling materials (or links to them). Furthermore, in conditions of self-study e-learning allows ensuring student's individual development trajectory (Sharifzyanova, Shtreter & Naurzybayeva, 2015; Alekseeva et al., 2015). Instructional content is permanently freely available. Instructional courses are devised in conformity with the operating discipline syllabus and are supplied with methodological instructions (both for a teacher and a student). For instance, working with this software can be based on the fact that a lecture as a systemic, consistent, monologue-based oral discourse on the teaching material by a teacher (lecturer), generally of theoretical nature and performing the explanatory function, will be used at introductory, establishing or end-of-course classes. At such lectures a teacher recommends literature to students and spells out methods of working with the textbook, primary source and NEP, terms of reference for the course, as well as the logic of mastering the material. At the end-of-course lecture a teacher encapsulates the principal concepts of the course and, thus, demonstrates how acquired knowledge can be used in practice and in learning other disciplines. The discipline is summarized, its significance in forming scientific outlook is displayed, the peculiarities of a test or an exam in the subject are discussed. And the major part of lectures is based on a student independently familiarising himself/herself with the material via NEP or a study guide. That is why methods and techniques used in seminars and workshops have to enable the stimulating of students' cognitive activity. Then the frontal work, group work, pair work, and tutorials gain a new profundity, and structuring a class on the basis of intentional self-study for preparing to it, combination of various methods, forms and means of organisation of teaching help impart the interactive character to the teaching and educational process.

The technology of interactive teaching is a whole range of forms, methods, techniques, as well as means of teaching and controlling applied in the process of educational activity and

aimed at forming the ways of acquiring knowledge, developing skills and habits of students, creative and productive thinking, behaviour, communication of personality, raising its creative activity. Projection, organisation and delivering of an interactive class on the basis of subject-oriented activity approach demand professional competence, high creative activity of a teacher and are related to the permanent perfection and updating of the educational process. Interactive teaching is based on interrelations between a pedagogue and students as subjects of the activity and is their common cooperation and co-creativity.

Predominance of interactive methods and forms of teaching that intensify personality's cognitive activity imparts the character of a mutually receiving interaction to the relations between a student and a teacher by creating a field of common creative exertion, emotional involvement. Not only does a student start to evaluate the teaching process from the viewpoint of its practicality, but he/she also makes sense of it ethically. To a considerable extent it has to be the foundations for creative self-development of student's personality. Previously we showed that active technologies effect on the development of the following personal qualities: perseverance and single-mindedness, sociability, the teamworking ability (Donetskaya, Golovanova, 2015).

Conditions in the educational domain of a higher educational institution that subsequently assist in self-fulfilment of a student and future graduate, thus, in such a way ensure an improvement in the quality of mastering various competences. Teaching is effective if it is student oriented (Deulin, Samarawickrema, 2010, p. 112). The following competences ensue as a result of gaining grounding in the educational curriculum by students:

- Domain knowledge (specific skills in applying available knowledge, acquiring new knowledge in educational and creative situations, experience in activity),
- Meta-learning (multi-purpose learning actions (MPLA), ability to apply them, plan and organise cooperation, structuring an individual educational trajectory, etc.),
- Personality changes (civil position, social competences, an ability to set oneself goals, personal self-identification, readiness for self-development, etc.).

However, little attention has been paid to applying interactive technologies in a university system of pedagogical education so far. Forms and methods of teaching applied at classes do not fully meet the requirements put forward in education standards for developing graduates' competences.

### **Results and Discussions**

#### ***Research Into Interactive Classes Outlook***

At the Department of Pedagogy of the Institute of Psychology and Education within Kazan Federal University (KFU), research into KFU interactive classes outlook is carried out, which is aimed at the following:

- Foundation of the *Interactive Up-to-Date Knowledge Classes Databank* held by teachers of all institutes for further exchange of professional experience;
  - To get an overview of applying interactive forms and methods of teaching at KFU;
- The stages of the research in progress embrace:
- Surveying KFU lecturers;
  - Students' essays *The Most Memorable Lecture at KFU* and their subsequent triangulation analysis;
  - Putting the interactive approach into practice by the lecturers of the Institute of Psychology and Education within KFU participating in the experiment;
  - Creating experimental platforms in the other institutes of KFU.

#### ***The usage of interactive forms of learning***

For further analysis of empirical data obtained in a survey of teachers and students, we identified the following characteristics of a lecture allowing evaluating its interactivity:

- actualization of the problems considered in class;
- the availability of thematic information in view of its scientific nature;

- the visibility usage assuming links to information resources and e-learning courses;
- emphasize of interdisciplinary of a problem and bringing relevant examples;
- feedback presence on the lecture via the involvement of students in the joint discussion of the problem;
- maintenance of a creative atmosphere in the class.

As a result of the survey of teachers from different institutions and departments of KFU (585 participants) it was determined that:

- most of the teachers (62.5%) have difficulties to complete the characterization of interactive lectures and therefore cannot conclude whether they carry out interactive lectures or not;
- teachers who use interactive technologies in the classroom find them rather time-consuming to prepare and difficult to organize (causes: logistical support, organization of classrooms space, organizational skills of teachers);
- part of the teachers (27.4%) doubts the effectiveness of interactive lectures due to the unreadiness of students to participate in them.

To obtain an overview on the use of interactive forms and methods of teaching, such as creating a problematic situations, the use of project-based methods as well as case methods, business and role-playing games, debates and discussions, organization of research work, etc., students at their 3-5 year of studies were asked to write an essay on topic "The most memorable lecture in the university." Students were describing the course of the lecture, their participation in it, were recalling all possible details and impressions from such activities, the emotional background at these lectures, and communicated their opinions about the importance of such lectures. The students were asked to base their essay on the above mentioned characteristics of interactive lectures. During the *actualization* of the lecture topic it was remarkable to determine whether the emphasis was done based not only on previous knowledge but also on the specific experiences of the participants of the educational process, and whether the importance of the experience broadening through the assimilation of new means of activities were discussed. It was of further interest to determine whether disclosing of new study material was combined with examples that encourage more *comprehensible* assimilation of modern *scientific* information. It has been defined which means of *visual methods* were used in the corresponding lecture. Along with these characteristics particular importance was supposed to be paid to the implementation of the *feedback* between teacher and students, which was expressed not only in a one-sided teacher responses to the questions of students, but also bringing in the audience to participate in the joint discussion of the most difficult points of the topic. In essays, students could also express their opinion about whether the lecture promoted the creation of a holistic understanding of the practical relevance of the discussed topic in the future professional activity, which examples have been used to characterize the *interdisciplinary* of the topic, and whether a *creative atmosphere* was built up in the class.

As a result of the content analysis of 530 student essays from different institutes and faculties of KFU it has been recognized that:

- the majority of students described a modern interactive lecture in detail, recalling the finest niceties of personal involvement in it. It can be assumed that the increase in cognitive activity during these lectures contributes to a more successful following educational and professional activity of students;
- creating learning situations during the lecture topic actualization, display of practical examples of the application of relevant knowledge, development of the ability and willingness to use existing experience in new situations allowing to expand the idea of the university educational environment without limiting its scope by a lecture-hall;
- competent combination of teaching methods, methods of self-training, forms and means of interaction with the students promotes the positive motivational

background on the lecture, increases the responsibility of the individual student for the outcome of collective, group and pair work;

- reliance on previous experience and acceptance of each other's experience (teacher as well as student) are important in terms of interactivity for the formation of personal assessment of the lecture and the importance/ relevance of the topic at issue;
- during the interactive lecture preconditions for the personal qualities display are created; general knowledge of students and teachers that focuses on partnerships and the implementation of training as a co-creation are becoming apparent. Among the personal qualities of supreme importance are compassion, empathy, communication skills, tolerance, tact, self-criticism, organizational skills, and commitment to continuous self-improvement;
- contemporary classes in universities are a model for the implementation of professional activities of the future teachers.

Involvement in the analysis of the educational process allows students (future teachers) to plan and design their own interactive lectures, to acquire multidimensional pedagogical skills, which are based on professional knowledge and skills, as well as the ability to conduct simultaneously multiple types of learning, developmental, educational activities, to integrate methods, forms and means of education (Yalalov 2012).

### Conclusion

The students (future teachers) supposed to have creative thinking and readiness to apply innovative approaches in their professional activities and to improve their organizational skills. Multitasking of educational activities and modern requirements in higher education are targeted at improving the technological component of the educational process by teachers. New approaches to planning and conducting the lectures in the process of students training (future teachers) guided by the implementation of interactive learning, which is based on the interaction of training subjects (online and offline) contribute to the development of competence and self-fulfillment of students in educational and professional activities. Highlighted features of interactive lectures allowed us to analyze the frequency of its usage in the learning process, according to the opinions of teachers and students of the University of Kazan presented in the questionnaires and essays. Students pointed out the important educational and professional experience gained at these lectures. Therefore, the task of teachers in the course of training is to specifically identify conditions for the most effective professional development of future graduates, including future teachers. Establishment of interactive lectures database is a step towards the solution of crucial problems. In the outlook, all this is aimed at university graduates to implement their multi-dimensional teaching activities and increase of their competitiveness.

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# PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS OF ECONOMIC EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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## Abstract

The urgency of the problem under investigation due to the fact that under the conditions of modern society cannot do without a thorough economic education of the younger generation. Article aims to identify and study of pedagogical conditions of economic education of children in preschool educational institution, including the organization and saturation types of children's activity information on the economic life of the family, people, society and development on this basis of cognitive interest to the positive norms and values of social and economic society ; interaction of preschool educational institution and the family in the development of economic education began in children. The leading method to the study of this problem was the pedagogical experiment (notes forming, control); allowing to identify the levels of economic education. Article Submissions may be useful to teachers of preschool educational institutions in the disclosure to the child diverse world economy, as well as all those interested in economic education of the younger generation.

**Keywords:** economic education, pedagogical conditions, pre-school children, the moral qualities of the person

## Introduction

### *Relevance of the issue*

Saving the economic independence of Russia and its scientific potential is impossible without education free personality capable of self-consciously, responsible decisions both in private and in public life. Relation between policies and education today is obvious to all. On the content and direction of the latter depends on the economic, intellectual, cultural, spiritual and moral potential of any civilized society.

In today's economic conditions, the problem of raising children is one of the main. The urgency of the problem is determined by the fact that under the conditions of modern society is becoming a significant economic education of the younger generation. Modern new economic conditions dictate the need for education from pre-school age independent, active, industrious, economically literate, highly moral, humane people, that is the basis for further life personality (Khuziakhmetov, Shafikova & Kapranova, 2015; Kubiato, Usak & Masalimova, 2016; Alekseeva et al., 2015; Gubaidullina et al., 2016; Valeeva & Kalimullin, 2015; Parfilova & Kalimullin, 2014).

There is a lack of scientific and methodological elaboration process of economic education of children in preschool educational institution, although in recent years the interest in economic education of preschool children in the new and highly controversial conditions of social life became the subject of intense research.



## *Explore Importance of the Problem*

Relevance of the study due to the fact that in pedagogical science are discussed various aspects of economic education: economic education of preschool children (Smolentceva, 2001); laying the foundations of economic culture (Kurak, 2002); introduce children to the economy, the initial economic education as a factor of economic socialization, has a huge impact on the child's relationship to the folding material and spiritual values, and in general on the personality of the child (Shatova, 2004); formation of economic socialization of children (Kozlov, 2000); formation of preschool children of Economic Studies (Galkin, 1999); awareness of children of economic concepts (Golub, 2003). However, despite the variety of the studied problems remain poorly understood pedagogical conditions of economic education of children in preschool educational institution.

## *Hypothesis*

Analysis of theoretical studies and practical activities in the aspect of the developed problems showed that the issues related to the recognition of economic education, from pre-school age, are by far understudied area of scientific knowledge and practical activities that enabled us to formulate the hypothesis of the study of this problem: the process of economic education age children may be successful if defined set of pedagogical conditions of economic education is a prerequisite for the implementation of the process of economic education.

## **Materials and Methods**

### *Objectives of the study*

In the study, the following tasks:

1. To study the state of the problem in the philosophical, historical and pedagogical, psychological, scientific and methodological literature.
2. To identify and test educational environment conducive to the successful implementation of economic education of children.
3. To develop and implement a pedagogical process authoring program "Economics in kindergarten."

### *Theoretical and empirical methods*

In order to achieve the objectives, the following research methods were used: theoretical analysis of the philosophical, psychological and pedagogical, scientific and methodological literature on the study; analysis of programs for pre-school educational institutions, study and analysis of teaching aids, children's literature; Analysis of experience of preschool institution (planning).

Among the empirical methods were used: pedagogical supervision; diagnostic methods (questionnaires, interview, study of children's activity products). The leading method of our study was the pedagogical experiment (notes forming, control); quantitative and qualitative analysis of the experimental data.

### *Base of the research*

*Experimental* work was carried out in preschool number 25 and number 67 of Naberezhnye Chelny, Tatarstan. The study covered 82 children 6-7 years old and their parents, 90 preschool teachers.

### *Stages of the study*

The study was conducted in four phases:

The first phase of the study and analysis of the philosophical, psychological and pedagogical, scientific and methodological literature. Determined by the initial position of the study, the methodological and theoretical aspects of the problem, clarify the subject, hypothesis, settled the main goals and objectives of the research work.

The second phase was devoted to the design and implementation of ascertaining diagnostic phase of the experiment, a plan of experimental work aimed at identifying the importance of pedagogical conditions of economic education of children.

The third stage began forming in the experiment, to organize and conduct which created the necessary pedagogical conditions of economic education of children: the creating educative medium, aimed at the formation of such a moral-economic qualities of the person, as

the thrift, responsibility, efficiency, enterprise, providing ability to live in society; organization and saturation types of children's activity (game, work, cognitive) information on the economic life of the family, people, society and development on this basis of informative interest to positive norms and values of social and economic society; the interaction of preschool educational institutions and families in the development of economic education began in children.

The fourth stage is the control in the experiments: carried out the feasibility of understanding the pedagogical conditions necessary for economic education of children; refined some theoretical propositions, conclusions; made out the results and thesis research.

#### **Results**

##### *The degree of coverage of the problem of economic education in the philosophical, historical and pedagogical, psychological literature*

The problem of economic education in the history of educational thought has always been important. In his book "Parent School" Comenius aims to provide children with a wide richness of the material world at the level of sense and effectiveness of its knowledge. In the enumeration of human knowledge required for pre-school children, along with other sciences Comenius called economy.

In the XVII century English philosopher, pedagogue psychologist John Locke considered the goal of education is to form a "gentleman" who can "manage their affairs sensibly and prudently". Progressive phenomenon in its time was the fact that Locke marked out the importance of learning book-keeping among other sciences, knowledge of which should come in handy business person. In this case, the direction of economic education is obvious, although the term "economy" has not yet been used.

Our analysis of foreign pedagogy of XVIII, XIX centuries showed that prominent teachers (Dewey, Kershenshteyner, Pestalozzi, Rousseau) did not exclude the importance of economic education, but in most cases considered it in close interrelation with working or even in the system of labor education.

From the beginning of the socialist state the special significance of preparing the young generation for high performance was acquired. Its economic aspect was expressed in the fact that the school began to implement economy mode, scientific organization of labor, began to study and make rational use of the time budget of students, to solve the problems of vocational guidance in new ways, to raise the question of mastering economic knowledge. In this regard, scientists have tried to develop the content and methodology of economic education at school.

During the Soviet period (Makarenko, 1938) revealed the main areas of family education, including economic. He claimed that from an early age in the family the child learns the future economic activity and it brought teamwork, honesty, diligence, thrift, responsibility.

In the post-Soviet period of the study in the school pedagogy economic education of pupils realized most successfully in terms of an integrated approach. It provides the economic training of students in the study of the fundamentals of science, in the labor and vocational training, in socially useful, productive work, in the activities of core enterprises and family. An integrated approach requires the establishment of extensive relations between groups of schools, basic enterprises and parent community, enhance of the quality of all parts of the educational work of the school.

In the 80-ies of XX century scientists (Ponomarev, Epstein, 1987) regarded economic education as a significant factor in the development of the national economy, as a prerequisite for scientific organization of production, as an important means of forming a correct attitude toward labor and property of the young generation.

The genesis of economic education of children was investigated in foreign and domestic pedagogy (Bogomolova, 1997, 2006). The principle of historicism put in the basis for selection of content, tools and techniques of economic education of preschool children.

The current stage of economic education of children is directly linked with the development of moral values, citizenship, hard work, creativity, understanding of economic issues. Everyone, without references to their profession should have a strong knowledge of

economics, which allows you to feel confident in life. Success depends not only on the hard work and creativity, but also on the enterprise, initiative, economic literacy.

At all times in the pedagogy teachers and practices associated with the formation of economic education such personality traits as thrift, prudence, thrift, efficiency needed in production and economic activity in everyday life.

### Discussions

The need for economic education of children of preschool age was raised (Shatova, 1989) in the journal "Early childhood education." She invited colleagues to discuss the question whether it is necessary what and preschooler economic education? Is needed for a long time the economic education is not a subject of special study, since preschoolers are far from the scope of this productive labor - the basis of economic life. Experience education of preschool children proves that many preconditions for future economic activity are laid very early, and if you do not configure them in a timely manner, may appear negative aspects of the child's personality: negligence, carelessness, indifference to spoiled things, books, toys. As a response to a discussion speech of Shatovain magazine, there were received a lot of feedback, which were both of supported and opponent opinion of economic education of preschool children; expressed different points of view of teachers. There were expressed doubts about the availability of economic knowledge and notions to preschoolers (Lyamina, 1990); in particular the constant emphasis on the children's attention to the material basis was criticized. There were different views on economic education. The child can and should know the economic aspect of social reality. It should only be available to determine preschooler content, methods and means of economic education (Kozlova, 1990).

The need for targeted training of future preschool workers in the walls of Teachers College, on the faculties of preschool pedagogical universities, on the training courses for teachers of economic education. This problem cannot be solved by the system of lessons, the direction of economic education should go through all the processes of learning, in communication between the tutor and the children, and in the family. It is important to keep this work in series, only then kindergarden and family can lay the economic education of the child, preparing him for life (Samborenko, 1990).

The essence of the proposed approach to economic education of preschool children in the organization considers no special training economy (Smolentceva, 2001, 2006). This will require additional time and may overload the children, and in enriching the various types of children's activities (mathematical, artistic and creative) economic content. Saturation of life of preschoolers by basic economic data, the author believes, promotes the development of their real economic thinking, which makes the process more informed and realistic.

In recent years among the studies should be allocated study (Galkina, 1999). In order to implement economic education of senior preschool children, researchers have developed a model, which is a specific set of requirements for preschoolers. These requirements should be appropriately reflected in the educational process of preschool educational institutions, as well as the program "Economic kindergarden Little Red Riding Hood." The process of mastering knowledge of economics, in its view, includes the perception of economic substance, the formation of the necessary concepts, connection of different knowledge, application of knowledge in a new situation, improving and sustaining them in memory. In the study the parameters of economic activity preschooler is determined as a set of tasks that have to deal with preschool children in connection with the economic direction of learning. A combination of factors of the educational process, including the existence of objective external and internal features which are reflected in the content, in the forms, methods, techniques, material and spatial environment, family and social environment in the emotional and personal perception of the economic information, current and boundary control level of economic knowledge.

The establishment of pedagogical conditions of economic education, formation of elementary economic knowledge, specific personality traits in preschool children perform in different studies are not as the main object of study, as well as a particular problem, the subordinate other problems (labor, moral education, familiarization with difficulty Adults).

Let us consider the first condition - the creation of educative medium, aimed at the formation of such a moral-economic qualities of the person, as the thrift, responsibility, efficiency, enterprise, providing ability to live in society. Content of economic raising among the speakers: object-spatial environment (creating games economic area); social and behavioral environment (parents, teaching staff); event-cognitive environment (excursions, meetings with interesting people) and information environment (crossword puzzles, illustrations, layouts signboards of shops, banks, service centers, industrial map of the city, samples of coins). The teacher, a professional using the influence of these social agents, gives this effect target orientation, translating social situation of development in teaching - thereby creating educates area, aimed at the formation of the leading economic and moral qualities.

Enriching experiences helped to create caregivers economic zone games: educational games, table with crossword puzzles, model of "family budget", "Economic tree", constantly updated illustrations, signage options, a city map with the location of factories, stand "Economic alphabet", "What used to be money", illustrated albums about numismatics, as well as mini -" workshop of good deeds. " Organization of gaming economic zone gave children the opportunity to act independently, contributed to the formation of cognitive and practical activity, creating opportunities for involving parents in the education of the child, the ability to adapt to the diverse world economy. It was promoted and competence of teachers who are familiar with the essence of economic phenomena, with the world economic relations in society.

Another condition for economic education is to organize and saturation types of children's activity (game, work, cognitive) information on the economic life of the family, people, society and development on this basis of informative interest to positive norms and values of social and economic society.

Conducted tours with children (at Bakery, micromarket, in the studio, a supermarket, a saving bank, an advertising agency) publicly disclose the importance of these institutions in a city, familiar with people work, the results of which are necessary to others, to society (providing bakery products, delivery of written mail, parcels, packages, pensions, provision of money on credit). Conducted tours given the opportunity to fix the representations of children about the history of the city, its sights on the economic life of their native land.

Their needs in creative activities under the guidance of the teacher implemented the children in the workshops of the "Do yourself with your own hands," they emphasized a practical activity of the children: the organization of repair toys, pasting books, making gifts and greeting cards for the holiday, making children's crafts,. This has contributed to the formation of hard work, ingenuity, efficiency, frugality, organization of children. The work was done in class circles "Skilful masters", "The Second Life of our things," "Tales of garbage", the products were used in the productions of puppet theater, story-role-playing games, games, dramatization, at various events organized by the group and the music hall, developed the activity and creativity of children.

It's important to activate the cognitive interest of the economy focused on the children's questions. Often manifested cognitive interest in the estate of the family, the production of various enterprises, technical innovations in the service sector (ATMs, new terminals). None of the questions did not remain unanswered, drew attention to the changes taking place in the life of a kindergarten, events in the economic life of the city (the emergence of new buses, trams, improvement of streets). Thanks to creative tasks (to draw the newspaper come up with a brochure, make an economic crossword puzzle) and creative games ("Presentation", "Reporter", "Fair" et al.), Formed in children ideas about the economy gained connection with life.

Organization of children's tournaments ("Journey into the world of fairy tales with economic content"), themed evenings ("Economic Activity"), quizzes ("Visiting the Queen Economy"); communication of children with adults and peers during meetings with people from different professions; joined participation of children and parents in competitions, entertainment, sightseeing contributed not only to systematize representations of children about the diversity of the world economy, but also contributed to the education of efficiency, responsibility, interest in a common effort, consistency in the work.

Interaction of preschool educational institutions and families by becoming began economic education of children is a prerequisite for the economic education of children and allows to build a relationship of mutual understanding, a common approach in the formation of children of 6-7 years the foundations of economic education.

Improving the economic competence of parents in the first place through consultations ("Economic education of preschool children", "Education of responsibility"), interviews ("Education thrift", "Children and the business"), parent meetings ("The role of the family in the economic education of children"); round tables ("How to bring an assistant", "Participation in the life of a kindergarten"), discussions ("Professional future of our children", "Advertising and anti-advertising of children's toys"). For the dissemination of best practices in family education group was wound up book for parents "Economic education of our childhood"; organized club hobbies parents' home studio. "

Parents were partners in joint activities, participated in the plot-role-playing ("Supermarket"), didactic games ("Economic lotto", "happy event"), played a leading role, helping the children to bring the game to completion, taught tactfully to communicate with partners; participated in the drafting of economic crossword table "Family Budget"; Competition wall newspapers ("What would you like to see your band?", "Our Town"); in the production of albums by profession; the design of brochures; excursions, organizing meetings with creative people.

Thus, family involvement in the educational process and educational preschool possible to ensure the unity of the educational influences, to achieve mutual understanding and cooperation, as well as increase the efficiency of the work carried out in the experimental group.

In the course of experimental work an authoring program "Economics in kindergarten" has been implemented which suggests evidence-based approach to the selection of material about the history of economics, modern professions adults, patterns of behavior, value orientations that guide people in today's society.

### **Conclusion**

The success of economic education of senior preschool children is provided by a set of pedagogical conditions of economic education of children: the creation of educative environment; organization and saturation of types of children's activity (game, labor, cognitive and communication) by economic information; development of cognitive interest to the economy; organization of interaction between teachers and the family in matters of economic education, followed by involvement of parents into the active forms of joint activities with the children.

### **Recommendations**

Modern society in general and teachers in particular are interested in the person who is ready to engage in the modern forms of economic relations, in the cost-bred individuality. Studies show that the main requirement of the effectiveness of economic education of today's children - creating of elaborate system of pedagogical activities and appropriate conditions.

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# A STUDY MODEL OF COLLATING RUSSIAN AND IRANIAN EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF DISTANCE LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES QUALITY

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## Abstract

The relevance of this article is due to the active implementation of distance learning technologies in various countries having similar problems in distance education and accumulating positive experience in solving them. Among such issues is the quality of education in the context of distance learning, the ways and the effectiveness of which considerably vary. Therefore, this article is aimed at the study and collation of the quality of international distance education technologies. The leading method in the study of this problem is a simulation method allowing to compare and collate the quality of learning technologies used in Russian and foreign experience on the basis of similarity (both recognized and valuable experience and the experience of little importance for the countries) and specificity (as the experience in which the leading position is taken by one or other country). Comparative research of the scientific sphere is done on the example of selected scientific materials of Russia and Iran on the designated problem and scientometric analysis of internal databases for each country. The paper presents a statistical research model of international experience collation in the designated area, the appropriate research tools and the main findings of the comparative analysis of the quality assurance of distance learning technologies, including active application of standardization and quality control issues, quality indicators, quality criteria, distance learning / education, distance learning technologies that are typical for both countries.

**Keywords:** distance learning technologies, quality system in education, research model, international experience collation, statistical tools, scientometric analysis

## Introduction

### *Relevance of the issue*

The article is devoted to topical problems caused by active implementation of distance learning technologies, which in various countries have both positive aspects and challenges. Thus, collating the experience of different countries the scholars should reveal actual ideas, the distribution of which will allow the expected productive results. In the previous research papers the authors of the given article described aspects of distance learning technologies formation (Zamani, Abedini, Soleymani & Amini, 2012), as well as the experience of information-and-environment and logistical approaches (Vlasova, Kirilova & Masalimova, 2015). Further investigation of the described issues require the development of statistically verified research models of Russian and foreign experience collation, allowing to make well-reasoned conclusions and recommendations in the field of distance learning technologies quality.

### *The main aspects of the study*

The article focuses on the problems of education quality in distance learning context, the solution of which can vary considerably in different countries. It reveals two aspects: firstly, the authors' statistical research model of international experience collation (comparative study), secondly, the results of its implementation for the scientometric analysis of Russia's and Iran's achievements in the field of distance learning technologies quality. It should be noted that the given model is founded on the universal philosophical (Nurullin, 2013) and historical understanding (Newman, Ward, Smith, Wilson, McCrea, 1997), oriented on developing standards (Sharifzyanova, Shtreter & Nauryzbayeva, 2015) and the experience of comparative research (Kamalova & Zakirova, 2014), as well as standardized invariant schemes of objects analysis that are applied to different data (Razinkov & Latypov, 2007). On the basis of the proposed statistical research model there can be compared the achievements and experience in the science and practice of different countries.

The article describes the model and the results of terminology comparative analysis in the areas related to ensuring the quality of distance learning technologies implementation in Russia and Iran.

### Methodological Framework

#### Statistical research model

The paper proposes the statistical research model aimed at the division of the analyzed data into the following categories: 1) evidence that the countries in question are similar, 2) data showing that the countries manifest themselves in the designated field differently.

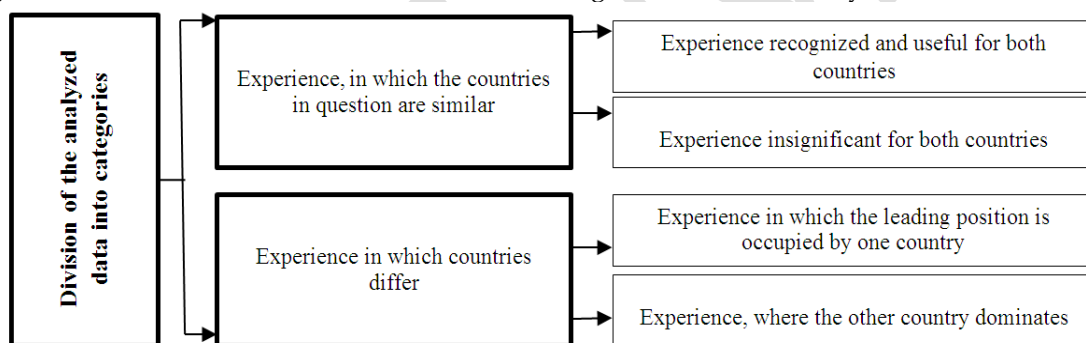


Figure 1. Categories of statistically significant data shown in the authors' statistical research model of international experience collation.

The general scheme of similarities and differences zones defined by the methods of mathematical statistics see in Fig. 1. The first category, respectively, includes: experience recognized and useful for both countries, as well as experience insignificant for both countries. The second category includes experience in which the leading position is occupied by one country, and experience, where the other country dominates.

This model was built in order to identify common and specific features of scientific research development and practical achievements in the field of training quality in the context of distance learning technologies implementation. Experience, in which the countries in question are similar, is based on global trends including the interest in the study and implementation of ways to ensure the quality of distance learning technologies implementation, which is due, on the one hand, to the development and implementation of distance learning technologies and on the other hand – to the increased interest in relevant quality systems. The experience, in which countries differ, is based on their history, legislation and the structure of their educational systems, as well as the level of information technologies and the established mentality, which determines the attitude toward education.

#### Research tools

For the given research model there were proposed and adopted the following rules forming the basis of research tools for collation, regulating the adequate inclusion of data into the specific category on the basis of statistically significant similarities and differences in the data obtained:



- comparable volume of the original samples of the studied materials;
- consideration of variations in synonymously similar concepts as a criterion to determine correctness of the formation of the main sets of terms;
- assessment of chronology and dynamics of the main synonyms and similar concepts emergence in the development structure of the investigated materials;
- reliance on relative statistical indicators of usage frequency of the studied term sets in the sample totals;
- assessment of the reliability of the studied data obtained by means of samples collation organized on the basis of keywords, titles of publications, abstracts, types of publications and full texts of the materials;
- consideration of completeness of compound terms coverage in literature and other studies.

### *Research sample*

The study was conducted in the framework of data collation based on scientific works sampling and the results of the practical implementation of distance learning technologies.

For the analysis there were selected research and educational materials related to the designated issues and there was compared the usage of basic terminology groups in Russia and Iran. The described sampling was carried out to identify the specific features of the development of scientific researches and their inclusion in educational practice in the field of quality of distance learning technologies implementation in each of the studied countries.

The scientific interest in the study of the quality of distance learning technologies is, on the one hand, due to the development and introduction of technologies (Levina et al., 2015), (Yusupova, Podgorecki & Markova, 2015) (Biktagirova & Valeeva, 2013), (Heinecke, Milman, Washington & Blasia, 2001), and on the other hand, the construction of quality systems and standards (Su White, 2000). Accordingly, the criterion to choose scientific and educational materials samples was their usage of terminological groups due, on the one hand, to the development and implementation of technologies, and on the other hand, to the construction of quality systems. The clarifying definitions were the reference to distance technologies and quality in the field of education.

Study of the basic terminology groups was based on content analysis of the use of terms in Russia, according to the data of «E-library», whereas in Iran on the basis of the electronic library «Irandoc». Orientation on countries' internal literature databases provided the scholars with the opportunity to study the wider variety of sources, including not only scientific but also educational literature. For the analysis there were selected the key phrases including the basic terms "quality" and "technologies", as well as clarifying definitions of "distance learning", "electronic resources".

During the practical implementation of distance learning technologies there was tested the realization of organizational and pedagogical conditions to ensure high-quality training. The studied groups of organizational and pedagogical conditions for ensuring the quality of training with the use of distance learning technologies are highlighted in the structure of the components of the educational system: the first group includes the conditions of goal orientation, the second group - the conditions of integrity of the educational content; the third one - the terms of quality assurance of forms, methods and means of training; the fourth group includes the conditions of quality assurance at the stages of monitoring, evaluation and feedback.

In the framework of the experiment the students attended classes conducted with the use of distance learning technologies. It was important to establish whether certain groups of conditions were equally important for both countries, or there was revealed a higher priority and their more successful implementation in one of the studied countries. Statistical aggregate of this part of the study is presented by the Russian and Iranian university students: there were selected 221 people, of which 110 students were from Russia and 111 from Iran. As a tool for data collection there were used questionnaires. Questions for these questionnaires were based on researches on the program of the Russian Academy of Education (Vlasova, Kirilova &

Sabirova, 2015), studies of twelve-year program of the International Association of Distance Learning (iNACOL) and the Commission on Accreditation of local colleges and colleges of the lower stage (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges). Questionnaires contained 64 questions, divided into seven blocks, the answers to which were given in accordance with the Likert scale. In Russia, the questionnaire was available during four months the students of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University and students of the Academy of Social Education. In Iran, the similar questionnaire during four months was posted on the website of Isfahan University applying distance learning technologies.

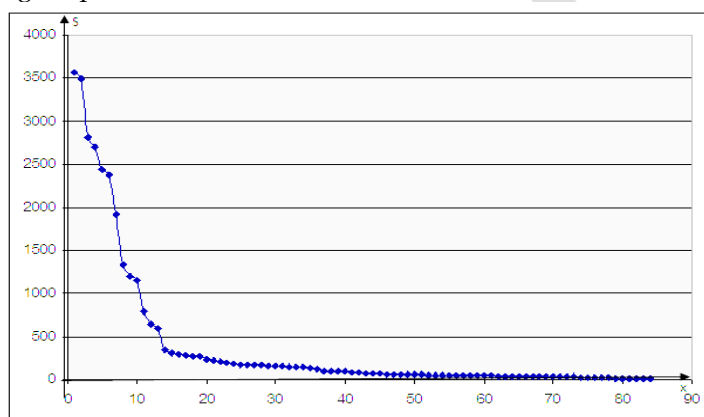
The article presents the data obtained on the basis of statistical calculation Student's t-test for equality of averages. The given data allow us to claim statistically significant similarities or differences of relevant experience. On the basis of statistical results, characterized by a probability of more than 0.95 for the similarity of data there was taken the main hypothesis of the equality of averages, confirming statistically significant similarities between Iran and Russia. On the basis of statistical results, identified with a probability of less than 0.05, there was accepted the alternative hypothesis, confirming a statistically significant difference between Iran and Russia on appropriate indicators.

### Results and Discussions

#### *On significant similarities and differences of the Russian and Iranian terminology base*

Let us explain the results of comparative study of terminology base, providing quality of distance learning technologies application in Russia and Iran.

The figure 2 shows the graph of the selected set of terms usage on the problems associated with distance learning technologies quality, where the X-axis gives the ordinal terms, sorted by particular circumstances, and the S axis gives the number of frequency of each specific terminological phrase.



**Figure 2.** The graph of the selected set of terms usage.

It is particularly remarkable that 75% of key terminological phrases usage refers to the first 10 positions of the list. This indicates a sufficient correctness level of the main sets of terms formation.

Considering the evaluation of the materials development according to parameters of the dynamics and history, the analysis has shown that the differences have historical roots and are manifested in the fact that the scope of the quality of education and the sphere of distance learning technologies are more lasting and actively studied in Russia than in Iran. In accordance with the stated statistical research model there were identified the general trends of the studied areas, along with some differences as well, which are supported by a statistically significant similarities and differences, identified during terminological analysis, that was carried out with the support of the relative activity indicator statistics of selected set of terms usage based on the total amount of sample.

#### *Analysis of the similarity based on the sample study of terminology base*

Similarity is determined by common to both countries groups of terms, which have high level of research activity. In the area of similarity the following concepts were included:

standardization and quality management, system of distance learning (education). The collected data can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Data for terminological analysis collected on the basis of the compound terms occurrence in the title and keywords of publications under "Education"

Main group	Compound terms	Usage in Russia		Usage in Iran	
		before 2013	before 2015	before 2013	before 2015
Quality	<b>Totals on education quality problems</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>2683</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>1289</b>
	Quality standard	871	719	049	034
	Quality control	292	614	456	654
	The quality of training	038	464	345	532
	The quality of knowledge	18	19	14	34
	Quality indicators	23	03	35	02
	<b>Totals on problems of technologies in education</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>318</b>
	Distance learning	968	040	207	543
	Distance learning technology	159	578	003	323
	E-teaching materials	04	280	61	58
Technology of quality	05	45	04	94	

As a rule, thought-out terms get the greatest usage, as well as terms that were included in textbooks and academic programs. Accordingly, certain compound terms are actively used in key words section and titles of modules in textbooks, and in the reference lists. This fact may be due to the terms being developed in the framework of educational process and active use in the students' academic studies. The use and analysis of such common issues in pedagogical science become less active with the time, as researches for the most part are completed.

On the other hand, there is a very little activity of a number of compound terms in both countries, including the following: the effectiveness of distance learning technologies, the model of distance learning and the quality of the educational environment.

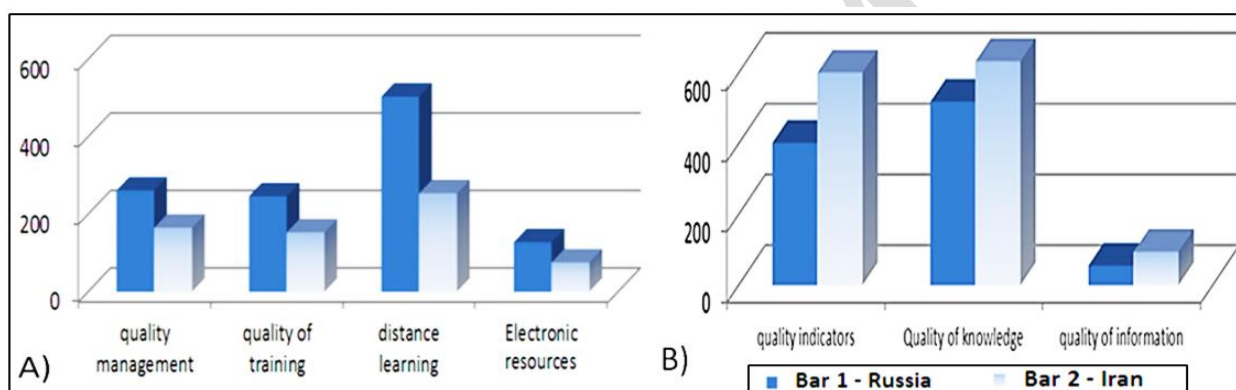
**Table 2.** In both countries, special attention should be paid to the following aspects of the study.

Analyzed compound terms	Usage in Russia	Usage in Iran
The effectiveness of distance learning technologies	7	9
Models of distance learning	16	15
Quality of the educational environment	20	20

The rare usage of indicated terms is due to the fact that the relevant studies are mainly experimental. This is evidenced by its rare use in the academic literature and in students' work. Selective control of sets of terms dynamics indicates an increase of its significance for modern science and practice. Active citations show that they are widely used. In the near future it should be expected an active increase of interest to the respective issues. A similar situation is typical for experimental development of science and is detected in many inter-disciplinary researches.

***Analysis of the differences on the basis of the research sample***

Let's refer to the collation of terminological base that has got a specific spread in Russia and in Iran (Fig. 3). Statistical analysis showed that the following compound terms are widely used in Russia most of all: quality management, education quality management (2616 in Russia and 1654 in Iran), quality of training (2464 and 1532), distance learning (5040 and 2543), as well electronic educational resources (1280 and 758).



**Figure 3.** The main priorities of each country: A) Priorities in Russia, B) Priorities in Iran. Statistical analysis also showed that the following compound terms are used less active in Russia than in Iran: quality indicators (403 in Russia and 602 in Iran), quality of knowledge (519 and 634), and quality of information (56 and 95).

***The interpretation of revealed terminological base specifics of Russia and Iran***

Zones of differences need further interpretation from the point of solving the education quality problems and the use of distance learning technologies.

As for the quality problems, questions on education quality management are predominant in Russia, and they are solved on the basis of a well-developed theory of management. In Iran the questions on identification and the use of universal (standardized) quality indicators have got the greatest use, and consistent application of them can be extended to a number of educational institutions.

According to the problems of distance learning technologies there were identified specificity, which is linked to two major factors - the "openness" and "availability". These factors have different interpretations in the countries concerned. In Russia, the "openness" is mainly treated as readiness to change and improvement, and "availability" as access to affordable education not only anywhere in a large country, but at different initial individual level. In Iran, the "openness" is mainly treated from the point of open borders in entering the global educational community, "availability" - as the search for new methods of learning, appropriate and accessible to all.

***Findings and Practical Recommendations***

The collation enables to make a number of conclusions and recommendations which promote the development and transfer of productive experience at the international level. Firstly, for the Russian universities and research organizations it is recommended to continue and strengthen the positive research in the field of quality management of distance education, based on management theory. This experience is very interesting for other countries. Second,

the Iranian education should expand the use of universal (standardized) quality indicators, as well as build its productive transfer and adaptation at the international level.

For both countries there is identified special zone of active application on standardization and quality management, quality indicators, quality criteria, distance learning / education, distance learning technologies, as well as the area of perspective development of distance learning technologies effectiveness, modeling of distance learning systems, as well as the quality of education environment.

### **Conclusions**

It should be noted that in this study it was also taken into account the materials to implement the research in the field of information (Reason, 1994.), general scheme of comparative research in related areas (Taylor, Francis, 2007), (Novik & Podgórecki, 2015) research experience in the quality of training sphere (The Orbit Report, 1998), (Nail, Artem, 2013), (Nuriev & Starygina, 2013).

In contrast to the studies presented above, this article carries quite coherent exposition of the issues raised and implemented on research model construction and its application to match developments in the quality of distance learning technologies.

The expansion of distance learning technologies in each country is described by both general world trends and specific characteristics. Russia launched a programmed learning about thirty years ago; during this process there was a necessity to overcome the incompatibility of the required software and technical equipment in the field of education and to minimize the initial lag in the field of information. This path has allowed Russia to accumulate a wealth of variable experience in development and implementation of automation in the educational process, a natural element of which was the use of distance learning technologies. Iran is making significant efforts to spread and develop distance learning technologies for the past ten years. The peculiarity of the Iranian history is to a high extent in its centralization of education quality management, using distance learning technologies. Selected invariant approach is focused on well-elaborated technological and substantive development, which is ubiquitous.

Accordingly, the prospects for further development of distance learning technologies involve a combination of invariant and variable content, forms and methods, providing on the one hand the standard requirements for all, and on the other hand individualization and accounting capabilities and preferences of the individual in the organization of training and management of its quality in terms of distance learning technologies. In this perspective of distance learning technologies spread, there is still a number of unresolved issues in both countries. All of this suggests the need for a mutually beneficial exchange of experience between Russia and Iran in the field of distance education.

The scientific novelty of the study is proposed research model, suggested tools, quoted analysis results of developments in the sphere of distance learning technologies quality, received on the basis of scientometric and statistical research achievements in science and in practice, carried out on the basis of a sample materials of Russia and Iran.

Proposed statistical model as a leading research method, as well as tools for comparison of experience, can be applied in the analysis of similarities and differences of other countries and in the research of international experience in other areas. Thus, the article demonstrates a focused and organized process of matching the achievements in science and practice, received by different countries according to categories of its generality and specificity. Generality category includes recognized and valuable experience, and the experience, which is of little importance for both countries. Specificity category includes the experience in which the leading position is occupied by one or another country.

The analytical tools, which provide matching process in the science and practice is revealed through the implementation of a number of rules, they are as follow: ensure the comparability of data volumes, reliance on the relative statistical characteristics, checking the reliability of data received, the account of variant groups of terms, orientation to the dynamics and activity of relevant experience formation in the science and practice. Comparative research

of scientific sphere was conducted on the example of selected scientific materials of Russia and Iran on the problems under study and its scientometric analysis based on internal databases of each country.

Among the results of the study there was revealed specific to both countries active zone of the following issues use: standardization and quality control, quality indicators, quality criteria, distance learning, distance learning technologies. The article presents the findings and practical recommendations related to the prospective development of distance learning technologies effectiveness, modeling of distance learning systems, as well as the quality of the educational environment.

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## RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE OF PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION MODERNIZATION

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### Abstract

The relevance of the research problem of modern teacher professional training is defined as a necessity, because the quality and the level of teaching staff training determine the prospects of education development in general. In recent years, the system of teacher education in Russia was associated with the "double negative selection": not the strongest applicants entered the "Psycho-pedagogical education" training program, and not the strongest graduates began to work in the education system. The purpose of the article is to describe one of variants initiated by the Ministry of Education the ways and means of transition to an open multi-level system of psycho-pedagogical education, providing variety of ways to "start" the professional training program. This allows you to select motivated students for the psychological and pedagogical specialties. The listeners of the educational program in the framework of the implemented project were students-participants of additional education; students receiving the second higher education; employees of educational institutions, who do not have a psychological-pedagogical education. The article analyzes the piloted modular model of the teacher-psychologist training. In the process of modules testing there were organized a broad cooperation of universities partners with a university-developer. It was found that the developed software modules can be integrated into educational programs as a whole and individually. The conclusions of the article have practical value for the teaching staff, academic services personnel, developing and implementing educational programs at the university.

**Keywords:** modernization of pedagogical education, educational program, networking University cooperation.

### Introduction

The question of pedagogical education quality generates an increasing interest in recent years, both on the part of international organizations and at the level of government policy in education (Siniscalco, 2002).

The concerns about the quality of teacher training, non-compliance of professional competences of the most teaching programs graduates to the requirements of the profession itself are being expressed in the professional community (International Perspective Teacher Preparation (Accessed 16.09.15), Hans A., Akhter Sh. (2013). Within the framework of the Lisbon process it was taken a regulation based on the "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications" (European teacher education policy: recommendations and indicators (Accessed 17.09.15).

According to Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (Accessed 17.09.15), 13 of the 31 EU countries, the EEA and candidate countries experienced a lack of teachers in secondary education. Russia also points to problems in pedagogical education and tries to resolve them by upgrading pedagogical education. In the framework of pedagogical education modernization project and the Federal target program of education development for 2011-2015 years. Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation is implementing a project on the development of new modules of the basic Bachelor's and Master's professional educational programs with enhanced practical and research oriented training (Bolotov, 2014; Parfilova & Kalimullin, 2014). The objectives of the modernization program of pedagogical education are the following: radical improving the students' training quality in the teaching profession; the



teacher training content and technique change in order to ensure the implementation of a new professional standard of higher education, new standards of school and pre-school education; increasing the efficiency of universities, implementing training programs for teachers, and teacher training colleges (Safronova, Bysik (2014).

**Materials and methods.**

***Russian experience of pedagogical education modernization***

The project realization allowed developing, testing and implementing into a mass practice the fundamentally new educational programs in accordance with the new standard of professional work of a teacher, an educational psychologist. The increasing of "entry" options into the profession and methods of getting education is one of conditions for optimizing the teacher training system that consequently leads to an increase in the quantity and variety of educational programs (Kasprzhak, Kalashnikov (2014).

The expected results of the project is to improve the quality of teacher training by means of modernized teacher training programs in universities participators of the project and universities co-contractors of projects; prepared teams of professors and teaching staff who are ready to modernize the remaining training programs in these universities; organized access to developed modules for all universities preparing teaching staff; developed and tested training programs for teaching staff in accordance with the new requirements.

In this project the teachers of the Kazan Federal University, composed of more than twenty Russian universities, have developed new educational modules for the teachers and educational psychologists training programs. They contribute to the attraction of motivated in teaching students for further learning and work at school. The author of this article has taken part in this work too.

The listeners of the educational program in the framework of the project were students-participants of additional education, students receiving the second university degree, employees of educational institutions without psychological-pedagogical education. The developed application modules individually and as a whole were offered to students of further training system, who have a certain level of competence in the field of study; professionals working in public and private educational institutions, the system of education management, training and retraining of teachers (further training included in the professional activity).

***Internal content of the educational program***

The educational program consists of 3 modules.

"Module is called a cluster or a bunch of training activities, which is dedicated to a specific topic or content. The module therefore is meaningfully and timely completed learning unit (academic integrity, block), which may be composed of a variety of training activities. It can be described qualitatively (meaningfully) and quantitatively (number of credits) and must be yield to evaluation (an exam). Thereby a module is a unit (a completed integrity) or a construction element [block] - which is [in turn] a part of a larger whole, within which each module has its own particular function" (Kasprzhak).

During the project realization and development of education program modules the developers followed the requirements of the European system of quality assurance (ENQA), there were carried out: revision of existing educational programs, evaluation of academic achievements of students in achieving their educational outcomes (program as a whole unit, discipline, training session) ensuring the quality of teaching through the evaluation of teachers' competency, who train students (the outer, self and mutual evaluation), the improvement of teaching methods through the renewal of the material of the educational process, the use of interactive methods of educational programs implementation and alignment of the student support system (open materials, transparent assessment procedures, etc.).

The key and important difference between the developed modules is shown in the focusing of each discipline, the entire module and educational programs in general on educational results. The educational results were conditionally divided into three groups: subject, personality, metasubject (Kubiato, Usak & Masalimova, 2016). In the result of the program realization the metasubject results are achieved (universal educational actions,

regulatory, communication, cognitive; personal (personal and professional self-determination, social competences, the ability to self-development), subject (development, transformation and application of knowledge and cognitive learning activities on the basis of already available). The logic of module comprising suggests a starting point to choose what the program graduates must demonstrate at its end, what is demanded by employers. In our project 3 developed modules "work" on 8 educational outcomes, where each of the disciplines of the module contributes in its formation. The program is implemented in the mode of short-term intensive training sessions on courses lasting 24-36 class hours, accompanied by continuous psychological and pedagogical practice (reflective immersion in the profession), and constant analysis on the elective course "Ascension to the profession" the results of their professional development. Thus, for independent work of students are allocated substantially more hours than for the classroom work. Consequently, the responsibility of the student and the teacher for educational outcomes of a discipline, a module, an educational program increases. To increase the student's responsibility for educational outcomes, he/she is necessary to have a high level of reflection (in this case the self-esteem) (Khusainova, Chirkina & Gabdrakhmanova, 2015).

The main principles of the program realization were: the integration of educational content, interactive educational techniques, variability of learning routes, open educational space. Significant parts of the pedagogical education content are also a self-education of students and their practical activities. The self-education in a broad sense we understand as the improvement of one's knowledge and skills in various areas of reality, but in a narrow sense it is the improvement of expertise and the ability to demonstrate it in a particular field of activity (Gabdrakhmanova, Khusainova, Chirkina, 2015).

Disciplines in the module are divided into basic and elective courses. It was suggested in the modules 1 and 2 to select 3 of 5 varies disciplines, in the module 3 - 4 of 7. The organic part of the learning process, providing a link of theoretical training of future teachers, educational psychologists with their practice in the real professional activity is a continuous psychological-pedagogical practice. The pedagogical education today is understood as a process that involves the presence in the educational program of regular practice that is systematically planned in order to develop professional competency. In the opinion of many members of the pedagogical community, this criterion allows us to describe a model of the pedagogical education (Krasilova, (Accessed 17.09.15).

During the practice the students get acquainted with the main directions of professional activities, improve skills of direct interaction with people, gain experience of psycho-diagnostics, psychological support and counseling of educational environment. In accordance with the curriculum for bachelors in psychological-pedagogical education were provided the following practices:

- teaching and study adaptation practice (distribution) "A dive into the professional environment";
- psychological-pedagogical practice (distribution) "A reflexive dive into the profession";
- psychological-pedagogical practice "A summer practical school";
- psychological-pedagogical practice of "Psychological, medical and pedagogical consultation";
- industrial practice "A workshop of a practical psychologist."

All practices are closely linked and carried out in a certain system and the specified sequence, having a great potential for professional self-determination. It, thus, carried out the displacement of educational results into the practical application of theoretical knowledge. The heads of various types educational institutions, practitioners from preschools, schools, institutions for orphans and children left without parental care were involved into development of the program on the stage of its preparation.

*Network shape of educational programs realization*

Educational programs in the framework of the project were implemented by the organization engaged in educational activities, both individually and through the network forms of implementation.

This form of learning enables students to acquire educational programs with the help of resources of several organizations engaged in educational activities.

Within the framework of the described project were signed agreements with five educational organizations, each of them included one or all modules in their curriculum. Universities partners for a period of testing modules have been fully provided with the educational and methodical documentation. It was organized the interaction of students (on-line and off-line) with the coordinating influence of pedagogical support (maintenance) promoting the development of competences and self-realization of students in educational and professional activities.

#### **Results and Discussions**

It was made an attempt to consider the construction of the individual educational route of students as a compulsory part of the program. There are questions which do not have legal provision to get a student into learning to other organizations, to finance such mobility, especially for the "budget-funded students", taking into account the cost of each organization partner. It is necessary to clearly define the procedure for financing the network training in terms of "per capita financing" of students.

When licensing the educational activities the license's annex contains the addresses of the places of educational activities, except for the places realizing educational activities on additional professional programs. The question has arisen how to provide the "flexibility" in choosing (replacement) universities -partners for the network education.

In the framework of this project realization there were developed three variants of entering the pedagogical profession for students studying at non-teaching specialty. One option involves the academic mobility of students, non-teachers who pass from the 3rd year of study on the psychological-pedagogical training direction. There is a problem of moving the budget-funded place from one major group of specialties to another major group of specialties. How to implement such a movement within a single university, in different universities.

Another option is to include psychological-pedagogical modules in the curricula of non-teaching areas of training (chemistry, physics, philosophy, etc.) from the 3rd year of study. What document will record the acquisition of the educational program so that graduates can work in educational institutions? Is it possible to include in the document on education in the basic direction of training an additional qualification "Bachelor of psychological-pedagogical education" or to issue a diploma of additional education in psychological-pedagogical education?

#### **Conclusions**

So, in the framework of this project it was implemented a shift from disciplinary and content aspect of the educational process to the successfulness of a graduate, which was described in terms of educational outcomes. It was found that the resulting competencies and student's educational outcomes could only be achieved in the result of his/her independent, responsible activities under the supervision of the competent teaching staff.

The logic of discussion and finding answers to a number of questions allowed us to develop the educational program necessary for the implementation of this project:

1. What are the educational outcomes, which should be demonstrated by the program graduates.
2. What courses should be included, in what order, how they will complement each other, etc., to enable students to achieve the intended educational outcomes.
3. What should be the team of teachers who will be able to lead listeners to the planned educational outcomes.
4. What should be the methods and techniques of teaching and learning to be adequate to the planned educational outcomes.

5. What kind of literature should be provided in order the students can reach the educational outcomes.

6. What kind should be the system of evaluation of the results, methods of evaluation of each course and achievement of the program educational outcomes as a whole: the forms and methods of final works, assessment criteria.

7. What should be the mechanisms and procedures to ensure the quality of the program (as well as the infrastructure, management system).

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## COMMUNICATIVE ABILITIES AND THEIR FORMATION AT PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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### Abstract

Education at the modern stage reveals one of the most important problems - communicative abilities formation. Efficient interaction between people can be achieved through a high level of communicative abilities. Though, nowadays we face a common problem of lack of natural (face-to-face) communication among children, who spend a lot of time online and prefer "virtual" engagement. The present article reveals the problem, its coherence, shows its description in psychological and pedagogical literature; exposes the results of the pedagogical experiment. The authors present the age characteristics of youngsters' dialogue in primary school, also forms and methods applied in the process of formation of primary school children's communicative abilities. The experiment was being conducted for a half of a year. Great variety of theoretical and empirical methods was used to test the hypothesis. Pedagogical experiment proved the fairness of the hypothesis and theoretical positions on the formation of primary school children's communicative abilities.

**Keywords:** communicative abilities, sociability, communication, formation, forms and methods for formation of primary school children's, communicative abilities.

### Introduction

#### *Relevance of the issue*

The current stage of development of our society is characterized by profound social and economic transformations. Modern man must adapt to the constantly changing needs of society, to cooperate with other people at the moment is no longer in doubt.

However, despite the ever-growing social need for people to communicate, the availability of comprehensive knowledge, as well as modern school with its existing range of teaching methods and forms is not conducive to the proper formation of communicative abilities of pupils. An important aspect is the process in primary school children, as formation of an active person of the younger schoolboy that provides proficiency as a means of communication in various spheres of life (Novik & Podgórecki, 2015; Ribakova, Parfilova, Karimova & Karimova, 2015).

In recent years, teachers and parents are concerned with issues regarding their children experiencing serious difficulties in communicating with their peers, this is reflected in the inability to find an approach to the communication partner, to develop and maintain the established contact to coordinate their actions in the course of any activity and to respond adequately to express its sympathy to the particular child, marked by difficulties in the ability to enjoy success when sad and empathize with the other person (Minullina, Akramova, Gurianova, 2015)

The ability to communicate, to build and maintain friendly relations, to coexist and cooperate with people in general, is the full development of the necessary components and a self-realized person, it is the key to successful mental health.

The urgency of the formation of communication skills in primary school children is caused by the increase in and changing nature of the communications school, increasing "virtual communication" and a decrease in live communication, provoking negative changes in the psychological state of health.

### *Exploring Importance of the Problem*

When communication information is exchanged, there are interpersonal relationships formed and revealed characters, as well as different social roles that the child masters.

Formation of communicative abilities in younger schoolboys - is consistent and constant work, which has its own methods, their own kinds of exercises, and its program of skills that ensures compliance with the procedure.

Research studies show that the process of personal development and self-determination of primary school students is difficult. These figures are due to the immaturity of their emotional - volitional, retarded formation of social relations, age identification difficulties of family education. The approach to solving this problem is presented in the works of L.S. Vygotsky (2005). He described communication as a possible personal important condition in the upbringing and care of children. Based on the concept of Vygotsky, we can say that the formation of the criteria of communicative skills of children is one of the main task of general educational institutions. Therefore, the effectiveness of communication and quality of the process increasingly depends on the level of skills of participants engaged in communication, which is particularly relevant and timely today.

### *Methodological Framework*

The study of communication issues are widely disclosed in the works of well-known foreign and Russian scientists (Bodalev, 2008; Leontiev, 2005; Lisina, 2008; Lomov, 2006; Mead, 1987; Mudrik, 2006; Reyd, 2004; Shibutani, 1999). Scientists have identified the essence of communication skills, the criteria for their development, methods of formation of this group of skills and others.

In domestic science, a number of studies are devoted to such aspects of communication as a problem of communicative interaction, the formation of communicative abilities of students, and students in the educational process (Biktagirova, 2011; Biktagirova & Valeeva, 2014; Bushueva, 2003; Markina, 2008; Parfilova, Karimova & Kasimova, 2015; Shishova, 2015). This problem was developed mainly in relation to the pedagogy of the university and secondary level schooling. (Mustafina & Biktagirova, 2016). At the same time an overview of scientific literature clearly shows the weak part of the studies in pedagogy of elementary education.

### *State of the problem*

Analysis of the psychological, pedagogical literature, practical teaching and research activities in the aspect of the problem developed showed that at the present stage, there is no sufficient study of the problem in practice. It is possible to formulate the hypothesis of the study of the problem; that is, the process of formation of communicative skills can be more effective and successful if:

- To build the essential characteristics of the concepts of "communication skills";
- To determine the age features of formation of communicative abilities of younger schoolboys;
- On the basis of the identified methods and forms of appropriate age in younger students, it is important to develop and implement a program that ensures formation of communicative abilities' in the most sociable way.

### *Theoretical and empirical methods*

A variety of complementary complex techniques were used to check the validity of this hypothesis. They include: Theoretical Methods: The study and analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature, comparison, analogy, generalization; Empirical methods: survey, testing, pedagogical experiment; data processing methods (quantitative and qualitative analysis), methods of mathematical processing.

The study involved 92 school children of Kazan school №111 at the age of 9-10 years. Experimental study was carried out for 6 months (October 2014 - March 2015) in natural conditions of the educational process.

*Stages of study*

The study was conducted in three stages:

Stage 1- includes the state where the experimental subjects were determined and the studying of the subjects baseline characteristics. On the basis of these results a program was formed.

Stage 2- stage of Formation – this is a process which organizes the active work on formation of communicative abilities of younger students.

Stage 3- Control – this is the final stage of the research study of the problem; its purpose, verification of the findings on the effectiveness of formation of communicative abilities of younger students.

It is possible to compare the results obtained in ascertaining and control phases of work, if the right forms and methods used as well as its effectiveness are figured out.

*Evaluation criteria*

To implement the objectives of the study, we used the following methods: (1) Test of "Evaluation of sociability" by V. F. Ryakhovsky (2012), and (2) the test of communicative skills by L. Michelson (2011), which aimed at determining the level of competence and quality of formation of basic communication skills

All of these techniques (research procedures and manual processing) used in this study are in full compliance with the requirements. The test "Estimation of level of sociability" by V. F. Ryakhovsky intended to diagnose level of sociability in students. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions.

Every question is evaluated to answer "yes" or "no." The test results should define the estimated coefficient (K) according to the formula  $A = C / B$ , where B - the maximum number of responses to questions; C - the number of matching responses to the decoder.

The level of sociability is estimated as follows:

High level from 0.76 to 1.0 points,

The average level from 0.56 to 0.75 points,

Low: 0.1 to 0.56 points.

High level of sociability is characterized by an active desire for communication and organizational activities, quick orientation in the situations laid-back behavior in the new team. This include an important case and creates a difficult situation in which students prefer to make their own decisions, defend their opinions and ensure that it was taken by their comrades. At this level, the student likes to organize various games, activities, persevering in activity that attracts and can make a recovery in the unfamiliar company.

Middle level of sociability tends to have students that have contact with people, does not limit the circle of his acquaintances, plan his work, and defend their opinion. At this level, the student does not get lost in new surroundings, helps relatives, quickly finds friends, constantly striving to broaden their knowledge; is pleased to participate in the organization of public events, engaged in social activities, is friendly, takes the initiative in communication, able to take independent decision in a difficult situation. However, the potential of these tendencies is not very resistant.

The low level of sociability does not seek to communicate, it is hard going and goes through resentment, feels awkward in the new company, poorly versed in the unfamiliar situation, he prefers to spend time alone with himself, limits his knowledge, experiences difficulties in establishing contacts with people and difficulties in giving speech before an audience, cannot defend their opinion. Taking the initiative in social activities is much underestimated, in many cases it prefers to avoid making independent decisions.

2. Test of communicative abilities Michelson modified technique is aimed at determining the level of competence and quality of formation of basic communication skills.

All questions are divided into 5 types according to authors' communicative situations:

- requiring positive reaction to the statements of the partner;
- The student must respond to negative statements;
- The student is requested;
- conversation situation;
- requiring display of empathy (understanding feelings and states of another person).

These methods are measured as units of skills:

1. Ability to provide and receive tokens (compliments) from their peers;
2. Responding to fair criticism;
3. Responding to the unfair criticism;
4. Responding to offensive, provocative behavior on the part of the interlocutor;
5. The ability to turn to a peer request;
6. The ability to refuse a request to someone else, say "no";
7. The ability to have empathy, support;
8. Ability to accept the sympathy and support from peers;
9. The ability to make contact with another person, contact;
10. Responding to an attempt to enter into contact with you.

### **Results and Discussions**

#### ***Ascertaining stage. Solution of the given task***

In ascertaining the stages, investigated indicators were used for selected procedures. As a result of the diagnosis, there was 30% of the low level of sociability of students, 45% with an average level of sociability and 25% with a high level of sociability. The students with an average level of sociability (45%) dominated.

This suggests that students tend to have contacts with people, does not limit the circle of their acquaintances, and defend their opinion on their worked out plans. They do not get lost in a new environment quickly and find friends, constantly strive to broaden their knowledge, engage in social activities, help relatives and friends, take the initiative in dealing with pleasure, take part in the organization of social activities, can make an independent decision in a difficult situation. However, the potentials of these tendencies are not very resistant.

#### ***Reserves and recommendations***

Following the procedure of the Michelson type of response we have identified children: aggressive, dependent and competent. The results showed that in the group, children predominate with aggressive type responses include- 37% of children. 32.6% of children have competent type of response, the dependent type - 30.4%.

In the experimental study on the formation of communicative abilities in younger students, the following conclusions were made:

1) The results of ascertaining experiment showed that among children of primary school age, there were very low levels of sociability and communication skills. Juniors, unfortunately, the majority did not know how to listen, how to express their thoughts and behave in a conflict situation, to empathize, to respond to the comments.

#### ***The second stage***

The second stage of the study includes the conduction of experiment. The program "The most communicative" was implemented during school hours (November 2014 - March 2015), classes last an hour and are held 1-2 times a week.

#### ***Reserves and recommendations***

The program had the following objectives:

1. To form the ability to analyze the feelings of people in a variety of communicative situations;
2. To form the ability to plan their actions;
3. To form the ability to work in a situation of game interaction;
4. To form the ability to analyze their own behavior.

During the experimental work we used the following forms and methods: conversation, role playing, exercises, training exercises, celebration communication, tale- game, art project.



Each session ended with reflection. The process in the group is based on the following principles:

1. The principle of feedback.
2. The principle of voluntary participation in the group.
3. The principle of psychological safety.
4. The principle of equal participation.
5. The principle of self-discovery.

In the experimental study on the formation of communicative abilities in younger students, the following conclusions were made:

In the course of forming experiment was conducted and approved the program we have developed "The mixer" for forming communicative abilities in younger students.

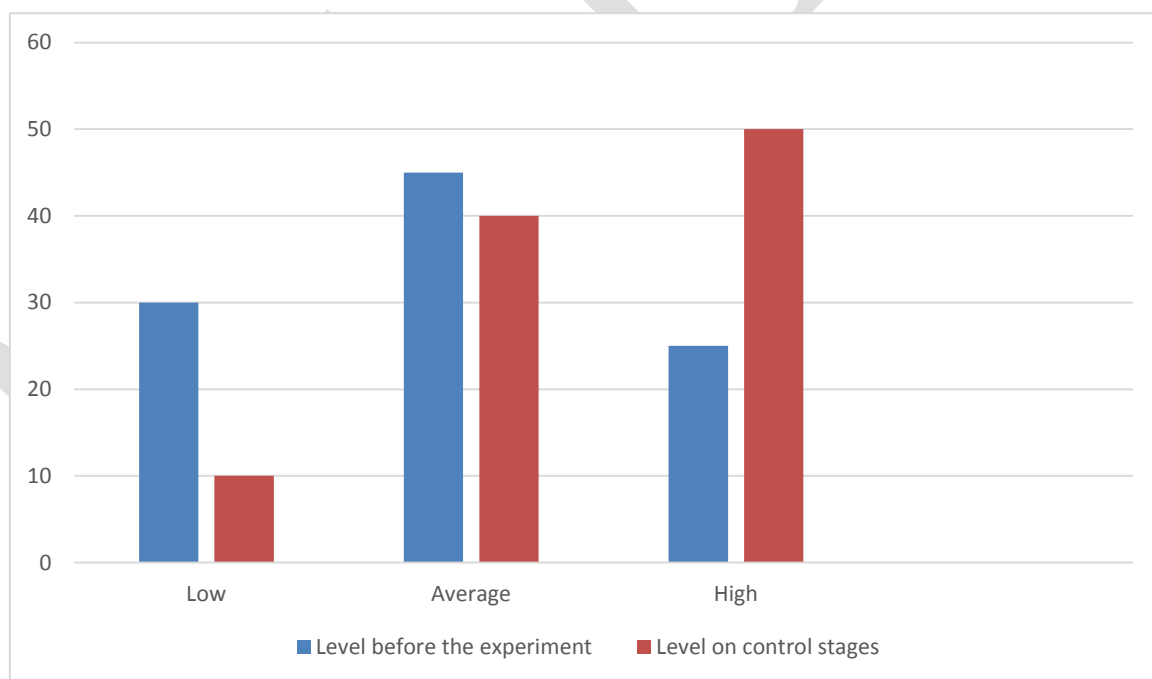
**Control experiment**

The purpose of control stage is to establish whether there is a sufficiently significant change in students studied indicator, therefore, it is possible to argue that developed the program had a significant impact on the formation of primary school children's communicative abilities.

Results were processed in sequential analysis. Results of analysis showed that school children have average sociability (45%), while 30% have even lower levels of sociability. In addition, children with aggressive predominant type of response (37% children) dependent type response were present in 30.4% of children.

**Solution of the given task**

The next stage obtained comparable data on the first and third stage. The findings of sociability level before and after the shaping of the program are presented in graph 1 below.



**Figure 1.** Comparison of school children's sociability on ascertaining and control stages

Graph I shows the low level of sociability, which was lower by 20% than before the experiment, and was only 10%. There is a positive change after the implementation of the program and the level is high, it rose from 25 to 50%. Middle level of sociability decreased by 5% (from 45 to 40%).

In order to find out whether there are significant differences between the indicators "before" and "after" experiment, we used a mathematical statistical analysis t- Student test. Based on the analysis as well as in accordance with the parametric criteria, we can put two hypotheses about the presence or absence of differences in the values of the index:  $H_0$  = the difference between the average of the two samples is equal to zero.

$H_1$  = the difference between the average of the two samples is different from zero.

For our group  $t_{cr 1} = 1.73$   $p = 0.10$ ;

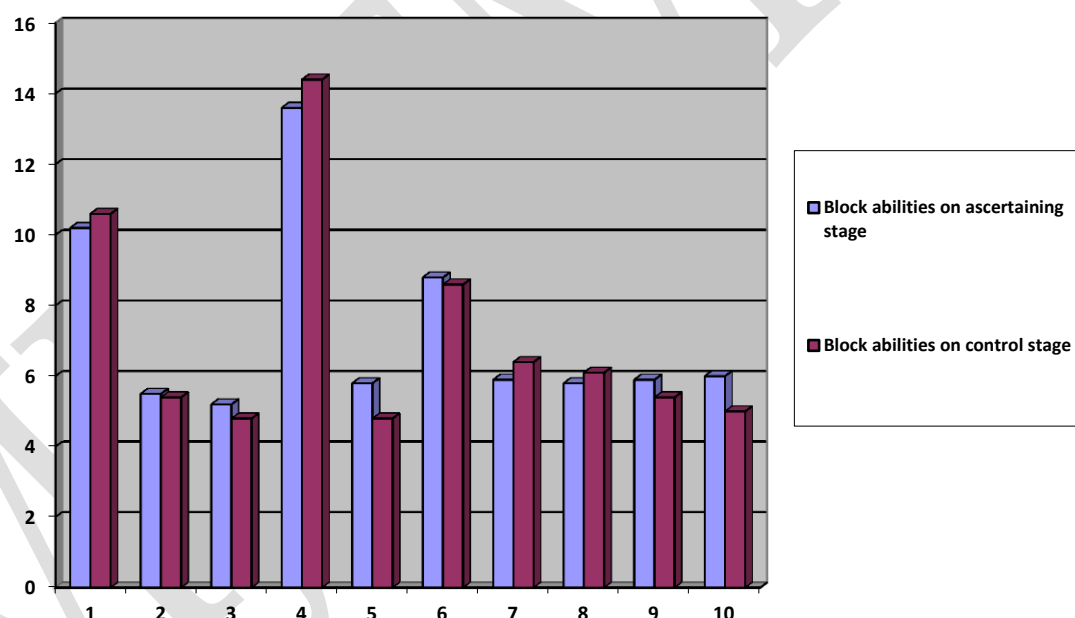
$t_{cr 2} = 2.09$   $p = 0.05$

$t_{cr 3} = 2.86$   $p = 0.01$

$t_{exp} (2.88) > t_{cr} (2.86)$  for  $p = 0,01$ , that is,  $H_0$  - the average value exceeds  $X_1 X_2$ .

The level of sociability at primary school children in the experimental group on the ascertaining stage of the study is different from the level of sociability in the control stage.

The comparison of the school children's abilities is shown in graph 2.below



**Figure 2.** Compare blocks abilities of younger schoolboys on ascertaining and control stages

Next, we analyzed using t Student's test as described by Michelson, we wanted to test whether there is a significant difference in the mean values of the studied parameters at 1 and 3 stages of the study, which was confirmed at the level of reliability at  $p = 0.05$ . In addition, this method is assumed qualitative analysis. As seen in Figure 3 qualitative changes of 4 blocks of skills - are:

1) the ability to deny and to take attention (compliments) the average value of the ascertaining step was 10.2% in the control phase and showed 10.6%;

2) in response to offence, provocative behavior on the part of the interlocutor the average value was 13.6% in the control phase and showed 14.4%;

3) the ability to provide the most sympathy, support, the average value was 5.9% in the control phase showed 6.4%;

4) the ability to accept the sympathy and support peer average value of 5.8% in the control phase showed 6.1%.

This is a very important skill, so we can say that there are positive changes in the study parameters.

The results of this work demonstrate the accuracy of the hypothesis. We developed the program in order to contribute to the process of formation of communicative abilities at children of primary school age.

In the experimental study on the formation of communicative abilities in younger students, the following conclusions were made:

In the control stage, we had to re-examine the level of sociability in children of primary school age. The results indicate a positive trend. During the study, we observed students improve sociability and positive dynamics of development of communicative skills necessary for the formation of the younger students. In general, according to the results of the study, we can say that we have put forward the hypothesis and it is confirmed.

#### **Conclusion**

Formation of communicative abilities in younger schoolboys – is a complex process of interaction. We have considered the need for this process, the disclosure of this problem in the psychological and educational literature revealed age features of communication in younger students.

We have considered various forms and methods of formation of communicative abilities and tested in the program developed by us. The results of this present research confirmed that we have developed a program of formation of communicative abilities in younger schoolboys, which is efficient enough to admit and allows carrying out the work successfully.

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# THE TECHNIQUE OF COMPLEX EXAMINATION OF THE SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AS A FACTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS

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## Abstract

The main backbone procedural characteristic of the educational environment is this or that educational technique of its development chosen by a school. It is important to understand the effectiveness of its implementation, assessment of the developmental effect, and to identify the advantages and disadvantages of its implementation into the school educational environment. Therefore this article is aimed at revealing the results of the complex examination of the school educational environment, working on the technique of the integrated quality characteristic, based on the allocation of three aspects: target - allows you to identify the target settings and internal challenges, so the educational environment subjects focus their efforts, time and money on the decision of these tasks; procedural - suggests the use of various techniques in achieving the developmental effect; effective - means achieving a certain result, taking into account the specifics of the school educational environment. The article presents the complex examination data allowing us to identify the cause - effect relationships of different manifestations of the educational environment features, to assess the developmental effect of educational technique in terms of development of the pupil's personality, his/her cognitive abilities, thinking and intellect, social and motivational development of the child, to describe the type of interaction in the system "teacher-pupil". The material presented in this article is of practical importance for the administration and the teaching staff of educational institutions.

**Keywords:** educational environment, examination of the educational environment of the school, the psychological development of the child, target aspect, procedural aspect, effective aspect.

## Introduction

Educational environment - is a concept that has come to the pedagogical and educational psychology dictionary recently. But more and more scholars and practitioners refer to it. There are different approaches to its definition. Many scientists involved in this issue (Panov, 2001; Slobodchikov, 1997, 2000; Rubtsov & Ulanovskaya, 2010; Rubtsov & Polivanov, 2007; Yasvin, 2001; Myasoedova, 2000; Ilyasova, 2014) use the concept of educational environment for a holistic description of the specific characteristics of a particular school, introducing a variety of criteria to describe it: the democratic - authoritativeness of relationships, activity - passivity of students, creativity - the reproductive nature of knowledge supply, narrowness - the wealth of cultural content, etc.

Most foreign scholars instead of the "educational environment" concept, use the term "school effectiveness" as a social system - the emotional climate of personal well-being, the microstructure features, quality upbringing - educational process (Maklaflin, 1996; Reid & Hopkins, 1987; Rogers & Freiberg, 2002).

From the American scientists' point of view the organizational factor is more important effectiveness factor of the school, which provides unity of representations of teachers about their professional duties, the ability to relate the personal teaching philosophy with colleagues

and pupils, to find support for his/her personal initiative by the school administration (Pilipovsky, 1997).

Now the school has gained considerably more freedom and autonomy in the choice of educational technologies, forms and methods of organizing the learning process, assessment and evaluation systems. The variety of domestic tasks has increased, which a particular school sets and to solves itself. Also the "social" order has changed - as the basic result and fundamental value of the educational influences, "official" recognition of the problem of child development was received.

To assess the effectiveness of the schools' solution of the developing problem of traditional criteria, which assesses the quality of subject teaching, is not enough. This requires a comprehensive analysis of all educational influences in their specific manifestations and combination, specific to a particular school.

### **Materials and Methods**

Posing the problem of examination of the educational environment of the school, taking into accounts that:

Educational environment - is a holistic qualitative characteristic of the inner life of the school, that:

- defined those certain objectives that the school places and actually decides in its activities;

- manifested in the choice of means by which these objectives are solved (the means are chosen school curricula, the organization of work in class, the type of teacher-pupil interaction, the quality of ratings, the style of informal relationships between the children, the organization of extra-curricular school life, the material - technical school equipment, classes' and corridors' decoration, etc.);

- meaningfully evaluated by the effect in the personal (self-assessment, the level of claims, the anxiety, the predominant motivation), social (competence in communication, the status in the class, the behavior in the conflict, etc.), the intellectual development of children, which it allows to achieve " **(Technology)**, - we qualitatively and quantitatively described the specific features of the educational environment of the school, trying to help it realize its real internal goals and objectives, to evaluate the adequacy of its resources.

This system is based on the identification in the educational environment of the three main aspects (see Table 1):

**Table 1.** Aspects of the educational environment.

Educational Environment		
Target aspect	Procedural aspect	Effective aspect
(why?) Target setting and internal challenges, on the decision of which effort, time and resources of subjects of the educational environment are really focused	By what means the school reaches its developmental effect	What is achieved by the school, creating, supporting and developing their specific educational environment (developmental effect), including psychological criteria : intellectual - cognitive, social - communicative and individually - personal

As a diagnostic material the system of methods and techniques were used, proposed by an author team under the direction of Rubtsov & Ulanovskaya, 2010.

### *The target aspect*

Questionnaire (developed by an author team under the direction of Rubtsov, Ulanovskaya, 2010) consists of three judgments, concerned the school tasks, the teacher and the qualities of a good pupil. Each judgment is offered seven alternative answers.

With the help of this questionnaire the declared and the real target setting can be identified, the degree of unity of the teaching staff and the administration in understanding its objectives and the degree of satisfaction among school pupils, teachers and administration.

### *The procedural aspect*

1. Evaluation of educational communication based on the analysis of the lesson schemes. The analysis of the lesson scheme focuses on the organizational - psychological side of teacher-pupil interaction. It contains three aspects:

- subject-substantial;
- organizational aspect;
- the personal aspect.

2. Analysis of the lesson content by observation. It is important to see the availability and quality of the proposed study material.

3. Assessment of the interaction type in "pupil - teacher" system, which includes a questionnaire for teachers "An assessment of teacher-pupil study interaction features in the classroom" and questionnaires for pupils' "An evaluation of the children's training communication with the teacher in the classroom".

4. Diagnosis of the psychological climate of the school with the help of observation maps, which include a list of a variety of the school objective characteristics. The main topics of observation are: the appearance of the school and its interior design; school during the class, during the break and after the class; relationships between teachers, school and parents, administrators and teachers, the administrators and children; school psychologist; school equipment; school symbols; school graduates.

### *The effective aspect*

1. Diagnosis of the socio-psychological development of pupils:

- diagnostics of socio-psychological structure of the class-sociometric technique by J. Moreno (2001).

- diagnostics of socio-psychological adaptation of the child to the conditions of the educational environment - children writing "My School" essay.

2. Diagnosis individually - personal characteristics of pupils:

- method of determining self-esteem and level of aspiration (technique by Dembo-Rubinstein in the A. M. Prikhozhan (2007) modification);

- method of emotional relationship diagnosing to the pupil, using the technique by Andreeva A.D. and Prikhozhan A.M. (2007);

3. Diagnosis of educational - cognitive development of the pupil:

- diagnosis of the educational environment influence on the development of pupils' thinking. Using the tests by Cattell (1946) CFT 2 and Zak A.Z. (2007) "Permutations".

An array of data on the proposed comprehensive assessment is very large, however, the obtained data objectively reflects the actual operation of the school. It allows seeing the major trends in the efficiency of the school to make a reasonable forecast, and if necessary use the data for adjustment and reorganization program of its activities.

### **Results and Discussions**

In order to determine the developing effect of the school educational environment, the psychodiagnostic survey of 75 ninth-graders was conducted. The pupils of this class were selected for integrated assessment by the diagnosis developers' recommendation. Also the teaching staff of this school.

### *The results of the target aspect diagnostic*

Using the proposed questionnaire, survey procedures and processing of the data, we have identified the real and declared target setting at school, rated the degree of unity of the teaching staff and the administration to understand their objectives and the satisfaction degree of school among pupils, teachers and the administration as the main participants in the

educational process. Careful comparison of the responses to particular questions of primary and basic school teachers, humanities and natural - scientific subjects, experienced teachers and fellows gave a lot of interesting information about the school in general, as well as its teaching staff, children - adult relationships, and led to the conclusion that the school is not only declares, but really solves educational challenges, and it firstly focuses on transmission of knowledge and skills to pupils. However, the school does not always use adequate means for the solution of this problem. The pupils' answers to the questionnaire suggest that these exact inadequate means, often in the informal pupil-teacher relationship, are responsible for the fact that pupils' view the main aim of the school is humanistic target setting.

### *The results of the effective aspect diagnostic*

To identify the objective structure of interpersonal relations of pupils in the class and determine the position of each child in the status structure, the sociometric test has been used.

Analysis of the obtained data revealed that the lists of general and business leaders and lists of business and emotional leaders crossed less than 60%, means that academic achievement are not the basis for the formation of informal relations. (In such a class honors are prepared to use, but not going to be friends with them). The overall trends in sociometric structures of different classes have not been identified. It should be borne in mind that each class has its own background, and the structure of relations depends on many factors.

The average scores for most groups of categories in the table analyzing the results of the "My School" work exceeds 1.5, so we can say that the school is focused on the children, not only in terms of upbringing - educational influences, but also in terms of creating a psychological climate in which the children feel comfortable and safely at school themselves.

It can be stated that in general, the children feel good at school, they are quite emotionally high appreciate all the main components of school life. And all parties of school life are important enough for them (all group categories mentioned in more than 80% of the text).

It can be concluded that the overall scope of the, "the Master's" school life, looks for the pupils as a significant and emotionally positive, but in relation to some particular teachers, children have problems.

Comparing the number of positive and negative judgments in terms of "teacher as a man" and "teacher as a professional," explains noted fact that the majority of negative assessments are classified as "teacher as a man", i.e., teachers generally satisfy children professionally, but often do not meet the children's personal and communicative expectations. And the children note as its negative attitude to some particular teachers, so the negative attitude of particular teachers to children.

It also can be mentioned, that the children's relationship with the teachers are emotionally saturated, because in this group of categories there are the least neutral judgments, and the most positive or negative (as compared to other groups). The problems arise mainly in the interpersonal sphere.

Group of "Friends" categories involved less than others, mostly all the negative judgments relate to "Classmates". It can be noted that in the surveyed classes in general, the sphere of classmates' relations is emotionally less important for children than other aspects of school life. Apparently, these relations develop spontaneously and are focused primarily on the personality of children. But in general, this relationship area can be assessed as safe for the majority of pupils.

Writing an essay as a free form does not necessarily presuppose the children to answer all questions. So, direct information about the school motivation in texts is extremely rare.

Thus, it was revealed that the surveyed pupils go to school with pleasure and benefit a positive emotional state from the presence at school. It is more concerned with the overall situation at school (and in particular lessons). The emotional and personal contact with teachers in the classroom is more significant communication for them than the training activities.

Overall, the writings data analysis, suggest that the main setting at school setting is a humanistic, i.e., the school tries to create the conditions in which the children would feel at the school "at home", i.e. safe and emotionally comfortable.



The level of claims and self-graders has been detected. Self-evaluation performs as a regulatory and protective function, influencing behavior, activities and development of the individual, its relationship with others.

The results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Indicators of pupils' claims and self-esteem

Levels of indicators	Level of claims (% of pupils)	Level of self-esteem (% of pupils)
Very high	79	74
High	16	18
Average	4	7
Low	1	1

The highest level of claims is identified in 9B class - 90% of pupils with a very high level of claims. The lowest level of self-esteem is identified in class 9C - 4% of pupils with low self-esteem.

Anxiety and negative emotional experiences at the lessons are discussed in the context of interference to absorb the curriculum and personal growth decelerating.

Indicators of anxiety levels, activity and emotional attitude of pupils to the teaching are presented in Tables 3-4.

**Table 3.** Indicators of pupils' anxiety and activity levels

Levels indicators	Anxiety in the classroom (% of pupils)	Negative experiences in the classroom (% of pupils)	Cognitive activity in the classroom (% of pupils)
High	21	5	
Average	77	76	86
Low	2	19	14

**Table 4.** The ninth graders emotional attitude to the learning

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V	Level VI
9A		5%	25%	65%		5%
9B		24%	14%	62%		
9C		15%	18%	63%	4%	
9th grades		15%	19%	63%	1%	2%

The table shows that the largest number of pupils (63%) belong to the fourth level.

Adolescents with diffuse, uncertain emotional attitude to learning are referred to the fourth level. These children are very mild manifestations in both interest and concern in the classroom, it can be said that they do not reflect on their attitude to learning, so their condition is characterized by the lessons rather indifference, disinterest than emotionality. Another subgroup of pupils - are teenagers, who do not show curiosity, interest in research at the lessons and their attitude to learning can be defined as the experience of the "school of boredom".

According to the results of the diagnosis 19% of young people with a common positive attitude in case of hypersensitivity to the rating aspect of teaching are referred to the third level. This group consists of two sub-groups of pupils. The first subgroup - are pupils who show great interest at lessons, moderate, or even weakly expressed anxiety and at the same time they tend

to unbalanced and often aggressive conduct. Another subgroup of pupils – are distinguished by the presence of interest in activities, combined with mild negative emotions in the classroom. However, they have found increased anxiety.

There are 15% of adolescents with general positive attitude towards learning who refer to the second level. These pupils do not experience anxiety and negative emotions at the lessons, however, in contrast to the first level of their cognitive motivation is low.

Only 1% of adolescents exhibiting the lesson excessive emotionality refer to the fifth level.

There are 2% of teenagers, with varying degrees of negative emotional attitude, who refer to the sixth level.

Overall, analyzing the generalized results of the diagnosis, it can be concluded that 97% of ninth-graders have a positive attitude to learning process.

To evaluate the intellectual and cognitive abilities of pupils, two tests data were compared. Comparison of the results has allowed identifying and assessing the schooling impact on the development of pupils' intellectual abilities.

The types and levels of development of thinking of ninth-graders on the A.Z. Zack's "Permutations" techniques results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Types and levels of thinking development

The type and level of thinking	9A	9B	C	9th grades
Empirical 2	22			7
	%		%	%
Theoretical 1	39	12%		1
	%	%	8%	
Theoretical 2	22	12%		1
	%	%	7%	
Theoretical 3		56%		3
		6%	4%	
Theoretical 4	17	20%		2
	%	3%	4%	

The table shows that 75% of ninth-graders have a fairly high level of thinking development, as the Theoretical 2 - Theoretical 4 - is higher levels of theoretical thinking, differing for 3- 5steps by planning depth and meaningful reflection. Theoretical 1 - is the first theoretical level, characterized by the ability to release the general method of solution and transfer it into a qualitatively new task. Empirical 4 - is the highest empirical level, characterized by the ability to transfer empirical method to relatively complex multi-path problems.

A comparative analysis of each child results, received in the "Permutations" procedure with the results that same child is demonstrated in the Cattell test (CFT2) led to the conclusion about the impact of the school on the thinking development of ninth grade pupils'.

Results of the analysis were as follows: 42% of ninth-graders - can be told about the effective influence of the school on the thought development of pupils; 36% of ninth-graders - the school did not have a specific effect on the "normal" process of maturation age intellectual abilities of pupils; 22% of ninth-graders - the school does not contribute to the intellectual development of pupils, i.e. the child was in such an environment in the school, which does not require the child's even the efficient use of natural thought resources.

### Conclusion

A complex study of the educational environment of the school has allowed the following conclusions:

Based on the survey results of a complex diagnosis of the psychic development of the ninth grade students, on the analysis of the teaching staff questioning results, as well as on the supervision of training activities organization we can make the following conclusions:

- the organization of educational process let us to get a significant gain in the indicators of intellectual development that characterize the acquisition of theoretical methods of thinking, which are manifested in the ability of planning, analyzing and meaningful reflection;

- the organization method of educational process promotes the development of social - communication skills, development of more diverse, extensive and productive relations between classmates;

- the diagnostic results showed an evident positive dynamics in motivation - personality development of adolescents, which is manifested in the increase in the level of cognitive activity and positive attitude towards school, as well as reducing the level of negative experiences in the classroom.

Methodology of teaching at this school is based on the concept of educational activity of D.B. Elkonin - V.V. Davydov. The findings suggest that the activity of the school is really "developing". The school can serve as the platform of the network partner for pedagogic higher educational institutions, as well as an internship platform for teaching staff.

### **Acknowledgments**

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## CHILDREN'S SECOND LANGUAGE SPEECH DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF FAMILY EDUCATION

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### Abstract

The relevance of the research problem is due to the need to improve the effectiveness of listening as a type of a preschool child's speech activity. The purpose of the study was to identify the psychological and pedagogical conditions of increasing the efficiency of listening. Leading methods of the study were analytical and experimental. Main results: identified psychological-pedagogical conditions improve listening; the technology of reading children's books by parents determined a special role of a father, worked out methods of increasing the efficiency of reading and listening: the transposition and overcoming interference, uppercase, empathy and reflection, prediction, anticipation. The article may be of interest to psychologists and teachers of children's organizations, parents, college and university teachers. In the process of family reading in a second (non-native) language organization it is necessary to: strengthen father's role: text reading and interpretation of its context by a father is perceived better by children than when it is performed by a mother; provide linguistic transposition and consider interference. The process of semantic perception is always affected by the nature of a text determined by linguistic peculiarities (phonetic, grammar, lexical, stylistic) and logic-semantic structure of the text. Thus, semantic perception is primarily influenced by the complexity degree of grammar forms of thought expression. Therefore, parents need to teach family reading technology (slow reading, reading with the interpretation of the meaning, reading a retelling, etc.). At the university, we have organized special courses for parents. The undertaken research proved that only interactive strategy has positive effect on educational results. Still its curriculum should include real communication between students and teachers, it should propose using information resources in the mode of algorithmic distance tasks, supporting a student by coaching, that is professional (psychological and pedagogical) situations simulation, coordinated problems solving; a student should become a subject of interaction, take an active part in the course of studying, following his/her individual route.

**Keywords:** listening, preschool children, transpose, interference, uppercase, empathy, reflection, prediction, anticipation, interactive learning strategies, curriculum, coaching.

### Introduction

#### *Relevance of the issue*

A family plays a big part in children's second language speech development as in a family parents can speak in a second language, read books and discuss their contents. Family reading consisting in one parent's (mother or father) reading a book in a second (usually foreign) language to a preschooler is a rare but interesting phenomenon both from the point of view of psychology and speech development methodology. The point is in this case such processes as listening, perception, understanding and speaking understudied by science are activated in a different manner. Listening and speaking have special importance for preschool children under the conditions of bilingualism. Listening is one of the types of speaking activity providing productivity and efficiency of other types of activity such as speaking and reading aloud. In Russia this was studied by Baudouin de Courtenay, 1963; Zhinkin, 1965; Zhinkin,

1967; Zhinkin, 1982; Zimnyaya, 2001; Leontiev, 1967; Broadbent, 1958; Fant, 1967. In their works these scientists set forth an idea that speech perception and comprehension form a single process. The product of listening is inference or a chain of inferences a person comes to as a result of listening. Whereas the product itself may or may not be recognised by a person. Nowadays it is known that special listening training influences the development of children's conversation hearing and speech memory, acquisition of pronunciation and spelling norms (Laswell, 1949; Miller, 1951; Osgood, Sebeok, 1954). Listening acquires special meaning in bilingual context when the task is not only to teach a child to listen but also to speak in another language. Certain classes of speech or native (foreign) language development are dedicated to this at preschool institutions. However, in families parents do not always have enough time to read fairy-tales in a foreign language to their children and in particular to organise listening process in a proper way. That is why the degree of family reading influence on a child's foreign speech development is still not very well studied.

### *Tendencies in organizational-content updating of educational process*

The main peculiarities of listening as a kind of speech activity are well investigated in scientific literature (Steinberg, Hiroshi, David, 2001; Valerian, 2014a; Valerian, 2014b; Yusupova, Podgorecki, Markova, 2015): listening involves both direct interaction between the participants of communication and their indirect interaction, i.e. speech sounding in the street, on the radio, television, etc. can also be perceived aurally; listening consists of several stages: incentive-motivational, orientative, analytic-synthetic, controlling; there are some functions of listening: cognitive, regulative, aesthetic, reacting, etc. Thus, listening as a kind of a child's speech activity is a sophisticated perceptive-intellectual-mnemic inner activity. Under the conditions of bilingualism listening is impossible without comprehension: without comprehension there is no perception and apprehension which makes speaking impossible. Four main levels of comprehension can be distinguished for children: the first level is comprehension of several words, understanding only of what the text is about, in other words awareness of the main idea of a statement: the second level is comprehension of word combinations, awareness not only of the general idea but the meaning of a particular phrase; the third level is comprehension of separate sentences of a statement; the fourth level is comprehension of the main meaning of a statement; the product of the fourth level is an inference a child comes to as a result of listening.

### *Relevance of educational process technological updating*

The research tasks are: to organise monitoring of speech development of the children whose parents read texts in a second language at home; to determine these children's levels of speech comprehension in a second language; to elaborate a reading technology for parents; to determine the influence of this technology on the development of children's speech in a second language; to elaborate recommendations for family reading organisation.

### **Methodological Framework**

We have been observing the families of preschool children in the city of Kazan (Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation) for 6 years (2008-2014). Some families identified themselves as Russian but one of the members (sometimes both members) of the family knew a second language as native or foreign, i.e. could read, understand and interpret the content of a children's book text in Tatar or English). Other families identified themselves as Tatars but one of the members (sometimes both) knew a second language (Russian) as native (i.e. could read, understand and interpret the content of a children's book text in Russian). Parents responsibly read to their 4-5-year-old children literary works (fairy-tales, poems, short stories) in a second language (in English - 106 families, in Tatar - 37 families, in Russian - 185 families, in other languages - 32 families). The function of a reader was more often fulfilled by mothers only (63%), fathers only (22%) and mothers and fathers in turn (15%). Upon children's reaching 6 years we traced a corresponding comprehension level with the help of questions to the texts that were read. The authenticity of the selection for 6 years of data proceeding proved to be mathematically accurate (according to Pearson formula).

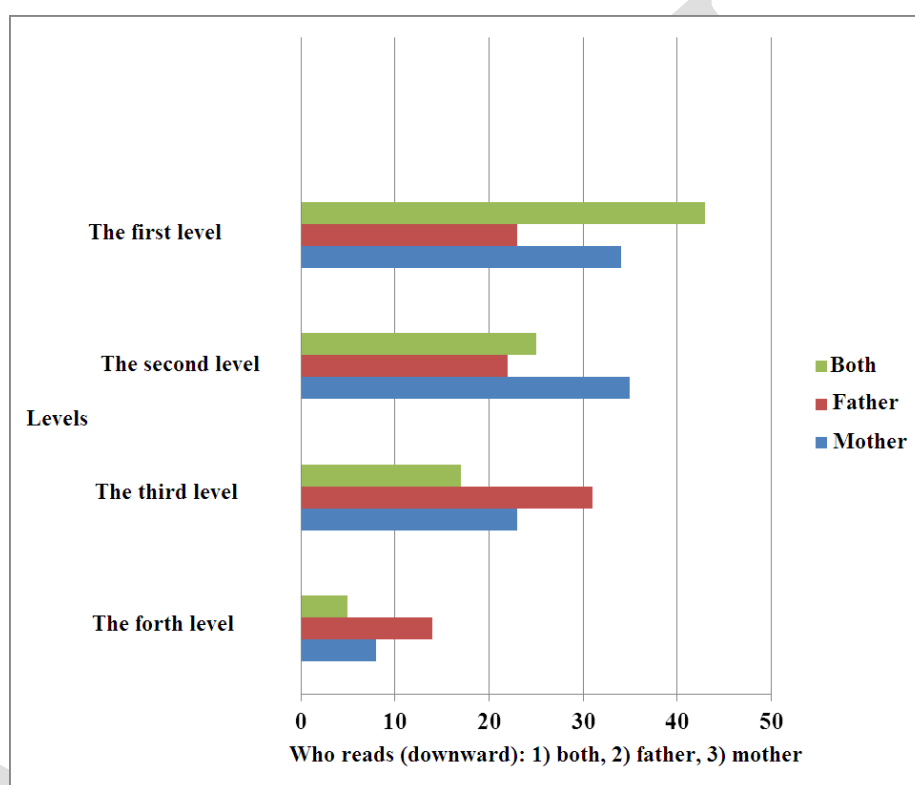
### **Results and Discussions**

#### *Levels of a second language understanding before the experiment*

As a result we have the following picture (see table 1, diagram 1)

**Table 1.** Levels of a foreign text understanding in the context of family reading

Levels	Who	Fourth level	Third level	Second level	First level
reads	Both, in	5%	17%	25%	43%
turn	Father	14%	31%	22%	23%
only	Mother	8%	23%	35%	34%



**Fig 1.** Levels of a foreign text understanding in the context of family reading before the experiment

As we see the results are quite curious: the highest level of comprehension (comprehension of the main idea of a statement and the ability to make inferences in a second language) is achieved by children who discuss a literary work with their father (14%), mother - 8%; with both of them in turn - 5%; the third (a lower) level is when separate sentences are understood better from father's reading (31%), worse from mother's (23%) and even worse when both of them read in turn (17%). Thus, a gender aspect emerges unexpectedly: father's text interpretation is more efficient than mother's. From the point of view of Gender Pedagogy the question is poorly studied. However, the general picture of empiric data proves that both for mothers and fathers the lowest levels - the first and the second - are predominant, when children understand only separate words and word combinations: fathers - 43%, mothers - 69%, in turn-based variant - 68%. The ability to listen is one of the most difficult communicative phenomena relevant to the culture of communication. There are two kinds of listening according to the way of exercise: disperse, passive (non-reflexive) when a child is distracted by something; and concentrated, active (reflexive) when attention mechanisms are alert. In the

process of verbal communication a child can have passive listening. Observations allowed projecting a family reading technology recommended afterwards to parents.

### *Reading technology*

The technology includes the following methods:

1. Transposition and interference overcoming. Transposition is a positive transition of similar concepts from a native language to a second one. Interference is negative influence of unknown concepts on comprehension.

2. Apperception or influence of previous experience on listening and perception process.

3. Empathy and reflection: the highest level of development of the ability to listen is empathic listening. Empathy is compassion to other people, the ability to feel what a child feels, understand him or her not by the mind but by the heart.

4. Predication: the place of predication (voice emphasising of informative centres) influences memorising. The significant information expressed at the beginning of the text is characterised by the highest percentage (about 80%).

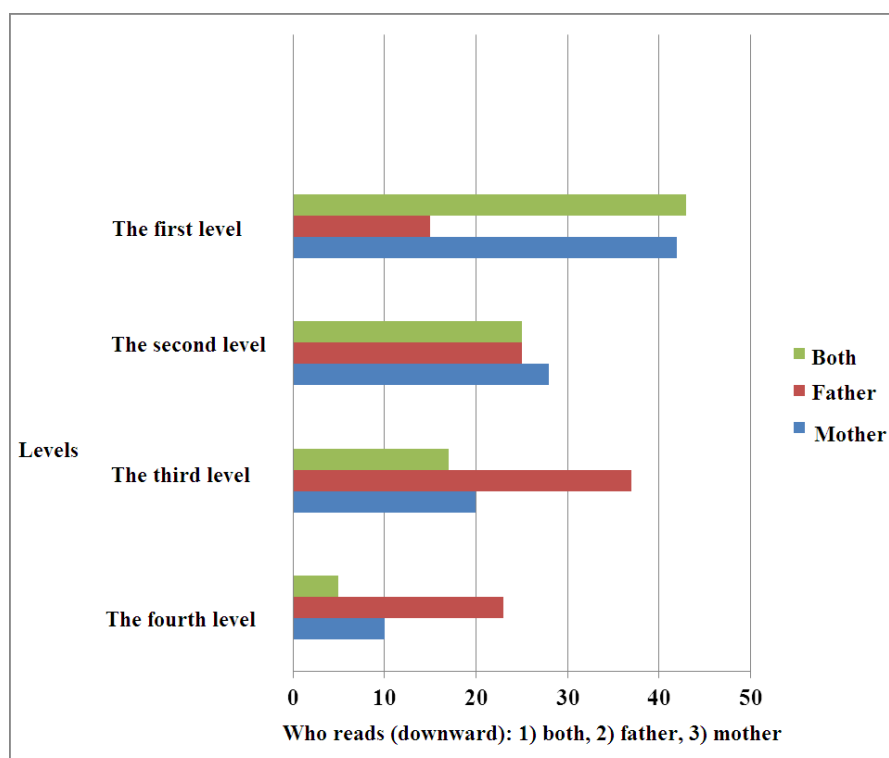
5. Anticipation: the dependence of perception on previous experience enables a child to make some forecasts in the process of perception which allows him or her to anticipate the future to some extent.

### *Levels of a second language understanding after the experiment*

As a result of collaboration of children's organisations with families, where the components of this technology were used, the picture started changing (see table 2, Fig. 2).

**Table 2.** Levels of a foreign text understanding in the context of family reading

<i>Levels Who reads</i>	Fourth level	Third level	Second level	First level
Both, in turn	5%	17%	25%	43%
Father only	23%	37%	25%	15%
Mother only	10%	20%	28%	42%



**Fig. 2.** Levels of a foreign text understanding in the context of family reading after the experiment

On the fourth - the highest level - listening to fathers by children improved up to 7%, mothers - 2%, on the third level - listening to fathers up to 6%, mothers - 3%, whereas the figures of the first and second levels decreased.

**Experimental resources**

The experiment was conducted at the Kazan Federal University. Participants in the experiment were students of the correspondence department. Students were families with 2-3 children. The research demonstrates that both in Russia and foreign countries higher education professors use traditional (about 35%), distance (about 30%), interactive (15%), none (20%) strategy. When polling professors of several Kazan universities about the strategy used in their academic activity (traditional, distance, interactive, none) we discovered that 43% chose distance strategy, 39% - none, 10% - traditional, 8% - interactive one. As we can see, most of the professors chose either distance strategy or teaching without any strategy. These are only the poll results. Observation of teachers work (176 teachers of different institutes) show that most of them prefer working not remotely but traditionally and they note that the increasing requirements and reports on digital education tasks don't let them specificate the strategic meaning of their T&E activity. In the survey of students (327 people) of correspondence departments at different universities with distance educational system we saw an interesting situation. Most off-campus students (78%) have adjusted to this system and they like it, because there is no need to spend time for study, but they worked out malpractice: A group of students asks a student (usually an excellent full-time student) to perform all the tasks for them. As a result they all have good marks. In the sample group of 447 testee students (studied in 2014, 2015, 2016), we could prove the correlation between the strategies and the education outcomes (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** The results of using (non-using) education strategies

Levels of education outcomes (%)	Zero	Low	Mid	High
Traditional strategy	10	18	37	35
Distance strategy	38	24	33	5



Interactive strategy	5	12	31	52
No strategies	36	21	36	7

The table shows: interactive strategy is the most effective (high result of 52%); it combines with features of live communication between a teacher and a student, and different forms of distance interaction: 52% of students confirm their high results in learning. The second best is traditional strategy: High results are confirmed by 35% of students, though within this strategy teachers avoid distance interaction and prefer to work in an old manner (using lectures and practice along with seminars). Distance form (in its pure form) proved to be not very effective: Independent testing showed that 5% of students have high results, and 38% have zero-point results. The group of teachers who don't use any strategy don't differ much in results (7% and 36% respectively). Therefore, non-strategic and distance interaction between a teacher and a student is rather risky for the educational process aimed at results.

### Conclusions

In the process of family reading in a second (non-native) language organisation it is necessary to:

1. Strengthen father's role: text reading and interpretation of its context by a father is perceived better by children than when it is performed by a mother.
2. Provide linguistic transposition and consider interference. The process of semantic perception is always affected by the nature of a text determined by linguistic peculiarities (phonetic, grammar, lexical, stylistic) and logic-semantic structure of the text. Thus, semantic perception is primarily influenced by the complexity degree of grammar forms of thought expression. This is testified by in particular a certain increase in the time of a child's reaction to more complicated grammar forms.
3. Consider apperception caused by the fact that perception of a literary work depends on many factors: knowledge of a language, subject being discussed listening practice (not to mention a general level of culture, education, a child's age, etc.)
4. Empathise and build reflexive relationship with a child. Empathic comprehension learning can be enhanced by the ability to read facial expression, gestures, poses, looks, handshaking, father's or mother's manner of walking. Reflexive listening consists in active interruption of father's or mother's speech, in helping them to express their thoughts and feelings, in creation of favourable communication conditions.
5. Realise predication taking into account: articulatory characteristics of a speaker (articulatory clarity, degree of reduction, etc.); time of performance (the period of the text of a literary work reproduction), tempo of reading (average syllable length) and the degree of father's or mother's eagerness to be understood expressed by emotionality, clarity of narration logic emphasising and adequacy of intonational thought arrangement.
6. Consider anticipation: the mechanism of speech utterance forecasting consists in the fact that in the process of listening a child having perceived the first word of a phrase can presuppose (unconsciously, of course) which word will most probably follow it. That is why he or she needs to be given an opportunity to try to realize this presupposition, i.e. complete the phrase.

### Guidance

The results of the undertaken research can be of interest to pedagogues, kindergarten psychologists, parents and pedagogy college and university teachers. Kindergarten psychologists and pedagogues can recommend to parents the reading technology for a second language teaching to children.

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN ETHNO-CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS (EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS)

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### Abstract

The relevance of the problem substantiated in the article is obvious due to the following: the formation of ethno-cultural representations provides personality successful integration into national and world culture, promotes the development of a new type of personality consciousness and self-consciousness, the nature of a living position as the subject of a poly-cultural society. The favorable period for ethno-cultural representations development is elementary school age as at this age stage there is an active development of social rules and norms, perception of the world through communication and interaction, awareness of belonging to a national group, comprehension of the uniqueness of each ethno-culture. The objective of the article is to develop the technology of pedagogical support to advance ethno-cultural representations of elementary school children in the context of poly-cultural educational space. The leading method is the project-based method applied to define the content and procedural bases of pedagogical support aimed to develop elementary school children ethno-cultural representations, to reveal the set of ways, means and conditions to arrange this process and provide valid socialization and sociocultural adaptation of elementary school children to living in a poly-cultural society. The elaborated technology of pedagogical support aimed to develop elementary school children ethno-cultural representations includes diagnostic, guide, content-operational and productive-evaluative stages. The technology is based on personal-activity and culturalogical approaches, principles of complexity, ethno-culture, axiology, subjectivity and is directed to elementary school children self-determination, extension of their mental possibilities, development of skills for cross-cultural and interethnic interaction, regardful and tolerant attitude towards representatives of various ethnic groups and cultures.

**Keywords:** ethno-cultural representations, ethno-cultural knowledge, poly-cultural education, technology of pedagogical support.

### Introduction

In the context of modern sociocultural situation people find themselves in the field of cultures the interaction with which demands ethno-cultural awareness, ability to conduct a dialogue, tolerance, ethno-cultural sensitivity. In this regard the issue to develop a cultural generation is considered crucial (Khuziakhmetov, Shafikova & Kapranova, 2015; Yusupova, Podgorecki & Markova, 2015). The preservation and development of ethnos cultural dominants is obviously possible on the basis of younger generation acquaintance with ethno-cultural values in the course of poly-cultural education. Poly-cultural education promotes the formation of children's national consciousness, their ethnic and civil identity (Garaeva, 2014; Gromova &

Zakirova, 2014; Ribakova, Parfilova, Karimova & Karimova, 2015), culture of international communication, provides their language development (Gabdulkhakov, 2014), socialization and sociocultural adaptation to living conditions in a poly-cultural society. The study of poly-cultural education opportunities to form the Person of culture testifies to the realization of the education content cultural core, the reconstruction of cultural patterns and norms in the educational system. Without them the organization of culture appropriate activity of younger generation in the context of poly-cultural educational space is impossible. The culture poly-level of the educational space is substantiated by the gained understanding that people's activity ways are estimated from the point of view of positive cross-cultural interaction experience development, tolerant attitude towards representatives of other cultures, readiness for the search of cultural meanings, active culture creative position (Gorshenina, Neyasova & Serikova, 2013).

It has been ascertained that the favorable period to form an ethno cultural personality is elementary school age (Gorshenina, 2011). At this time there takes place an active development of social rules and norms, knowledge of the world through communication and interaction, perception of each ethno-culture uniqueness. Children have the need to extend the sphere of communication and interaction, social recognition and self-expression; the child becomes aware of belonging to a national group; they comprehend ethno-cultural and universal values. The conception of ethno-cultural representations results in elementary school children development of these values. Ethno-cultural representations are a component of social representations system which during the studied age period acts as a new formation, a basis to create child's relationship with a poly-cultural society. In scientific literature this term is used to specify the transition from feelings and perception to thinking (Shukshina & Serikova, 2010; Novik & Podgórecki, 2015). Ethno-cultural representations of elementary school children are considered as the process when one of the components of the world outlook sphere of a person's mentality is developed; it takes place in the context of external impacts that lead to the change in the complete personality psychological organization due to the subject cognitive activity to obtain and evaluate information, to develop the roles and skills of behavior in a poly-cultural society (Zakirova, Gaysina & Zhumabaeva, 2015).

It should be noted that despite the considerable interest of scientific researches in the issue of poly-cultural personality development, the question concerning the ways of elementary school children ethno cultural representations development is debatable. Therefore, the pedagogical support is assigned a particular role in this context; it should be considered as the need to help children understand the value of ethno-culture, its role in the course of person's adaptation to social relationships and define guidelines of cross-cultural and interethnic interaction.

### **Materials and Methods**

#### ***Research methods***

The following methods have been applied to solve the research tasks: forecasting, project based method, pedagogical experiment, questioning methods (questioning, conversation); praximetric methods (analysis of activity products, projective techniques), testing, observation, method of expert evaluations.

#### ***Research experimental base***

The research of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations was conducted on the basis of general education institutions of the Republic of Mordovia. 358 elementary school children of 7 - 11 years old took part in the experiment.

#### ***Research stages***

The research was conducted in three stages:

- at the preparatory stage there was analyzed the current state of the studied problem in the pedagogical theory and practice; the program and criteria-diagnostic tools of the research were developed;

- at the main stage, there was elaborated and introduced the technology of pedagogical support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development in the

context of poly-cultural educational environment; there was carried out experimental work to verify the validity of this technology;

- at the final stage there was carried out the systematization and generalization of the research results; theoretical conclusions were specified; processing and registration of obtained results of research was implemented.

### **Results**

#### *Contents and stages of technology*

The elaborated technology of pedagogical support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development is the body of forms, methods, techniques and means applied in the educational process to provide elementary school children successful adaptation and integration into poly-cultural educational environment.

This technology is aimed to solve the following tasks:

- to develop elementary school children knowledge of ethnos, their history and culture, factors and conditions of ethnic cultures development, interrelations of ethnos groups and cultures, influence of ethnic culture on Russian and world culture;

- to assist to solve the issues of a school child ethnic identity and ethnic consciousness development;

- the ethnization of education content to provide the development of ethno-cultural and universal values;

- to prevent the emergence of problems in the context of cross-cultural, interethnic and interfaith interaction; to form valid and tolerant attitude towards representatives of various ethnosgroups;

- to promote ethno-cultural productive-creative activity of elementary school children;

- to up-date cross-cultural interaction of subjects of educational relations in the course of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development.

The personal-activity and culturological approaches providing elementary school children cultural self-determination, extension of their mental opportunities, development of cross-cultural and interethnic interaction skills, regardful and tolerant attitude towards representatives of various ethnos groups and cultures make the basis of the elaborated technology. Pedagogical support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development is based on the following principles: complexity, ethno-culture, axiologiness, subjectivity.

The complexity assumes the arrangement of pedagogical workers efforts into the system providing the support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development.

The principle of ethno-culture suggests the focus on the formation of civic consciousness, patriotism, ethnic consciousness, tolerance, ability to poly-cultural communication; the development of a complex of ethno-focused mental new formations and abilities; the development of traditional culture values, acquisition of ethno-cultural knowledge, abilities, skills which provide the formation of an ethno-cultural and poly-cultural personality, the citizen of Russia and the world (Yakunchev & Karpushina, 2010).

The principle of axiologiness is directed towards the formation of persistent world outlook ideas of ethno-cultural and universal values which have to become guidelines and behaviour regulators for elementary school children.

The principle of subjectivity is characterized by the fact that a school child, being the subject of poly-cultural educational space, is capable to structure it to a certain degree creating the environment for themselves. The probability of subject position realization by the child is higher if its structure is richer and more various, if its links with various subjects of the educational relations is richer and more various.

The technology of pedagogical support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development in the context of poly-cultural educational space reflects its main stages: diagnostic (diagnostics of the initial level of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development in the context of their entry into poly-cultural educational space),

guide (the definition of the forthcoming work content, elaboration of the general approach to solve the problem, specification of structural elements of support, selection of ways and means to support, development and introduction of a scientific methodological support), content-operational (joint constructive activity of elementary school children and teachers), and productive-evaluative (the analysis of results, reflection).

The pedagogical support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development is based on the consideration of their own interests and requirements, potential personal growth. As this age period is spiritually fragile and pliable, the child has already had freedom, but does not fully realize its sense and volume yet (Zenkovsky, 1995). During this period the child gains the main traits that characterize the personality: understanding of their responsibility, own interests, inclinations, tastes, requirements, motives are being arranged in some system.

#### *Implementation phases of the technology*

The implementation of pedagogical support technology of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development assumed to carry out the following stages of the experimental work:

- diagnostics of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development level to identify the problems and to search conditions to improve the studied process;
- development and introduction of educational methodological support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development, creation of poly-cultural educational environment in school, realization of adequate conditions of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development (teachers' are focused on the development of ethno-cultural representations of school children, ethnization of elementary school children educational content, correlation of the work content with elementary school children age peculiarities, application of interactive forms and methods of educational process subject interaction, inclusion of school children in productive and creative activities to master the development of ethnic and universal culture values);
- experimental verification of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development technology validity.

#### *The stating stage*

At the stating stage of the experiment there was carried out the diagnostics of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development levels according to certain components: ethno-cultural representations in the structure of personality social representations, acquaintance with ethnic culture, ethno-cultural representations as the basis of regardful and tolerant attitude towards representatives of various ethnos groups and cultures. Each component was studied in detail according to the following criteria: information-cognitive, world view, emotional-evaluative, operational. Proceeding from the analysis of theoretical sources and peculiarities of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development process, we have singled out the following criteria: information-cognitive criterion assumes the availability of representations system, concepts and knowledge in the sphere of ethnic culture of native people and other ethnos groups, interest in ethno-cultural problems, problems of cross-cultural and interethnic interaction; world view criterion suggests the availability of personality qualities, system of goals, feelings, beliefs that define the position of the bearer of ethno-cultural and universal values, independence of judgments and evaluation of ethno-cultural problems according to the norms of morals and national perception of the world; emotional-evaluative criterion includes emotional sensory perception of the ways of identification with the ethnos, the level of ethnic consciousness development, positive attitude towards ethno-cultural diversity and ethnic forms, regardful and tolerant attitude to ethno-cultural distinctions; operational criterion defines the focus of acts on ethno-cultural and universal norms and values, manifestation of regardful and tolerant attitude towards representatives of other ethnos groups and cultural distinctions. This approach resulted in the distribution of respondents into groups according to the corresponding levels of ethno-cultural representations development (high, average, low) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Diagnostics results of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development levels, %

Criteria	Informati on-cognitive	Worldview	Emotiona l-evaluative	Operational
Levels				
Low	43,8	36,1	16,3	18,6
Average	43,7	59,2	63,4	64,5
High	12,5	4,7	20,3	16,9

This diagnostics revealed the insufficient level of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development due to their poor knowledge of basic ethno-cultural concepts, low level of ethnic identity, insufficient positive attitude towards ethnic culture, towards representatives of other ethnos groups and cultures. Most elementary school children did not have developed skills to build cross-cultural and interethnic interaction.

***The forming stage***

At the forming stage of the experiment there was implemented the technology of pedagogical support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development on the basis of development strategies and formations (Kalinina, 2004). In regard to our research the developing strategy allowed to create conditions stimulating the formation of school children ethnic identity and ethnic consciousness providing successful socialization in the context of poly-cultural educational space. As a result there was brought out direct and indirect support. The characteristic feature of direct support was the address to the specific personality in the course of teacher's interaction with school children. The indirect support was implemented by the teacher with the application of various elements of culture. For this type of support, the appeal to a group of children in general is characteristic. In this case children were involved in independent solution search.

The forming strategy provided the opportunity to select and structure the content, to work out educational methodological support (educational and methodical aids, programs of extracurricular activities, methodical recommendations, diagnostic tools) to form elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development in the context of general education organization with age features in view. Within the frames of strategy implementation there was realized the ethnization of the education content aimed to develop elementary school children ethno-cultural presentations of the variety of nations and their cultures, world order symbols, subjectified system of images-values, elements of folk culture (oral poetic creativity, folk crafts, handicrafts); the system of elementary school children ethno-cultural knowledge was defined:

- declarative knowledge - knowledge of ethno-cultural values, criteria of evaluation, norms of attitude to various phenomena of public life and national culture, rules of relationship in poly-cultural society, etc.;
- subject-specific knowledge - knowledge of the language, history, nature of the native land, national traditions and customs, etc.;
- procedural knowledge - knowledge of features of national craft, national trade, knowledge of national dishes cooking technology, knowledge of national songs and dances performance, etc.;
- conventional knowledge - knowledge of ways and conditions of cross-cultural and interethnic interaction strategy application based on ethno-cultural and universal values.

The enrichment of organizational-methodical tools of pedagogical support of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development was provided with the application of various forms, methods and technologies (ethno-focused and ethno-cultural) (Gorshenina, 2011) that allowed to arrange interactive teachers and school children interaction to create conditions for the reconstruction and assimilation of ethno-cultural concepts, stereotypes, development of ethno-sociocultural experience (Neyasova, 2013).

***Comparative analysis of the experimental research results***

To determine the validity of pedagogical support technology before and after experimental work there was conducted the comparative analysis of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development level (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Diagnostics results of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development, %

levels	Criteria													
	Information-cognitive			Worldview			Emotional-evaluative			Operational				
	b	t		b	t		b	t		b	t			
low	3,8	4	4,9	6,1	3	9,2	6,3	1	,7	4	8,6	1	9	,4
average	3,7	4	7,8	9,2	5	3,4	3,4	6	9,2	5	4,5	6	1,1	6
high	2,5	1	7,3	,7	4	7,4	0,3	1	6,1	3	6,9	1	9,5	2

The analysis of the research data showed the increase of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development level by all criteria. To check the reliability of the obtained results we used Pearson's criterion (chi-square). As  $\chi^2_{emp} = 8,74 > \chi^2_{0,05} = 7,81$ , the reliability of the results difference obtained before carrying out a pilot study makes 95%. Therefore, the revealed regularity allowed to assert the increase of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development level that testifies to the efficiency of the elaborated technology.

### Discussions

The considered problem finds its reflection in modern foreign and Russian researches. Scientists study various aspects of learners' poly-cultural education (Banks, 2013; Nirmala, 2010; Phoon, Abdullah & Abdullah, 2013; Portera, 2008; Yakunchev & Gorshenina, 2013). Theoretical-methodological foundations of teachers' training for vocational activity in a poly-cultural society are covered (Babushkina & Shukshina, 2014; Buyanova, 2013; Gorshenina & Yakunchev, 2014; Castellanos, Gloria, Mayorga & Salas, 2007; Pope & Mueller, 2011). Appropriate pedagogical means and technologies of school children poly-cultural/ethno-cultural competence (Garaeva, 2014; Gabdulkhakov, 2014; Gorshenina, 2011; Gromova & Zakirova, 2014; Nistor, Gogus & Lerche, 2013; Fischer, 2013).

However, at present there are not enough scientific works devoted to the problem of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development, especially if it concerns their age features.

### Conclusion

The empirical research has singled out the peculiarities of elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development. Elementary school children manifest their attitude towards ethnic culture, first of all, in the cognitive sphere; the mental ability is dominant. Elementary school children have the ability to establish cause-effect relationships between components and the phenomena of ethnic culture. Elementary school children ethno-cultural representations are isolated from practical activities and real acts. Ethno-cultural representations become a basis to form ethno-cultural concepts considered as the reproduction of subjects and phenomena of national culture in their generalized characteristics-words. The body of ethno-cultural representations and concepts provide ethno-cultural knowledge development. Ethno-cultural knowledge and beliefs developed on their basis allow elementary school children to show positive, emotional-evaluative and regardful-tolerant attitude towards



representatives of various ethnos groups and towards their cultures in the course of cross-cultural interaction.

It has been established that the elaborated technology of pedagogical support makes it possible to implement elementary school children ethno-cultural representations development on the basis of stage-by-stage socialization in the context of poly-cultural educational space on the mono-cultural (development of native ethno-culture and ways of thinking peculiar to it), cross-cultural (comprehension of ethno-cultures of people living in a certain region), intercultural (ability to cross-cultural interaction and dialogue) levels.

The materials of the article may be useful to pedagogical employees of general education institutions to implement project, organizational, diagnostic activity in the course of work to develop elementary school children ethno-cultural representations; in the course of teachers' training to conduct professional activity in the context of a poly-cultural society.

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